A HISTORY OF THE KANO BOOK MARKET, C. 1920 – 2020

BY

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I at this moment declare that this thesis is my own unaided work, both in concept and execution, and that apart from normal guidance from my supervisor, I have received no assistance. Neither the substance nor any part of the thesis has been in the past, or is being, or is to be submitted for a degree at this University or any other university. All sources consulted are duly and adequately acknowledged.

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Sani Yakubu Adam Date

ABSTRACT

TITLE: A HISTORY OF THE KANO BOOK MARKET, C. 1920 – 2020

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By borrowing both empirical and conceptual tools from book history, this dissertation documents the history of the Kano Book Market (KBM) in northern Nigeria. Its sources are drawn from archives, private and public records, oral histories, and "printed manuscripts" (religious tracts retaining manuscript features but printed using offset lithographic technique). The dissertation's main thrust is to document how colonial legacies shaped book traditions well into the post-colonial period. Particular emphasis, however, is given to the book market, which encapsulates the other components of the "book cycle." The dissertation argues that the colonial infrastructure and facilities such as the rail lines, the printing presses and the Kano Airport built in 1936 provided the impetus for the emergence of internal and regional Islamic and Hausa book trade. The Islamic book trade, in particular, was pioneered by a section of Muslim scholars mainly based in Kano whose main goal was to publish Arabic books which circulated for centuries in northern Nigeria and other areas of West and Central Africa as part of the local curriculum in Islamic schools. The dissertation explores the dynamics of relations between these publishers and practitioners, such as printers, lithographers, copyists and authors. Most of the extant literature on Arabic printing and book distribution has focused on Arab cities such as Cairo and Beirut as the global centres of Islamic literature while silencing sub-Saharan Africa. To address this gap, the dissertation, by relying on primary records in private and public collections, demonstrates that the KBM, while importing Islamic books from the Arab countries, was a regional entrepot for Islamic book distribution in West and Central Africa, thus serving as a conduit linking Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, Kano played the role of a regional hub for the distribution of the Hausa popular fiction.

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A NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY AND TRANSLITERATION

I have used the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) transliteration system for Arabic words. The use of Standard Hausa Orthography has been maintained in writing Hausa words including proper nouns adapted from Arabic.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD: Anno Domini (in the years of our Lord)

ADO: Assistant District Officer

ALA II: Arabic Literature of Africa, Volume II

ANA: Association of Nigerian Authors

B.: Born

BC: Before Christ

BCs: Business Centres

BUK: Bayero University, Kano

CBD: Central Business District

CBN: Central Bank of Nigeria

CMS: Christian Missionary Society

CMYK: Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black

CPF: computer-to-film

CTP: computer-to-plate

D.: died

FF: And following pages

FGN. Federal Government of Nigeria

FOB: Free on Board

FRCN: Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Kaduna

GDB: Gidan Dabino Bookshop

GDI: Gidan Dabino International Nigeria Limited

GDP: Gidan Dabino Publishers

HAWAN: Hausa Writers Association of Nigeria

IJMES: International Journal of Middle East Studies

KBM: Kano Book Market

KML: Kano Market Literature

MBH: Moustafa El-Baby El-Halaby and Sons

MH: El-Mashhad El-Husseini Library and Printing Press

MSA: Milestone Shipping Agencies, Limited

ND: No date of Publication

NEPU: Northern Element Progressive Union

NMPP: Northern Maktabat Printing Press

NPA: Nigerian Ports Authority, Nigerian Publishers Association

NPC: Northern People's Congress

NNPC: Northern Nigerian Publishing Company

NORLA: Northern Regional Literature Agency

NPLS: Northern Provinces Law School

OUP: Oxford University Press

PCA: Personal Collection of Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino

PCDA: Personal Collection of Danladi Sani Adamu

PEO: Provincial Education Officer

PRP: Peoples Redemption Party

SAS: School for Arabic Studies

SEO: Senior Education Officer

SOAS: School for Oriental and African Studies

UPE: Universal Primary Education

USD: United States Dollars

WTC: Women Teachers' College

GLOSSARY

HAUSA WORDS

Ajami: Arabic script used in writing other languages

Littatafan soyayya: (literally translated as books of love) Hausa popular fiction

Malam: Hausa word for Mr or teacher/scholar

Tobe: cloth

Turkadee: a woman cloth

ARABIC WORDS

Islamiyya: Islamic schools modelled after the Western educational system

Jundullahi: A youth organisation affiliated to Qadiriyya brotherhood in Kano

Maktaba: bookshop

Muqaddam: A Sufi master

Murid: A Sufi acolyte

Nāshir: publisher

Qabd: Folding arms while praying

Qadiriyya: A Sufi brotherhood founded in Baghdad by Abdul Qadir Jilani in the twelfth century

Sadl: Praying with hands by the side

Shari'ah: Islamic law

Silsila: Chain of transmission of Sufi brotherhood

Tijaniyya: A Sufi brotherhood founded in the eighteenth century by Shaykh Ahmad Tijani

Ulama: Islamic scholars

Zawiya: A devotional centre of the Sufis

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Chapter One

General Introduction

Introduction

The Kano Book Market (KBM) is a space with physical, social, political and economic dimensions where agents interact to produce and distribute books. While the market is a specific space in Kano, it is at the same time more metaphorical than physical because critical decisions are often made outside its physical boundaries. The market thus encompasses all those activities, most of which occur outside the physical trading space, that involve the production and distribution of books. The city of Kano is the main diffusion space of such activities. The KBM has three main segments that are composed of English, Hausa and Islamic Book Markets. Each has a peculiar history that can be traced back to the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

On the social landscape, the three segments of the KBM mediate multi-layered forms of relationships involving authors and their associates (patrons, copyists, scribes and a host of others). Other dominant actors are printers, lithographers, paper sellers, publishers and booksellers. The interactions that occur in the KBM are principally based on normative principles inherited over generations. For example, transactions in the Islamic Book Market between most authors (most of whom were/are Islamic scholars and teachers) and their copyists (most of whom were/are disciples of the authors) were/are not based exclusively on immediate pecuniary benefits. Instead, they are based on the perennial traditions that shape relations between scholars and their disciples. The *quid pro quo* principle of such a relationship is subtle and rooted in Islamic pedagogy. The scholars are entitled to free services (*khidma*) from their acolytes, while the latter are entitled to spiritual and educational nourishment from their masters. Therefore, as a by-product of this logic, the copyists and the scriveners rendered their scribal services, requesting no reward. The same form of

relationship permeates the publishing and distribution of many religious tracts. Such publications are often sponsored by booksellers or wealthy patrons who receive spiritual guidance from the author.

The Hausa and English segments of the KBM — founded by the colonialists — operate on the conventions of the traditional or mainstream publishing industry of the Western world with a hierarchy of multinational publishers at the top, coming down to local publishing houses, primary dealers, regional distributors, bookshops (including university and other school-based bookshops), and street vendors. From the 1980s, the so-called "Kano Market literature" (KML) emerged as an offshoot of the Hausa segment of the market. This literature developed autonomous conventions of production and distribution based on the new technological possibilities of "self-publishing".

In economic terms, the overwhelming majority of the transactions that occur in the KBM are economic relations with the *quid pro quo* principle in operation (books being offered to consumers in exchange for money). Moreover, the forces of demand and supply are the main determining factors in the operation of the KBM. Vertical and horizontal competitions among buyers and sellers are embedded in the day-to-day transactions within the market's physical boundaries. This is especially the case in the KML, where stiff competition and the dog-eat-dog battle for consumers' control eventually undermined the market's ascendancy.

In the political realm, the structure of the book distributions has relied on state regulations. These statist interventions have far-reaching consequences on the transactions that occur in the KBM. The separation of the market sphere "from the sphere of state or politics is not a sustainable endeavour."[1] The state control mechanism ensures compliance with the terms governing the

[1] Eduardo Fernández-Huerga, "The Market Concept: A Characterization from Institutional and Post-Keynesian Economics," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 72, no. 2 (2013), 369 – 370

exchange and regulates the inflow and outflow of goods and services into and from the state. For example, in the 1980s, when the government imposed heavy restrictions on importing consumer goods into Nigeria, the book market contracted, forcing many booksellers out of business. This kind of intervention and many others determine the periods of boom and contractions in the KBM.

The main diffusion centre of the KBM is located in Kano, an ever sprawling city in northern Nigeria that has served, at least since the nineteenth century, as a dominant centre of commerce in the Hausa speaking areas of present-day Nigeria. In Kano, the Kurmi Market, which was established in the fifteenth century, became the major centre of the Islamic book trade in West and Central Africa by the late twentieth century. For centuries, the market served different purposes. The most significant historical role it played was its position as a central terminus of the trans-Saharan trade due to its strategic location on the Saharan trade route, which connected it to Tripoli in Libya. Kano has also been a famous centre of Hausa popular fiction that became ubiquitous in all the Hausa-speaking areas of West and Central Africa.

This dissertation documents the history of the KBM from the colonial period in the early 1900s to the early twenty-first century. The modern period was selected due to significant developments and transformations of the region's book culture in this period. By the colonial period, the Kano Province was the richest in northern Nigeria. Its affluence and strategic location enabled it to maintain a position as the main entrepot of Islamic, Arabic and Hausa book distribution to Nigeria and the neighbouring West African countries. The selection of Kano does not presuppose that the discussion revolves exclusively around the city. Where necessary, the dissertation illuminates the connection between the city and other areas.

Recently there has been a growing concern among book historians on using geographical categories in the discipline. This concern relates to the difficult negotiation of geographical

boundaries in the interests of pursuing international connections.[2] James Raven underscores the need to interrogate the book as an international commodity that circulates beyond and between geopolitical boundaries.[3] There is always the need to balance local or geographically defined interests and the exigencies of the book trade's transnational character. By their very nature, books defy any limitation imposed on them by space and time.

A primary question arising from my engagement with the literature and fieldwork is the following: what were the significant transformations in the history of the Kano book trade since the colonial period? For example, how did colonial policies affect commerce in books? What were the significant trajectories of the KBM since then? Addressing these questions would give an insight into the long history of the production and distribution of texts in Nigeria.

Some questions also arise from the primary problem. What was the internal structure of the book trade? How were the books produced and distributed within Kano and beyond? The latter question underscores the social life of the text. In other words, how did a text become social? In addition to being a material object, the book is rooted in social relationships among different people. It is both the product of one complex set of social and technological processes and the starting point for another.[4] As McKenzie reminds us: "The book as (a) physical object put together by craftsmen — as we all know — is in fact alive with human judgment of its makers."[5] The author, the publisher,

[2] See Jason McElligott and Eve Patten, "The Perils of Print Culture: An Introduction," in Jason McElligott and Eve Patten (eds.) *The Perils of Print Culture*: *Book, Print and Publishing History in Theory and Practice*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 9

[3] James Raven, "Selling Books across Europe c. 1450–1800," *Publishing History* 34, (1993), 6, cited in McElligott and Patten (eds.) *The Perils of Print Culture*, 10

[4] Adrian Johns. *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making.* (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1998), 3

[5] Donald Francis McKenzie, "The Sociology of a Text: Orality, Literacy and Print in Early New Zealand" in David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (eds.), *the Book History Reader*. (London: Routledge, 2006), 205 – 206

the transporter, the bookseller, and even the reader collectively shape book production and distribution.

Closely related to the above set of questions is the external structure of the trade, particularly in Islamic books. Kano has been a centre of the trans-Saharan trade for centuries. Some of the commodities were manuscripts and writing paper. In the twentieth century, Islamic books were imported from North Africa, especially Egypt and even from the Middle East and Europe. The external dimension presents another set of questions. What were the external sources of the books in the twentieth century? From which countries were these books imported? Who were the book distributors and from which countries were patrons of the KBM and why? Empirical data has shown that from the 1990s, Islamic books were predominantly imported from Egypt. In the past, Beirut was the favourite destination of the booksellers' import. What shaped the changes both in the import and export countries?

This research is based on the analysis of primary and secondary data. The primary sources were drawn from libraries, archives of northern Nigeria and primary records in the personal collections of Kano-based authors and booksellers. Printed Arabic books have also been used as primary sources of data. I examined them to source data on their printers, authors and physical features. The data described above have been complemented by oral testimonies from authors, printers, booksellers, and lithographers primarily based in Kano. Annual and other miscellaneous reports by the institutions under the Kano State and Federal Government of Nigeria have also constituted an essential data component. These government agencies include the Federal Bureau of Statistics, the Nigerian Port Authority, the Federal Ministry of Transport, the Kano State Ministries of Trade, Budget, Planning and Information, and the Economic Development Directorate. I obtained secondary sources from libraries in Nigeria, Cape Town and Germany.

I derived inspiration for writing this dissertation mainly from engagement with the scholarship on book history. Book trade studies constitute an integral part of book history, but this receives little attention in African scholarship. Although African historians have relied on both manuscripts and printed books to reconstruct the past, they overlooked the histories of the book as a material object. Moreover, scholars across disciplines were only concerned with the texts' meanings over the centuries, but the meanings are only possible and accessible to the reader because of their materiality. As Roger Chartier puts it, the book cannot exist when it is stripped from "the physical support that offers it for reading."[6] Thus the need to recognise the book's materiality by looking at it as a material object whose history is informed by complex but well-coordinated social interactions among many actors central to its production and distribution.

There is a growing interest among scholars of different disciplines in manuscripts and printed books: the discipline of "book history" is now well-established for parts of the globe. At least since the publication of Eisenstein's work, scholars, more than before, began to recognise the central role of the printing revolution in the history of Europe.[7] Her thorough, sometimes combative but often entertaining arguments on the crucial contribution of the printing press in shaping the significant developments in Europe from the Reformation to the Scientific Revolution received both critical and positive reviews.[8] Perhaps her publication's most enduring result was creating interest not only in print culture but the entire history of written communication centred on the

[6] See Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books*. (California: Stanford University Press, 1992), 9

[7] Elizabeth Lewisohn Eisenstein, *the Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979) An abridged version of this work was published in 1983 with the title: *Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1983)

[8] Many scholars have argued that she exaggerated the role of the printing revolution by attributing the Renaissance, Reformation, Counter Reformation and Scientific Revolution to the role of the printing. It has been argued, for example that the early printing provided mostly inaccurate and narrowly focused knowledge. See for example, Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

production and circulation of books. Initially, the new paradigm shift was only dominant in Western literature. However, scholars working on parts of Asia, and recently Africa, have worked in the field. This brief introduction elaborates in greater detail the connection between this study and the discipline of book history.

Historiographical Background: Book History in Western and African Scholarship

"*Histoire du livre*" in French or its English version: "history of books" or "of the book" is now an established sub-discipline in historical studies. According to Robert Darnton, "it might even be called the social and cultural history of communication by print because its main purpose is to understand the transmission of ideas through print and ultimately how exposure to the printed word affected the thought and behaviour of mankind in the last five hundred years." Darnton rightly predicted that the new discipline would win a unique space alongside prominent fields of study, such as art history and history of science.[9] The term history of the book was adapted and half translated from French; the phrase originated from the title of a work (*L'Apparition du Livre* or *the Coming of the Book*) written by Lucien Febvre and H. J. Martin in 1958, but the origin of the discipline can be traced further back.

The history of the book has a historical pedigree. It is connected to disciplines such as bibliography, literary studies as well as social and economic history. The discipline's origin can be dated back to the Renaissance when the Europeans became interested in studying texts, and the ancient classics were revived. A testimony to the prestigious position books held since the Renaissance can be seen

[9] Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982), 65

from the impressive collection amassed by the Church and individuals, and such texts served the function of being both aesthetic objects and carriers of human knowledge and past civilisations.[10]

Significant development of the discipline occurred in the nineteenth century. The study of the book as a material object, otherwise known as analytical bibliography or new bibliography, began in England.[11] Previously, the discipline, concerned with the text, only analysed books' content without considering their material aspects. Analytical bibliography was consolidated in the first half of the twentieth century through R. McKerrow, W.W. Greg and Fredson Bowers. They introduced a new methodology in the discipline of bibliography, which called for critical observation of paper, ink and printing methods to distinguish authentic from fake texts. This paradigm shift became necessary because of the emergence of falsely attributed texts to past writers. By the 1950s, the new discipline was well-established in English departments in Britain and the United States.[12]

In the 1960s, Cambridge-educated New Zealand-based scholar, McKenzie, came up with the "sociology of the text," departing radically from the new bibliographers' position. He argues that emphasising the text's materiality without considering its human and social influences was not enough. McKenzie further argues that meanings are not produced by the author but rather by the successive interpretive acts of the author, publisher, printer and (even to a large extent) buyers and readers of books. Thus meaning should not be given a restrictive definition. Similarly, the text would assume a new role when transported to a different social context. Thus McKenzie sees text,

[10] David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, *An Introduction to Book* History, (London: Routledge, 2005), 8

[11] Darnton "What is the History of Books?" 65

[12] Another concern of the new bibliographers was to seek for the original textual or authorial meaning. In this regard, Bowers discouraged the use of the last edition of the text which must have undergone new changes and which keep the text away from the original authorial intention.

not as the author's product but rather the result of collaborative processes calling for a method of analysis that incorporated attention to the material object and its production and reception rather than solely its content.[13]

In the 1960s, the new discipline further developed, especially in France, through Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's publication. These new book historians studied the new field using the methodology of the Annales School. They tried to discover the general processes of book production and consumption over a long period. Their main focus was on studying ordinary books instead of rare and fine editions to discover the ordinary readers' literary experience. This endeavour spread throughout Europe and the United States. Conferences were organised, and new journals dedicated to the book history began to emerge. New centres, such as the *Institut d'Etude du Livre* in Paris and the Centre for the Book in the Library of Congress, were founded. In the 1970s, special colloquia dedicated to the new discipline took place in cities such as Geneva, Paris, Boston, Worcester, Athens, to name just a few. Within two decades, book history developed into an independent field of study.[14]

In the early 1980s, there was an upsurge of many journals, conferences and studies dedicated to the book studies. This development raised concern among scholars. There was no clear-cut methodology or model used as the approach to the study of the book. This lacuna accounted for the intervention of American cultural historian, Darnton, who specialised in eighteenth-century France. He came up with a model, which he called the "communications circuit." Darnton and Chartier incorporated McKenzie's contribution to book history methodology. The model proposed

[13] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 11
[14] Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" 65 – 66

by Darnton was, in 1993, expanded by two British historians, Thomas R. Adams and Nicholas Barker. Their new model emphasised the bio-bibliographic dimension.[15]

Like many other evolving disciplines, book history has its centre of scholarship in the Western world with its journals, conferences and monographs. Conversely, in the South, only a few scholars ventured into the field. When looked at more broadly, the history of the book, as once described by Darnton, was chaotic as it was — and to a large extent still is — inundated with experts from varieties of academic backgrounds aspiring to venture into the world of the book. Somewhere along the line, the discipline has incorporated specialists in manuscript studies into its fold.

As typical of the global epistemologies, book history's blaze trailers studied the book in Western societies. In terms of periodisation, the starting point is mainly the mid-fifteenth century, with the printing revolution in Europe. Orientalists and other scholars specialising in Islamic manuscripts and print cultures increasingly identify themselves with the discipline at its fringes. Starting with the seminal work of Johann Pederson, translated in 1984, titled *The Arabic Book*, Islamicists are increasingly tackling the question of the Muslim manuscript and print cultures. Alas! The bulk of the energy in this endeavour focuses on the Middle East (seen broadly encompassing North Africa) and India. Sub-Saharan Africa receives little attention as of yet.

Although a body of literature is available on sub-Saharan book cultures, most of it focuses on the manuscript traditions of the region. A significant milestone in textual studies in Africa and cognate disciplines such as codicology, epigraphy, and palaeography had occurred in the colonial period. European scholars became interested in studying African manuscripts in the early colonial period.

[15] In a 2007 article, Darnton had revisited his 1982 essay and reviewed the works of the two English historians. He accepted some of their observations while reiterating most of his positions. See Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" Revisited" *Modern Intellectual History*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2007), 495 – 508

This interest resulted in various projects aimed at preserving and documenting the rich manuscript collections in Africa. In West Africa, the main interest initially was on calligraphy, decorations, cataloguing and binding. The scope later widened to include studies on paper, ink and even book or book trade.

One of the first articles in the European scholarship was an essay written on *Shaykh* Sidiyya's family library written by the French scholar Louis Massignon in 1909, whose data was primarily collected by the French Resident Commissioner of Boutilimit, Henri Gaden.[16] Massignon's inventory consisted of 1195 titles (683 printed and 512 manuscript works). The works were classified based on subjects with the Prophet's traditions having 98 printed and 83 manuscript titles, followed by Maliki Law (72 and 95); and Mysticism (58 and 64). Based on the data he collected, his major conclusion was that even in the middle of the Sahara, a library of a *Shaykh* could contain more printed works than the manuscripts.[17] Massignon had created a promising study area focusing on trans-Saharan manuscript heritage and its importance in studying West African history. There was increasing interest among scholars in the trans-Saharan manuscript study in the following years, which has become an essential branch of African book history.

The library collection of the *Shaykh* Sidiyya later attracted the scholarly attention of French academics. The new custodians of the library after the death of Sidiyya Baba in 1924 were his two younger brothers, Ahmed and Abdullahi. It was the latter who, in 1934, showed the library collection to two French women, Odette du Puigaudeau and Marion Sénones. They made several

[16] Louis Massignon. "Une Bibliothèque saharienne," *Revue du Monde Musulman* 8, no. 7–8 (Juillet-Août 1909), 409 – 18, cited in Graziano Krätli, "Camel to Kilobytes: Preserving the Cultural Heritage of the Trans-Saharan Book Trade" in Graziano Krätli, and Ghislaine Lydon, *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa.* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 322
[17] *Ibid.*, 320 – 322

trips between the 1930s and 1960s to Boutilimit. They conducted an ethnographic study of the town, documenting different aspects of Moorish life, including leather works in book production.

By far, the most outstanding research on the manuscripts of the library was conducted by an American scholar, Charles C. Stewart, who arrived in Boutilimit on April 4, 1968, with an official letter from the *Direction des Affaires Cuturelles* in Nouakchott, authorising him to research the life of *Shaykh* Sidiyya al-Kabir as the topic of his doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford. The then custodian of Sidiyya's Family Library was greatly helpful to the young American scholar. One of his most significant contributions was the recording of Sidiyya's book-buying trip to Morocco. The work of Stewart, published in 1973, titled *Islam and Social Order in Mauritania: A Case Study of the Nineteenth Century*, while not the focus of his work at all, did offer some insight into the nature of the book and book trade in Mauritania in the nineteenth century.[18]

The Arabic Manuscript Management System (AMMS) database, which began in 1987 and expanded in the 1990s, has given researchers access to manuscript titles held in West African collections.[19] It gave a new impetus to the study of the Arabic manuscripts of West Africa. Some scholars have used the AMMS to analyse the West African curriculum and book market in the previous centuries.[20] In the new millennium, three substantial volumes have examined aspects of

[18] Charles C. Stewart, *Islam and Social Order in Mauritania: A Case Study from the Nineteenth Century.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973)

[19] For more information on the creation of the AMMS, see Charles C. Stewart, "A West African Arabic Manuscript Database" in Shamil Jeppie and Souleyman Bachir Diagne (eds.), *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, (Cape Town: HSRC Press), 321 – 332

[20] For example, Stewart and Hall have used the database to analyse the core curriculum and book market in West Africa. See Bruce S. Hall and Charles C. Stewart, "The Historic "Core Curriculum" and the Book Market in Islamic West Africa" in Krätli, and Lydon (eds.), *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade*, 109 – 174

sub-Saharan manuscript traditions and history focusing on both "embodied" and "embedded" knowledge contained in the manuscripts.[21]

Narrowing the focus to Nigeria, several works have documented different aspects of manuscript and print cultures. The focus is sometimes on the whole of Nigeria, the northern region or specifically on Kano. In 1993, articles on different aspects of book production and distribution in Nigeria were compiled into conference proceedings, titled *Culture and Book Industry in Nigeria*.[22] The collection was a product of a conference organised in 1983 by the National Council for Arts and Culture. The book provides general background on the Nigerian book industry.

Two chapters of this collection focus on northern Nigeria. The chapters shed light on manuscript productions in the pre-colonial period. The Sokoto Jihad gave an impetus to the nineteenth and twentieth-century book trade in northern Nigeria and beyond. The books authored by the Sokoto Jihadists were found in different West African libraries, suggesting that such books were sold or copied in the Sokoto Caliphate and other areas of West Africa. Other areas tackled in the remaining chapters include book publishing, book distribution, library development in Nigeria, reading habits, academic publishing, printing, and the problems militating against the growth of the publishing industry. These are issues that directly affect booksellers generally in Nigeria. The book, therefore, provides a general overview of the Nigerian book industry.

The chapter of Murray Last in *the Meanings of Timbuktu* examines the manuscript book market in pre-colonial northern Nigeria. Last argues that paper was extensively used in writing secular

[21] Shamil Jeppie and Souleyman Bachir Diagne (eds.), *The Meanings of Timbuktu*; Graziano Krätli, and Ghislaine Lydon, *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade*; Andrea Brigaglia and Mauro Nobili (eds.) *The Arts and Crafts of Literacy* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017)
[22] Sule Bello and Abdullahi Augi (eds.), *Culture and Book Industry in Nigeria*. (Lagos: National Council for Arts and Culture, 1993)

subjects in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; this suggests its availability in large quantities and increased manuscript production. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, book owners restricted book copying by preventing strangers from copying texts in their possession. Conversely, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, scholars began to write original works due to book scarcity in many areas of West Africa. Last's article offers an insight into the nature of the book trade in pre-colonial northern Nigeria. The chapter also highlights the copying industry in the Sokoto Caliphate.

Narrowing the scope further to Kano, one of the early works which briefly describes the colonial and immediate post-colonial KBM, albeit only in a few paragraphs, is the memoir of Alhaji Mahmudu Koki titled *Alhaji Mahmudu Koki*: *The Kano Malam*.[23] The book edited by Neil Skinner, who interviewed Koki intermittently for several years, accounts for Koki's personal experiences, especially his service under various colonial officials in Kano. According to Koki, the book market had not fully developed in the colonial period as there were few booksellers, and most of the books were in manuscript form. The paper sold in the Kurmi Market was of different qualities as there was the one that absorbed ink.[24] Such paper was cheap and considered of low quality. According to Koki, the few printed books available in the market were obtained principally from Egypt.

The only other work examining the Kano book trade is a Master's thesis in Arabic that examines the Islamic booksellers' contribution to Islamic education and culture.[25] Specifically, the thesis explores the bookselling section of Kurmi Market. Its focus, therefore, is minimal. Moreover, a

[23] Mahmud Koki, *Alhaji Mahmudu Koki: Kano Malam,* Neil Skinner (ed.) (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1977)
[24] For the history of the Kurmi market, see chapter four.
[25] Aliyu Garba Shirawa, *Al-Kitāb al-Islamī: Aswāquhu wa atharuhā fī nashri al-thaqāfat al-Islāmiyya fī madīnati Kano (sūq Kurmi anmūdhajan)*. (MA Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 2013)

substantial part of the dissertation did nothing more than provide biographies of the booksellers to the detriment of the book trade itself. However, the materials presented shed light on the growth of the bookselling section of the Kurmi Market.

On printing in Kano, Rasheed Oyewole Olaniyi's thesis, "Yoruba Enterprise in Kano Metropolis: A Case Study of the Printing Industry 1943 – 1983," gives an account of the evolution and development of the Yoruba printing enterprises in Kano.[26] The thesis gives interesting insights into the emergence and development of the Kano printing industry. Printing is an indispensable component of book production. The Yoruba-owned presses were the first private enterprises to be set up in Kano; authors and booksellers primarily relied on them from the 1950s to print their works. Olaniyi's work, therefore, provides a background to the history of printing in Kano. Although the Kano booksellers still patronise the Yoruba presses, publishing companies established by the Hausa printers are becoming more popular and more ambitious in securing their fair share of the KBM. The Yorubas, on the other hand, by their pioneering role and their long period of experience in the business, are still active in printing and technical services for the Hausa-owned presses.

It is evident from the above that no substantive academic study exists on the KBM. This lacuna informs the need for this research. Despite the central role of Kano in the diffusion of Islamic and Hausa books in West and Central Africa, surprisingly, no serious research was conducted to document this role. This dissertation's intervention is mainly in three areas that the extant literature has not explored. Firstly, it unpacks the internal dynamics of the Islamic Book Market. In this case, the connectivity among different agents has been foregrounded. The focus here is not limited to

[26] Olaniyi Rasheed Oyewole, "Yoruba Entrepreneurs in Kano Metropolis: A Case Study of the Printing Industry 1943 – 1983." (M.A. Thesis, Bayero University, Kano, 1998)

booksellers. Instead, the roles of other actors (printers, publishers, lithographers and paper sellers) central to book production have been uncovered.

Secondly, Kano's pivotal position as an international entrepot of Islamic book distribution within Central and West Africa has been documented. This intervention is chiefly meant to complement the existing body of knowledge on Arab printing. The existing literature focuses mainly on the Arabic printing and publishing industry in the Middle East without mentioning sub-Saharan Africa, where many of these books are purchased. Thirdly, the dissertation documents the trajectory of the Hausa fiction market. This intervention is another area that has little or no attention from specialists in the field.

Conceptual Approach

The approach of this work is primarily inspired by the field of book history. The history of the book is not a fixed discipline. It has been interdisciplinary from its inception, incorporating scholars from a diverse background into its fold ranging from experts in the bibliography, history to literary studies and sociology. There is no consensus among scholars on the demarcation of book history. However, the discipline's classics such as Elizabeth Eisenstein's contributions and those of Darnton, Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin have impacted thematically and conceptually on the discipline's discourses. Inspired by these foundational texts, subsequent works of the discipline have focused on themes including, but not limited to, the manuscript and print cultures as well as their intersections, national book histories, book geography, 'communications circuit' and components of the book cycle ranging from authorship, printing, bookselling and reading. A scholar cannot cover all the components of the discipline in a single study. Consequently, many experts carve out specific areas within its broader thematic spectrum.

Therefore, this study focuses on the KBM while deriving inspiration methodologically and theoretically from the discipline's three main discourses. The first is the Darntonian "communications circuit." Darnton proposes a general model for analysing how books made their way into society.[27] Printed books pass through a life cycle, with variations when contextualised as the individual book's biography would not conform to the same pattern. This cycle can be described as the 'communications circuit' that runs from the author to the publisher, the printer, the shipper, the bookseller and the reader.[28]

The Darntonian model, with its focus on the printed book, has been chosen because the periods covered in this study were colonial and post-colonial Kano when printed books became more widely available. The British colonialists were the first to set up printing presses in Nigeria. Although this study's primary focus is book trade in Kano, the other events and individuals in the book's life cycle are central to understanding the subject matter. As Darnton correctly pointed out, to keep their task within manageable proportion, book historians generally study one segment of the "communications circuit" and analyse it according to the principles of a single discipline. However, the parts cannot take their significance unless they are related to the whole, and a holistic approach has to be adopted in the study of the book to "avoid being fragmented into esoteric specialisations, cut off from each other by arcane techniques and mutual misunderstanding."[29]

Although the model is helpful as a basis for conceptualising the book market as a component of the book cycle, the dissertation underscores its deficiency when applied to the study's context on two grounds. Firstly, the KBM has defied any form of linearity due to its complexity and fluidity. It is impossible to locate specific functions to particular agents. The bookselling role, for example,

[27] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 12
[28] Darnton, "What is the History of Books?", 67
[29] *Ibid.*, 67

operates within several spaces in the Kano book cycle. Secondly, it is more useful to talk of a social network, borrowing from Alison Rukavina, than rely on specific agents to explain the working of the book market. As the Islamic Book Market's external circuit indicates, various actors play varying roles.

The second discourse has to do with marking out the geography of the book market. *The Coming of the Book* was the first to use this approach to study the printing centres of Europe.[30] The work mapped out the printing industry's geography in early modern Europe and how it expanded over time. This approach was taken up by Fiona A Black et al. by proposing the deployment of Geographic Information System (GIS) in the study of the book.[31] Following Febvre and Henri-Jean, this dissertation explores the genealogy of the geographical spaces of the KBM, emphasising how the colonial spatial distribution of Kano impacted the KBM.

The third discourse is centred on using the social network model proposed by Alison Rukavina. Inspired mainly by Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome as "an access point," Rukavina developed a new model for studying the nineteenth-century transnational book trade connecting Britain with her colonies.[32] The social network framework is a decentred system with three principal components: connection, multiplicity, and rupture. It is "an organic and fluid model that can illustrate the complexity of connections and social acts"[33] that link agents within the network and cause it to develop, contract, and split.[34] It is better to consider the social network as a conceptual

[30]Lucien Febvre, and Henri-Jean Martin, *the Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450 – 1800*, Translated by David Gerard. (London and New York: Verso, 1997)
[31] See Fiona A. Black, Bertrum H. MacDonald and J. Malcolm W. Black, "Geographic Information Systems: A New Research Method for Book History" *Book History*, vol. I (1998), 11 – 31
[32] Alison Rukavina, *The Development of the International Book Trade, 1870–1895*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 25
[33] *Ibid*., 11
[34] *Ibid*., 11

framework or a way of thinking instead of a physical model like the Darntonian "communications circuit."

The story of the international Islamic book trade of Kano exemplifies Rukavina's conceptual model. It started with the connection between the Kano-based booksellers and publishers in Egypt from the 1950s and went through multiplicity when more connections were forged with Lebanese and Tunisian suppliers. By the 1990s, when most of these pioneers died, their businesses witnessed a sort of rupture. Partly for their inheritance of economic capital from their family and partly through their effort, several successors of the deceased pioneers established their independent business ventures, thus setting up new connections for their business and starting up the cycle again. Thus the social network, once broken, can start up again

Although Western models have been borrowed and applied to this study, such application is not blind. The study underscores the contextual uniqueness of the study area, indicating where such models could not fit the study context. The theoretical tools only helped the research consider several possibilities of analysing the empirical data collected from the field while allowing the sources to dictate the research direction.

Historical Background: The World of the Book and History of the Book Market

The development of manuscript books in sub-Saharan Africa is linked to Islamic tradition. Islam was well established in the region from the eleventh century through the Muslim traders' regular activities.[35] One can suggest that the emergence and development of the Muslim communities in

[35] Ibn Hawqal reports that the capital of Ghana had Muslim neighbourhoods in the eleventh century. Similarly, in the West of Ghana, "the king of *Takrur* was said to have converted to Islam in 1040 AD. The King of Songhay was also a Muslim when in 1009 he moved his capital from Kukya to Gao. The Kingdom of Kanem also adopted Islam in 1085. See Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*. (London: Longman, 1984)

Africa, south of the Sahara, attracted the demand for Islamic manuscripts, whether imported or copied locally by the growing literates and numerates in the region. Thus important commerce that became closely linked to the book trade was the paper trade. The trans-Saharan trade through which Islam was introduced into sub-Saharan Africa also served as the primary avenue for securing books and paper.

Although copies of the Qur'ān and classical texts were in circulation, no written record described the nature of the trans-Saharan book trade between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. In the early 1500s, when Leo Africanus (b. 1494 – d. 1554) visited Timbuktu, he declared that: "many book manuscripts coming from Berberie (North Africa) are sold." This information was contrasted by his account of the dearth of books for sale in the Market of Marrakech. In the same sixteenth century, the king of Songhay, Askiya Dawud (d. 1583), was said to have purchased *Qamus al-Muhit* for 80 pieces of pure gold. It is evident from the above cases that books were costly in sixteenth-century West Africa.[36]

Following the manuscripts' exorbitant price, the scholars began to copy manuscript books by relying on the massive importation of paper in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Paper was not produced in sub-Saharan Africa due to the lack of flax and scarcity of linen rags.[37] Copying was by far cheaper than buying a book. For example, in Timbuktu, a copyist was only given a *Mithqal* for copying a volume when he was supplied with the paper he required in his work. In contrast, the proofreader got half a *Mithqal* per volume by the 1570s.[38] Murray Last argues that

[36] See Ghislaine Lydon, "A Thirst for Knowledge: Arabic Literacy, Writing Paper and Saharan Bibliophiles in the Southwestern Sahara," in Krätli and Lydon, (eds.) *The Trans Saharan Book Trade*, 58 – 59

[37] See Murray Last "The Book in the Sokoto Caliphate" in Jeppie and Diagne, (eds.) *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, 142

[38] See Elias N. Saad, *Social History of Timbuktu.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1983), 80, cited in Murray Last "The Book in the Sokoto Caliphate" in Jeppie and Diagne, (eds.) *The Meanings of Timbuktu*,

even in Borno (one of the most prominent states in pre-colonial northern Nigeria located in eastern Hausaland), there was evidence to suggest that paper was used in bulk around the same period since secular texts were written on the administration of Mai Idris Alooma. It is important to note that paper was only utilised in writing secular subjects in the Muslim communities of pre-colonial West Africa when it was in abundance. Otherwise, it was only used to record religious texts. Even in Timbuktu, texts that discussed temporal subjects were written around the same time, such as *Tārīkh* al-*Sūdān* and *Tārīkh al-fattāsh*.[39]

One of the central West African sources of paper in the seventeenth century was Egypt due to its strategic location along the Muslim Holy land routes. In 1635, a Venetian merchant reported that Sanzo Sequezzi narrated how gold brought from Western Sudan was exchanged for "silk stuff from Italy, coral, paper, lead, copper, tin and quicksilver." Similarly, around this time, writing paper was found among the goods kept under the custody of a Cairene merchant belonging to a West African pilgrim while travelling to Mecca for pilgrimage. Considering the type of paper available in the Egyptian Market, one can argue that they were of Venetian or Genoese provenance watermarked with crowns, stars and crescents.[40]

Another important centre of West African paper sources in the seventeenth century was Tripoli, a Euro-African exchange centre. In 1636, Muhammad Saqizli, the Ottoman Governor of Tripoli,

143. A *mithqāl* was a unit of weight, equivalent to a little over three and a half grams used in measuring silver or gold.

[39] Last "The Book in the Sokoto Caliphate", 143. It is important to note that several scholars have pointed out that *Tārīkh al-fattāsh* is a nineteenth century pastiche of a sixteenth century chronicle with the same title. According to Mauro Nobili and Mohamed Shahid Mathee, the 1913 edition of *Tārīkh al-fattāsh* by Houdas and Delafosse is a literary pastiche that conflates two different chronichles: one dating to seventeenth century and the other written in the nineteenth century but apocryphally ascribed to a sixteenth century scholar, Maḥmūd Ka'ti. See Mauro Nobili and Mohamed Shahid Mathee, "Towards a New Study of the So-Called *Tārīkh al-fattāsh*" *History in Africa*, 42 (2015), 40

[40] Terence Walz, "The Paper Trade of Egypt and the Sudan in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries and its Re-Export to the Bilad al-Sudan" in Krätli and Lydon, (eds.) *The Trans Saharan Book Trade*, 97

wrote to the "prince" of Fezzan and Mai Umar bin Idris, the ruler of Borno, offering to supply large quantities of paper, copper, cloth and other goods. At this period, the Market of Tripoli was dominated by Italian paper. French consul, Le Maire, reported that the trade between Fezzan and Borno in glass, beads, bracelets, cloth, paper, copper and copper sheets was mostly from Venice at the end of the seventeenth century.[41]

Last argues that *de facto* restrictions were probably imposed on borrowing books for copying to strangers by the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century. This partial monopoly led to the distortion in the book market. This can explain the uneven nature of book distribution in West Africa. The bibliophiles had probably restricted lending their books to strangers for fear of losing them. [42] Despite these restrictions, copying continued to be the most dominant means of acquiring books. Paper continued to be a very precious material among the *ulama*. Italy maintained its position as the primary source of paper in nineteenth-century West Africa. A British report on the trade of Tripoli in 1767 listed among imports from Venice "paper stamped with three moons (800 reams), writing paper (200 reams), outside quire (300 reams)."[43]

The nineteenth century was a significant turning point in the history of book production and trade. There was an unprecedented upsurge in the original text production to meet the growing demand for books, especially in the main centres of the jihad movements. The nineteenth century was a period of various Islamic reform movements in West Africa, which established Islamic states in Sokoto, Macina, and Futa Jallon. These areas recorded high demand for Islamic books. They also served as primary centres of literary production. In the Sokoto Caliphate, the three leading scholars (Uthman Danfodio, Abdullahi Gwandu and Muhammad Bello) wrote over 300 prose works, and

[41] *Ibid.*, 98
[42] Last, "The Book in the Sokoto Caliphate," 143
[43] Walz, "The Paper Trade of Egypt and the Sudan," 98

one of their contemporaries, Abdulkadir Mustapha, was credited with the authorship of about 48 works.[44] Most of these writings were in Arabic.

In the same period, printed texts became increasingly popular in West Africa, and the book trade was further enhanced by the emergence of very ambitious bibliophiles and booksellers who engaged in book-buying trips to the Maghreb and brought many books back to West Africa to satisfy local demands. In 1826, Muhammad Bello had received a gift of some printed books from Clapperton. In the 1870s, when the Moroccan booksellers embraced lithographic technology, the printed books circulated in West Africa. Hence, from the end of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, some West African book merchants took advantage of the growing printed book market of North Africa to make fortunes in their profession. An example of such booksellers was Ahmad Bul'araf. He was born in 1864 in the town of Guelmim, the largest town in the Wad Nun.[45]

Bul'araf probably relocated to Timbuktu in the early 1900s. He emerged as one of the most popular booksellers and bibliophiles of the town in the twentieth century. Bula'raf, an author of many books, became the most active book merchant of the town, specialising in producing and importing manuscripts and printed books.[46] He is credited with writing a biographical dictionary, which recorded 477 past and contemporary scholars of Takrur, Sahara and Shinqit. He also sent his copyists to various areas of Timbuktu to copy texts for him. He was even called upon from areas very far from Timbuktu to record their local histories; one of such areas was Niamey. In every respectable West African library, one would find Bul'araf's manuscripts.[47] He corresponded with

[44] See Last "The Book in the Sokoto Caliphate," 144
[45] Lydon "A Thirst for Knowledge" 63 – 64
[46] *Ibid*., 66
[47] See Shamil Jeppie, "History for Timbuktu: Ahmad Bul'araf, Archives and Place of the Past" *History in Africa*, vol. 38, (2011), 401 – 416

scholars in Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and other areas to locate various manuscripts.[48] An inventory taken by Bul'araf in 1945 indicated that he had 2076 manuscripts and 6039 printed books.[49] He died in 1955, leaving behind his extensive collection of books and manuscripts, which decreased over the years.

The nineteenth-century manuscript tradition in West Africa continued into the twentieth century when colonial rule was instituted in most West African states. Colonialism had resulted in two fundamental changes. It disrupted the previous trans-Saharan trade routes, shifting from overland to shipping routes. The new focus was less on intra-African trade than on extracting resources. The newly created boundaries made the intra-African movement very difficult.[50] Secondly, the European presence marked the beginning of printing presses, thus paving the way for print culture.

In northern Nigeria, the colonial period began in 1903 after the British subjugated previously independent states in the region. The colonial policies impacted the book culture of the region in many ways. This dissertation's main thrust is to document these legacies and how they shaped book tradition well into the post-colonial period. Particular emphasis, however, is given to the book market, which encapsulates the other components of the book cycle.

The dissertation argues that the modern KBM is linked to the colonial educational policy of creating two new reading publics in colonial Nigeria. One had a background mainly in secular subjects and the other in Islamic sciences. The former occupied administrative positions in the colonial civil service while the latter served as Arabic/Islamic studies teachers and judges in

[48] Lydon, "A Thirst for Knowledge," 68
[49] Abdel Kader Haïdara, "An Overview of the Major Manuscript Libraries in Timbuktu" in Krätli and Lydon, *The Trans Saharan Book Trade*, 254
[50] See Elizabeth le Roux, "Africa" in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book* 2nd Edition, (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Ltd 2020), 353

Shari'ah courts. In northern Nigeria, this policy necessitated the foundation of printing presses and a regional book market of Hausa and Islamic books to satisfy the demand of the new reading public.

As a reaction, some Islamic scholars based in Kano who were excluded from the above colonial initiative blazed the trail by pioneering an Islamic book trade in the late colonial period to satisfy the demands of literates trained in the local curriculum inherited centuries before colonial domination. Paradoxically, the colonial presses were the vehicle for the mechanical reproduction of Arabic books circulated in the manuscript form in the pre-colonial period. Simultaneously, the colonial infrastructure enabled these trailblazers to start a regional Islamic book trade by importing and printing Islamic books in Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon, especially from the 1970s.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter one provides a general background by exploring the historiographical and historical trajectories of book history. It examines how the discipline evolves through the activities of scholars specializing in analytical bibliography and other fields of study. The main conceptual tools deployed in the thesis have also been highlighted starting with the Danrtonian model of the "communications circuit" and then moving to Rukavina's social network model. The chapter then turns to the history of the manuscript culture in sub-Saharan Africa. The focus here is on the pre-colonial manuscript traditions which influenced the book markets of the colonial period in the twentieth century.

Chapters two, three and four contextualise the KBM by tracing the origin of the various reading publics and setting out the geography of the KBM. Chapter two traces the beginning of the traditional community of readers which evolved in the pre-colonial period after the introduction

of Islam in Hausaland. This community developed a rich manuscript culture. The chapter examined how the introduction of colonial administration impacted this manuscript tradition by introducing printing presses which enabled the members of the community to print their works. The colonial rule also introduced a surveillance system to check the production of seditious texts that were capable of undermining British Rule.

Chapter three examines the evolution of the modern community of readers in northern Nigeria, underscoring how the colonial officers created the new community and worked hard to ensure its sustainability. This effort was accomplished by establishing schools modelled after the British system. The graduates of these colonial schools integrated into the new reading public. The colonial government ensured a continuous supply of reading materials to the community which constituted the future consumers of English books and Romanised Hausa literature.

Chapter four accounts for the oldest market in Kano, the Kurmi Market, founded in the fifteenth century. It was a market for general goods, including paper and manuscripts, throughout the pre-colonial period. The British administration introduced the dual city project in the colonial period with the old walled city populated mainly by the Hausa and the Fulani while the township was occupied by Europeans, Syrians, and Nigerian migrant communities. The two cities became centres for different book markets.

In the late colonial period, the Kurmi Market emerged as the leading centre for buying and selling printed Arabic and Islamic books. The sprawling nature of Kano necessitated the emergence of other small-scale markets located mainly within the walled city. Thus the Islamic book trade formed a concentric circle with Kurmi Market serving as the centre while the other smaller book markets constituting the periphery. Although the sub-units relied on the centre for their supply, they carved out their specialisations by dealing in old books. They, therefore, operated almost on

an autonomous basis in their speciality. The township, on the other hand, became the main diffusion centre for Hausa and English literature.

Three chapters of the dissertation document the role played by the Kano-Islamic booksellers. Chapters five and six examine the roles of the pioneers in the Islamic book trade and those of their successors in organising a book market dependent on local presses within Kano. Deriving inspiration from the "communications circuit," the two chapters consider the book market not as self-sufficient but rather as a heteronomous entity relying on other actors that operate outside the market boundaries, such as printers, lithographers, paper sellers and others. The chapters foreground the book market as the centre and rallying point of the book cycle, thus deviating, in a way, from the Darntonian model,

Chapter seven also deals with the pioneers of the modern Islamic Book Market and their successors. However, this time around, the focus is on their role in the transnational book trade. This intervention intends to supplement the extant literature on book history focusing on the Arab world. Arabic printing and the massive production of Islamic books in the Middle East have been given considerable attention.[51] However, this historiography is silent on the global Islamic book trade between the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa.

The last chapter (chapter eight) revisits the colonial legacy of creating the new reading public by examining how this patrimony fared in post-colonial northern Nigeria, again spotlighting Kano as a diffusion centre. The starting point is the foundation of the colonial market for vernacular

[51] See for example, Ami Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution: Cultural Production and Mass Readership*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Kathryn Anne Schwartz "Meaningful Mediums: A Material and Intellectual History of Manuscript and Print Production in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Cairo" (PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2015)

literature begun by a passionate colonial educationist of northern Nigeria, Rupert East. Thus the production and distribution of texts were controlled by the colonial state. This legacy continued two decades after independence through two state-owned publishers: Gaskiya Corporation and Northern Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC). The chapter argues that from the 1980s, when the regional government could not satisfy the growing demand for Hausa fiction, the market slipped from state control. It was taken over by young self-published authors, thus leading to the emergence of the KML. As the name indicates, Kano became the diffusion centre for this literature throughout the Hausa speaking areas of West and Central Africa. The rest of the chapter documents the trajectory of the KML, departing significantly from the focus of the existing literature, which primarily documents themes such as writers' club, gender roles and textual analysis.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a general background to the thesis by mapping out the historiographical and historical developments of the book as a material object. The origin of the discipline in the works of the analytical bibliographers and influential scholars of the Annales School of History such as Lucien Febvre has been discussed. The history of the book which started with a modest beginning had blossomed in the second half of the twentieth century into an influential field of study attracting scholars from different backgrounds. This complexity warranted the intervention of a cultural historian, Darnton, who came up with the "communications circuit" as a model for the study of the printed book to check the divergent tendencies among book historians on the discipline's possible methodologies. This model has been deployed in the study of the KBM. Yet, its limitations have been highlighted and adjusted to suit my area of study. The limitation of the Darntonian model necessitated the use of other conceptual tools. In this regard, Rukavina's social network framework was also applied to the study of the KBM.

The chapter has also explored the history of the Islamic manuscript tradition in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in the pre-colonial period. This provided the necessary background for the study of the KBM in the colonial and post-colonial periods. In a nutshell, this chapter served as a general introduction to the thesis. Thus, references to the main discussions of the chapter were made throughout the remaining chapters.

Chapter Two

The Foundation of the Traditional Community of Readers

Introduction

After the introduction of Islam in Hausaland in the fourteenth century, the Muslims of northern Nigeria had, over the years, developed a rich Islamic manuscript tradition that was embedded in their educational system. Over the centuries, the manuscript culture developed through local authorship. This was especially the case during the Jihad movement in the nineteenth century Hausaland when the Jihadists produced a large number of locally authored texts. When printing became predominant in the Middle East in the nineteenth century, manual reproduction of text was still the dominant means of book production in northern Nigeria and the manuscript culture continued up to the post-colonial period although it was dwarfed by the predominance of the print.

By the early twentieth century, the colonial administration was established in northern Nigeria. It is the contention of this chapter that colonialism had two main consequences on the writing tradition of the Hausaland. It resulted in the surveillance of authorship to check subversive texts. A case in point is the over-reaction of the colonial authorities in Kano over a text alleged to be subversive which was wrongly attributed to a Tijani scholar, Malam Muhammadu Salga (b. 1869 – d. 1938). Printing technology was also introduced which had a very limited impact in the early colonial period. As discussed in the subsequent chapters, it took the initiatives of the private presses to create a boom in the production of Arabic and Islamic books by the end of the colonial period.

The Traditional Reading Community[52]

We can trace the origin of the traditional reading community to the introduction of Islam in Hausaland, northern Nigeria, which is a matter of scholarly debate. It is worth noting that it is generally believed that Islam was introduced into Hausaland in the fourteenth century during the reign of King (Sarki) Yaji when itinerant Muslim scholars from present-day Mali came to Kano and converted Yaji to Islam.[53] In the fifteenth century, the reign of Muhammad Rumfa marked a remarkable progress in the development of Islam, a period when a visiting North African scholar, Muhammad al-Maghili, settled in Kano and authored a treatise for administration.[54]

The community was a product of the traditional educational system, modelled after classical Islamic pedagogy.[55] The system in northern Nigeria resembled the pattern of education

[52] By traditional reading community, I am referring to those communities in Hausaland and Borno who inherited Islamic book cultures through contact with Islamic scholars and merchants (at least since the eleventh-century) some of whom settled for some time in the region. Manuscript tradition is central to the intellectual life of the traditional community. Through Qur'ānic school system, the students were trained to copy Qur'ān first on wooden slates and later on paper. This tradition was transmitted from one generation to the other. The culture which hold the community together transcends both colonial and postcolonial states in the region. To be sure, the introduction of printing technology during colonial period had drastically reduced manual reproduction of texts. Works in local calligraphic hands are reproduced mechanically thanks to the availability of the offset lithographic printing technique. Yet the manuscript tradition, which is sustained by the traditional Islamic educational system, is still very much alive.

[53] One of the early works on Islam in Africa is John Spence Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa*, (London and New York: Longman, 1980). The first edition of this book was published in 1968. The main primary sources on the introduction of Islam in Hausaland are two texts, each translated from Arabic by H.R. Palmer and M.A. Al-Hajj: Herbert Richmond Palmer, "Kano Chronicle" in Herbert Richmond Palmer ed. *Sudanese Memoirs*, (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1967) and Muhammad A. Al-Hajj, "A Seventeenth Century Chronicle on the Origins and Missionary Activities of the Wangarawa." *Kano Studies 1, No. 4*. (1968).

[54] On Al-Maghili, see Hassan Ibrahim Gwarzo, "The Life and Teachings of al-Maghili with particular reference to the Saharan Jewish Community" (PhD Dissertation, SOAS, 1972); John Owen Hunwick, *Sharī'a in Songhay: the Replies of al-Maghīlī to the Questions of Askia al-Ḥājj Muḥammad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

[55] For an overview of Qur'ānic education in Northern Nigeria, see Joe McIntyre, "An Overview of Education in Northern Nigeria: Attempted from the Perspective of Qur'ānic Education." *Africa Spectrum*, 17, no. 1 (1982), 21 – 31

in Yemen, as described by Messick.[56] Understanding the traditional reading public requires a background on the evolution of the pre-colonial school system and book authorship.

In Hausaland, The goals of Qur'ānic education differed from those of the Western school. The essential tools used as educational aid were the pen, made out of a piece of wood from a local tree, and ink made from gum Arabic and various ingredients including household waste such as the soot from a cooking pot or an old mat. The writing board was a piece of flat wood, often purchased from the woodcarvers in the market by the pupil's father and kept in the school.[57]

The members of the community could produce literature in two languages — either in Arabic, for those who could understand the language, and for the majority, in Hausa using Arabic script: a system of writing known as the Ajami. Works in both Arabic and Ajami flourished from the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, only a few of such manuscripts survived. The earliest work in Ajami is associated with Abdullahi Suka, dating back to the seventeenth century.[58] Well-known scholars from Katsina, Dan Marina and Dan Masani started composing Arabic and Ajami poetry at about the same time, or not long after.[59] Most of the information we have on the nature of this community in the pre-colonial period is dated back to the nineteenth century, a period of high intellectual output in the Sokoto Caliphate.

From the eighteenth century, the genre of Ajami poetry began to dominate the literary life of the Hausa people. Among the most famous poets of the period were: Muhammad al-Katsinawi,

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[56] See Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society.* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993)

[57] No need to engage with extensive discussion on the school system and the materials used for such writing since other works have examined that aspect in greater detail. For example see, Hassan M. Salah, *Art and Islamic Literacy among the Hausa of Northern Nigeria*, (Lewiston, Maine: Edwin Mellen, 1992); Becca Hirsbrunner, "Sub-Saharan Ajami and *Rubutun Kano* Script in Market Editions," (MA Dissertation, University of Reading, 2015)

[58] Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya, *Hausa a Rubuce: Tarihin Rubuce-Rubuce Cikin Hausa*, (Zaria: NNPC, 1988), 31. This writing titled, *Riwayar Annabi Musa* can be found in Jos manuscript collection.

[59] John Edward Philip, "Hausa in the Twentieth Century," *Sudanic Africa* 15, (2004), 57

Muhammad Birnin Gwari, and Shitu Abdulra'uf. They produced works in both Arabic and Ajami. Malam Shitu's career as an author began when he was eighteen years old. According to the oral tradition collected by Ibrahim Yaro Yahya, Shitu was credited with the production of 200 works. However, it is not clear whether these works survived. Some of his writings include *Fassarar Arshada*, *Wakar Tuba* and *Wakar Wawiya*.[60] The primary preference of readers was on religious texts with varieties of sub-themes such as admonishment, jurisprudence, and Islamic history. Apparently, from the eighteenth century, the readers began to have more interest in poetry. Creative writing was never part of the reading materials of the period.[61]

The nineteenth century was a significant period in the history of the traditional reading community. The reform movement of Uthman Dan Fodio (b. 1754 – d. 1817) facilitated a massive production of literature to varieties of audiences.[62] The Arabic script was used to produce vernacular literature in Hausa and Fulfulde. From the account of his intellectual background, Abdullahi Danfodio had described how he used to borrow books from Dan Fodio, and he would reproduce them longhand after reading to get his copy.[63] Through this process, the religious elites could accumulate an extensive collection. This has demonstrated the predominance of manuscript culture among the traditional community. Thanks to the trans-Saharan trade, writing paper was made available to West Africa, which could be purchased from the merchants that brought it from

[60] Yahaya, *Hausa a Rubuce*, 47

[61] As late as the 1930s, one of the colonial officers had difficulty in convincing some of the emerging northern educated elites, who had a background in the traditional system, to accept the idea of writing novels for entertainment purpose which they considered as immoral.

[62] There are several works on his life and career. For example, see Mervyn Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth: the Life and Times of the Shehu Usuman dan Fodio*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)

[63] Abdullahi Dan Fodio. "Intellectual Background to the Fulani Jihad," in Thomas Lionel Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspective: An Historical Anthology*, (Oxford, Ibadan and Accra: Oxford University Press, 1960), 188 – 190

North Africa. Most of the books available then were in manuscript form. The few printed works were obtained from North Africa through trade or from the explorers.[64]

Based on the tentative estimate of Last, by 1900, about 250,000 books were in private collections, emir's palaces and scholarly households. Last further estimated the existence of "at least 250,000 people literate in Arabic or Ajami with a much larger number who had had some Qur'ānic school experience. Also, there will have been several thousand educated women."[65] The above figures shed light on the size of the community in the pre-colonial period. It is worth noting that throughout the colonial period, and despite creating a new circle of readers by the British, the traditional community was still vast. From colonisation onwards, the two communities began to co-exist under foreign rule.

Colonialism and Re-Shaping of the Traditional Community

The traditional community went through a profound transformation during the colonial period. British rule, which began in northern Nigeria in 1903, had its roots in nineteenth-century southern Nigeria, starting with the annexation of Lagos in 1861. The colonial government monitored the traditional community. The monograph of Muhammad Sani Umar and the MA thesis of Alhaji Bala Sulaiman have underlined the colonial policy of surveillance and monitoring of the colonised. The surveillance was mainly targeted to the traditional community through monitoring of Islam and *ulama*.

[64] For example, Hugh Clapperton brought some printed books to Muhammad Bello, the son of Uthman Danfodio in 1826.
[65] Murray Last, "The Book in the Sokoto Caliphate" in Shamil Jeppie and Souleyman Bachir Diagne (eds.), *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008), 140 – 141

Umar conceptualised the British policies towards Islam in northern Nigeria in three significant orientations: appropriation, containment and surveillance.[66] While maintaining the policy of containment, Lugard, the High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, gave instructions to his subordinate officers to contain Islam by avoiding actions that could facilitate its spread to non-Muslim majority areas, such as Kabba, Benue and Adamawa. In the spirit of this commitment, the colonial administration ensured that the Islamic practices did not promote colonial opposition.[67] The case of Malam Salga, discussed below, is a good example.

The controversy surrounding the encounter between the colonial government and Malam Salga has demonstrated how colonialism profoundly transformed the traditional community. It has also illustrated the desperation of the colonialists to monitor the activities of the community. Salga was the most prominent figure among the followers of the Tijaniyya brotherhood in Kano in the 1920s and 1930s.[68] As an author of a Tijaniyya treatise, *al-Su'āl-wa al-Jawāb*, he became an associate of a Moroccan *Muqaddam*, Sharif Muhammad al-Alami (d. 1969 in Casablanca), who visited Kano in 1923 and renewed Salga's *silsila*. Alami instructed the building of a Zawiya in Koki neighbourhood, entrusting Salga with its leadership. The colonial government was suspicious of the activities of Alami, and they monitored his movement in northern Nigeria.

The whole controversy about Salga in the colonial period was linked to a book purportedly authored by Salga titled *Sabīl al-Muḥtadī*. The colonial government had the impression that it was

[66] Muhammad Sani Umar, *Islam and Colonialism: Intellectual Responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British Colonial Rule*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 26
[67] Umar, *Islam and Colonialism*, 34
[68] There are a number of works on Sufi brotherhoods. See, for example, John Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, (London: Clarendon Press, 1971). On Tijaniyya in particular, see Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); Zachary Valentine Wright, *Realizing Islam: The Tijaniyya in North Africa and Eighteenth Century Muslim World*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020)

capable of igniting an uprising against their rule, as the following account, from colonial files, indicates:

> "When it was finished, it was taken to the Waziri so that a title should be chosen which proved to be "*Sabili al Muhtadi*" in Hausa "*Tafarkin Mai Shiriya*" and in English "The Commencement of the Preparation." The party then went to the emir (I believe this to be 3 months ago) to discuss the possibility of sending this book to be printed in Cairo. In the talk that followed, it was pointed out that the more educated people of Egypt might pour scorn on the possible grammatical errors of the author, and apart from the time taken in sending the script to Cairo, would it not be better to try and get it done locally. This suggestion was adopted, and 100 copies of the book were printed (presumably without the knowledge of the Superintendent, but on this point, I am making enquiries) at the Arts and Craft School near Dan Agundi Gate."[69]

Based on the above Intel, the colonial officers invited Islamic scholars in the Kano metropolis, including Malam Salga, and severely reprimanded the latter.[70] Consequently, many scholars returned the book in question, which they bought from Salga for eightpence.[71] Presumably, the colonial government did not complete their investigation on the case when the above measures were taken. As it turned out, eventually, Salga was not the author of the book at the centre of the controversy; the author was his son-in-law, Malam Mahmudu Magoga. Secondly, its content was innocuous. The Resident of Kano had consulted the emir twice on its content, and the latter informed him that it was not subversive. This information was corroborated by "a government malam."[72]

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[69] The Inspector General of Police, (Northern Provinces), Confidential Letter to the Private Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor, (Northern Province), July 8, 1929, KSHCB/Confidential File No PIB/226/Kaduna. 1 – 2. I have to acknowledge Dr Aisha Ni'ima Shehu, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano (BUK) for sharing this file with me when I was doing fieldwork for Master's dissertation.
[70] *Ibid*
[71] The Resident, Kano Province, Confidential Letter to the Lieutenant Governor, Northern Provinces, July 22nd 1929, KSHCB/Confidential File No PIB/226/Kaduna
[72] *Ibid*.

What finally brought the end of the controversy was the report of Mr Orme (July 10, 1929) on behalf of the Kano Native Authority Press (KNAP), the printers of the work. The report described the painstaking steps taken before the printing was approved. The KNAP received an application for the printing of the book on January 1, 1929. Then Malam Muhammad, the Accountant of the Survey Department, prepared a translation of the manuscript for Mr Morphy, the CEO of the Press. The latter sent the translation to the emir for his view. He indicated that he had no objection to its printing. Mr Morphy asked some members of the emir's council, the Waziri, Galadima and Madaki, who visited him a few days later to read the book, and they also concurred with the opinion of the emir.[73]

After the first print run was out, Mr Morphy sent five copies to the emir, who indicated his satisfaction with the book. It was then that the 100 copies were released to the author. Six copies were distributed to the malams of the Survey Department and three copies to the Resident; six copies were damaged in the course of production, while 31 copies were kept in the storeroom. The work was completed on June 26, 1929. Later, requests were made for more copies to be printed, but it was declined based on the principle laid down by Mr Morphy that private printing should be discouraged.[74] Mr Orme concluded that he did not suspect the text, and neither did he have an idea that Malam Salga had anything to do with it.[75]

The controversy demonstrates the extent to which the colonial government used the dual strategies of vigilance and surveillance to monitor the traditional community. The colonial state was very

[73] Kano Native Authority Printing Press, "Arabic Books —Printing of," July 10, 1929, KSHCB/Confidential File No PIB/226/Kaduna.
[74] This is an indication that Malam Mahmudu had to apply for printing of the book through a government official. It was not clear whether the work was paid for or not.
[75] Kano Native Authority Printing Press, "Arabic Books —Printing of," July 10, 1929, KSHCB/Confidential File No PIB/226/Kaduna.

much concerned about book authorship. It dawned on the traditional community that authors could no longer write on any subject or engage in any debate without the censoring eyes and hands of the colonial master. Their intellectual productions were now subjected to scrutiny by the colonial government.[76]

The second implication of the controversy is its revelation of the role printing technology played in the new intellectual life of the traditional community. In the pre-colonial period, the community relied almost entirely on the manual reproduction of texts. The establishment of printing facilities in the colonial period had resulted in the gradual shift from manual reproduction to mechanical duplication. It was evident from the copies of *Sabīl al-Muḥtadī* printed (only 100 copies for the author and another 50 copies for the colonial government) that the new technology was limited. Several factors can be attributed to this development. Presumably, the novelty of the new system coupled with its introduction by Europeans (perceived as agents of Christianity) made people suspicious of it.[77] The study of Larkin has demonstrated how the same kind of mistrustful attitude was exhibited to the new infrastructure in Kano during the colonial period.[78] Despite the surveillance of the community, the non-interference policy of the British in northern Nigeria resulted in the continuous growth of the Islamic schools. The consequence of which was the expansion of the community.

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[76] In Pre-Colonial period, there was a lively debate between Uthman Dan Fodio and other scholars who did not believe in the justification of the Jihad. For example the Shehu of Borno had engaged in debates with Muhammad Bello who wrote the rejoinders to Dan Fodio on behalf of his father.

[77] When the first copies of the Qur'ān were printed by some local booksellers, many people refused to buy them because of their suspicion that printed copies were bound to contain errors. The acceptance of the printed Qur'ān was gradual. This is not peculiar to northern Nigeria. The same scepticism in the Muslim world resulted in the late adoption of the printing technology to print the Qur'ān until very late. For a discussion on the Muslim scepticism on printing technology, see introduction to chapter seven.

[78] Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008)

Conclusion

The chapter examined the evolution of the traditional community of readers which can be traced to the introduction of Islam in Hausaland in the fourteenth century. The tradition of writing texts in Arabic and Ajami is traced back to the seventeenth century. However, most of the Islamic manuscripts that survived the pre-colonial period were produced in the nineteenth century. The colonial period impacted the traditional community of readers in many ways. The period witnessed the introduction of printing technology which had limited effects on book production in the early colonial period but subsequently facilitated the rise of private presses which were used in the production of Arabic books especially from the 1950s. It is important to note that the members of the traditional community constituted the main actors in the Islamic Book Market whose discussion is presented in chapters five, six and seven. In the meantime, the next chapter explores the introduction of colonial projects that resulted in the creation of a new reading public.

Chapter Three

Northern Nigeria under Colonial Rule (1903-1960): The Foundation of the Modern Reading Community

Introduction

The period of colonialism had created a profound transformation in the social and intellectual life of the people. The colonial administrators were not inclined towards the promotion of the existing book culture. Instead, they set up the machinery to create a new reading community with two categories of elites: the Western-educated northerners and the so-called "Arabists." This colonial agenda resulted in the experiment of simultaneously establishing secular and Islamic institutions of learning. A part of this story was the introduction of Roman characters in writing the Hausa language, which used the Arabic script for centuries. The overall goal of all these projects was to produce elites that would occupy subordinate positions as teachers or judges in the Shari'ah courts within the framework of the colonial civil service.

However, the training of elites had a concomitant requirement of setting up a structure for their sustenance. One such requirement was the production of reading materials to consolidate the literacy they acquired. For this reason, the colonial administration had set up printing presses in Kano and Zaria to produce invoice and receipt booklets, books and newspapers. This chapter demonstrates that the colonial projects of the creation and sustenance of new elites resulted in the proliferation of a modern community of readers who constituted the main consumers of Romanised Hausa books and Arabic books in *naskhī* variety of Arabic script. At the same time, the projects created two divergent book markets for Islamic books and vernacular literature discussed in chapters seven and eight.

Colonial Education and the Modern Community of Readers

The Western-Style Schools

The introduction of colonial education created a modern community of readers, different from the products of the traditional system. The members of the new community attended the newly founded Western-style schools, which had formal structures. Instead of reading Hausa in *Ajami*, this community principally read Hausa in Roman script. The members of the community became very influential, especially by the end of the colonial period, as its members were gradually being prepared to take over political power from the colonial officers.

The members of the modern community could be divided into two categories from the early colonial period: the Western-educated northerners and the "Arabists". The former attended Western form of schools which mainly taught secular subjects, while the latter were graduates of colonial Islamic schools structured on the European pattern, but at the same time incorporating some of the traditional features.

The following section accounts for the evolution of the two categories of elites. This background is germane to the discussion of the book market that emerged in the late colonial period to cope with the demands of the two categories. However, the book market evolution is outside the scope of this chapter but will be discussed in due course.[79]

European relations with the people of Nigeria was in four stages: exploration, Christian mission, trade and administration. It was during the second stage that education featured prominently.

[79] Chapter seven accounts for the Islamic Book Market created by the colonial administration to meet the demand of the Arabists while chapter eight examines the Hausa Book Market structure managed by the colonial government to provide literature largely for the Western educated elites but to some extent to the Arabists as well.

Western education had its roots in southern Nigeria through the activities of the Christian missionaries.[80] Apart from the Portuguese evangelical works in the fifteenth century, the substantive Christian missions can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the evangelists began to interfere with local politics.[81] By the nineteenth century, Nigeria was a favourite scene of the Christian missions founded in Europe and America towards the end of the eighteenth century.[82]

Despite the outstanding role of the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) in missionary services, it was the Methodists that eventually began an educational project in southwest Nigeria. William de Graft and his wife established the first missionary school. The former was a Ghanaian evangelist who arrived in Badagry on September 24, 1842, with Thomas Birch Freeman. The two were Methodist clergymen. They named the school "Nursery of the Infant Church." However, by far, the CMS made the most significant contribution to the promotion of Western education. It established two schools in Badagry between 1845 and 1846.[83] Other missions joined subsequently. So that between 1842 and 1892, eight Christian missions established their presence in southern Nigeria.[84]

The attempt to establish the Christian mission in northern Nigeria can also be dated back to the nineteenth century. However, such efforts were not entirely successful. The missions restricted their activities to two areas — Lokoja and Gbede — before 1900. The earliest effort to extend the

[80] For Christian missionaries in Nigeria, see Emmanuel Ayankanmi Ayandele. *The Missionary Impact of Modern Nigeria 1842-1914*, (London: Longman, 1996)
[81] *Ibid*., 3
[82] Emmanuel Ayankanmi Ayandele, "External Relations with Europeans: Explorers, Missionaries and Traders," in Obaro Ikime (ed.) *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, (Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980), 371
[83] Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1974) 79 – 80
[84] Ayandele, "External Relations," 371

activities of the CMS to the North was by Samuel Ajayi Crowther and other proselytisers. In 1865, they established a station and school in Lokoja. During colonial administration, the most crucial figure in the evangelical works in northern Nigeria was Dr Walter Richard Samuel Miller, a close friend of Lugard. He opposed the encouragement of the existing Qur'ānic schools.[85] Lugard, committed to his pledge of non-interference to ensure smooth administration, discouraged the activities of the missionaries in the Muslim dominated areas of northern Nigeria.

The role of the foundation of Western-style education in the North had to be shouldered by the government. While Lugard was trying to find a way to found a school system in the protectorate, one of the zealots in colonial educational projects, the Resident of Sokoto, Major Burdon, went ahead and founded an educational institution in his area of jurisdiction in 1906 to teach Reading, Writing and Arithmetic (the three Rs). He started the school with the help of one Malam Ibrahim, whom he sponsored to go through training in England and became the school instructor.[86] There were also, few other scattered efforts in introducing education in other areas of the Northern Region, but they did not have much impact.[87]

By 1907, Sir Percy Girouard was the High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. He sent a letter to London, suggesting the direct control of education by the colonial government in line with British policy in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan under Lord Cromer. He recommended a

[85] Fafunwa, *History* of Education, 101 – 105

[86] See Sonia F. Graham, *The Beginnings of Western Education in Northern Nigeria: Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria, 1900–1919, with Special Reference to the Work of Hanns Vischer,* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1966), 59

[87] For example, there was a Bida Mission School, and in the same 1909, Richard Palmer, the Resident of Katsina set up a school almost on a similar pattern to the one established by Burdon.

colonial officer of Swiss origin, Hans Vischer (b. 1876 – d. 1945), for the new educational initiative.[88]

In 1909, just before Vischer established the new school, he undertook trips to several Muslim countries, such as Sudan and Egypt, to observe their educational system. After his return, he established a class for training local malams. The lessons began with 12 students drawn from Kano, Sokoto and Katsina. He organised the classes at Nassarawa outside the old city of Kano. The curriculum contained Hausa reading and writing in Roman script, Arithmetic and Geography of northern Nigeria, Africa and the British Empire. The classes later expanded to include boarding schools for the children of the emirs.

Eventually, the institution's structure comprised two elementary schools, primary, secondary and technical schools, and a vocation centre.[89] The programme's success in Kano made the emirates of Zaria, Bidda, Borno and Ilorin request Vischer to extend the institutions to their areas in 1913. By the end of the same year, the Department had employed 20 teachers.[90] The enrolment of students in the school is indicated in Figure 1:

[88] Hans Vischer was a CMS missionary between 1900 and 1903 before he later became a colonial officer. He spoke Arabic, Hausa, Fulfulde and Kanuri. On Hans Vischer, see Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898–1945*, (London: Collins, 1960)
[89] Fafunwa, *History of Education* 107 – 108
[90] Alhaji Bala Sulaiman "The Role of Shahuchi and the School for Arabic Studies, Kano in the Development of Legal Education in Northern Nigeria to 1967." (M.A. Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 1990), 73

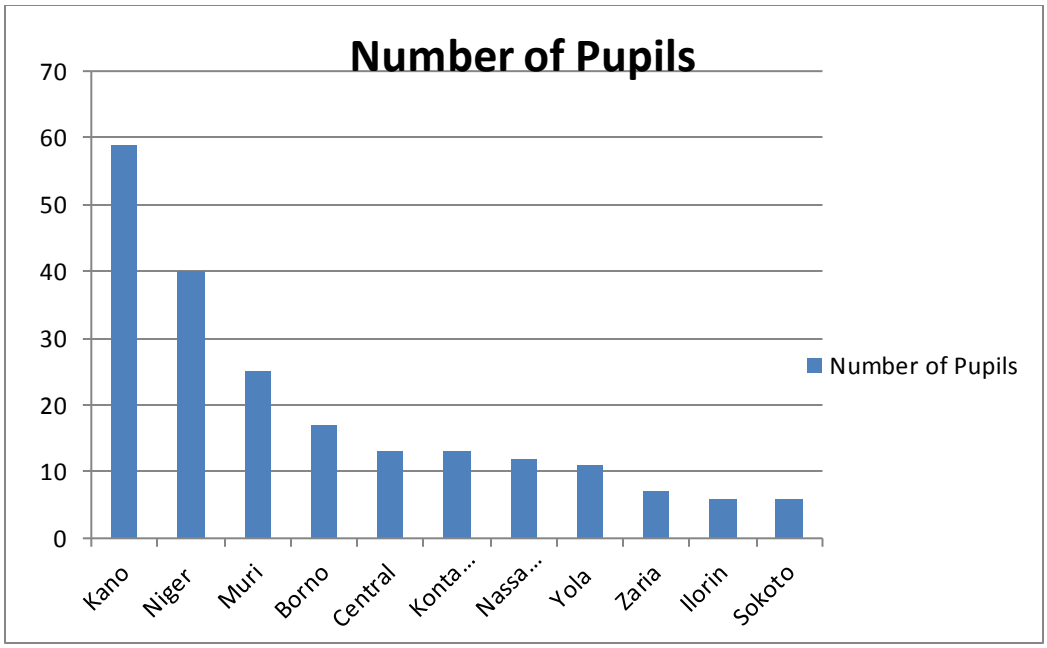

Figure 1: Enrolment by Provinces in the Nassarawa School, Kano in 1913. Figure adapted from Fafunwa, *History of Education,* 108

Figure 1 indicates that Kano had the highest number of students, followed by Niger. Then at the bottom of the chart, Ilorin and Sokoto had the lowest number of students. In 1914, the Northern and Southern Protectorates were amalgamated to form Nigeria as a country. Lugard became the Governor-General of the Union. The Department of Education was moved from Kano to Kaduna in 1917; the government schools had increased to nine. By 1919, the population of students swelled to 1,189 in 18 schools with 81 native teachers of secular subjects and 46 instructors of Arabic and Islamic studies. Nonetheless, the Qur'ānic schools' enrolment, 205,172, in the same year, outweighed the secular schools' figures.[91]

To address the shortage of teachers in the schools, the colonial office in London formed a committee under Vischer (who was then working there) and U.F. Urling to recommend a solution.

[91] Umar, "Muslims Intellectual Response," 138

They suggested the establishment of a teacher training college. Thus, the colonial government founded Katsina College in 1920. Some of the courses offered in the College were: English, Arithmetic, Education and Arabic.[92] The College started with 48 students, and its first graduates passed out in 1926. The College became the primary centre for training modern Muslim elites in the Northern Region.

The Evolution of the Northern Arabists

The second category of the new community of readers comprised the so-called "Arabists." In his study on the overseas scholarships for the Muslim elites in the late colonial period in northern Nigeria, Alexander Thurston distinguished between two tracks of the elite students that emerged from the 1920s in colonial northern Nigeria when the students began to graduate from the public schools of the period. Those were the graduates of the Shahuchi Judicial School and those of the Katsina College. In other words, Thurston was referring to the two categories within the modern community of readers. The Arabists came out of the two schools established by the British — the Shahuchi Judicial School founded in 1928 and Northern Provinces Law School (NPLS), established in 1934 — to be examined below.

The foundation of the two institutions represented the culmination of two divergent but simultaneous agendas pursued by the colonial officers and the emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero (b. 1881 – d. 1953). It also epitomised the implicit response of the northern Nigerian Muslims to colonialism. By the second decade of the twentieth century, the reality dawned on the Muslims of northern Nigeria that colonial rule had come to stay, and the use of force could not exterminate it. The only option was to find a tacit way of navigating the colonial system while maintaining their

[92] Sulaiman, "The Role of Shahuchi and the School for Arabic Studies," 77 – 78

identity as Muslims by promoting Islam and Islamic scholarship. On the other hand, in continuation of their surveillance policy, the colonialists wanted the new Islamic institutions to align with their aspiration of operating schools that were not inimical to their administration.

In line with these antithetical goals, the new Emir of Kano Abdullahi Bayero (r. 1926 – 1953) welcomed the idea of moving out of the palace legal training unit to join the other public schools operated by the colonial government. The relocation took place in 1927. The emir knew that the teaching would improve with the intervention of the colonial officers, while on their part, the British wanted to ensure that the school's pedagogy was directly under their supervision to rule out the prospect of teaching subversive texts.

Classes began at the school in 1928 under the headship of Malam Sulaiman Isma'il. His training was rooted in the traditional system. In the beginning, the school operated in consonance with the existing pedagogic tradition.[93] It was transformed gradually into a formal judicial school for the training of judges as the students were later exposed to secular subjects of Arithmetic, English and Hausa — all taught in Roman script. The teachers recruited for that purpose were mainly those who attended Western-style secular schools. Some of them, according to Hussaini Sufi, were Malam Bako Bauchi, Malam Umaru Dan Madakin Kano and Malam Muhammadu Makwarari.[94] The emir transferred his library to the school with its collection of between 3000 and 5000 books. The school only introduced exams as a means of students' assessment in 1930, in line with the practice in Elementary Schools.[95] The need for secondary school to absorb Shahuchi School graduates resulted in the foundation of yet another institution.

[93] For the history of the school, see Alkali Hussaini Sufi, *Mu San Kanmu,* (Kano: Mainasara Press, 2009) 131 – 139
[94] *Ibid*., p. 133
[95] Sulaiman, "The Role of Shahuchi and the School for Arabic Studies," 97 – 98

The visits of two prominent traditional rulers — the emir of Katsina, Muhammad Dikko and the Waziri Gidado of Kano — to the Gordon Memorial College of colonial Sudan was the prelude to the institution's establishment. The two were impressed by that college. By immortalising General Charles George Gordon, the British meant to atone deserting him, resulting in his murder by the Mahdists in the Battle of Khartoum.[96]

A ten-member committee was set up in 1933 to establish an institution modelled after the Gordon Memorial College. The members of the committee comprised the emirs and the Sultan. They recommended the foundation of a senior law school for the Northern Provinces, which was to be situated somewhere in Kano. On May 6, 1933, the government wrote a letter to the Lieutenant Governor of Sudan requesting three graduates of the Gordon Memorial College. Consequently, the Government of Sudan seconded three Sudanese for the planned Law School: Shaykh El-Bashir El-Rayyah (34 years old), Shaykh El-Nur El-Tagari (33 years old) and Shaykh Mohammed Saleh Suar El-Dahab (35 years old). Their appointment was based on their fluency in English, years of service and expertise in the Maliki School of Law used in Nigeria. They signed their secondment in December 1933, embarked on their journey in January 1934, and arrived in Nigeria on February 23, 1934.[97]

On July 2, 1934, the Sudanese arrived in Kano. Thus the NPLS began operation in its new site. Right from its inception, the NPLS was organised along with the Western School System with a clearly defined period of graduation, graded classes, school uniform and the requirement for

[96] Lilian Sanderson, "The 1924 Revolution: Its repercussions upon the Education System of the Sudan," *Sudan Notes and Records* Vol 17, (1976), 73
[97] Sulaiman, "The Role of Shahuchi and the School for Arabic Studies," 109 – 112

satisfactory performance in the examination before students were allowed to graduate.[98] Apart from Arabic and Islamic sciences, the students also took courses in English and Arithmetic.[99]

The Sudanese had accepted coming to Nigeria and establishing the school because of the better remuneration they obtained in their new job. They earned almost twice their annual salary as in Sudan.[100] The head of the Sudanese teachers was Shaykh Bashir El-Rayyah, who was very close to the emir. Despite the preference for the Sudanese educational system, the colonialists kept the school's teachers under close monitoring. For example, they opened a secret file that contained at least four letters of complaints against El-Rayyah. One of them was from a fellow Sudanese teacher and the other from a student. The Europeans were wary of his close association with the emir, which was seen "so far for the good but the position is dangerous," and they "envisage circumstances in which his influence and power with Emir might be for the bad." Despite the complaints against Shaykh Bashir, the colonial officers did not take any action against him for their satisfaction with the NPLS progress under his supervision. This is evident from a letter addressed to Mr Peterson, the Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces: "You know Sheik Bashir better than I do. He has undoubtedly done a good job of work here but is not nearly so altruistically

[98] Muhammad Sani Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends in Northern Nigeria," *Africa Today* 48, vol 2, (2001), 134

[99] Fafunwa, *History of Education*, 65

[100] In the letter of complaint against Shaykh Bashir, one of the Sudanese teachers, Abdulhamid Abdallah, mentioned that: "I do like to extend the engagement for three years more, if the Government agrees to such extension, even with my instant salary, at the rate of £400 yearly, and I consider that as an offer. I am well contented with this sum, because, the half of it equals my full salary in Sudan." The letter was addressed to the Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces, Mr. Peterson. See Abdulhamid Abdallah to Mr J.R. Patterson, Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces, September 17, 1943, Confidential Letter, KSHCB, School for Arabic Studies Staff.

inclined as he tries to appear, and undoubtedly, he resents interference or any kind of questioning."[101]

Initially, contributions from provinces were the primary source of funding for the NPLS. However, from April 1947, the Northern Regional Government took complete control of the school. The consequence of which was the expansion of the students' population in terms of geographical spread. Henceforth, students from Northern Provinces and a few others from the south were admitted into the school. Some of the students even came from Ghana and Gambia. In 1948 the NPLS was renamed the School for Arabic Studies (SAS).[102] The NPLS/SAS graduated an average of 30 students annually. Between 1938 and 1967, about 870 students graduated from the institution.[103] This indicates that the population of the Arabists was insignificant compared to the graduates of Qur'ānic schools.

In the 1950s, some of the ex-students of the school were sponsored to further their studies abroad. In 1952, the Northern Regional Scholarship Board accepted applications for studies overseas. The screening process, including the selection examination, was held in June 1953. The Board offered scholarships to six candidates to study in Bhakht-er-Ruda in Sudan, and another applicant, Na'ibi Sulaiman Wali, was sent to the Publications Bureau in Khartoum. The board offered scholarships to five students in the same year to study for one year course in Arabic in School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).[104]

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[101] The Resident, Kano Province, Confidential Letter to the Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces, October 13, 1943, /KSHCB/Confidential File/3755/School for Arabic Studies Staff/(1943)
[102] Sulaiman, "The Role of Shahuchi and the School for Arabic Studies," 157 – 158
[103] *Ibid*., 200
[104] Alexander Thurston. "The Era of Overseas Scholarships: Islam, Modernization, and Decolonization in Northern Nigeria, c. 1954-1966." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 44, fasc. 1 (2014), 72 – 73

It is pertinent to highlight the kind of category of readers produced by these institutions. As one of the NPLS/SAS Arabists commented while enunciating his new identity, distinct from that of the traditional community: "I did not welcome to study with the leading scholars around because I had now become used to the approach quite different from theirs. Most of my former teachers had (a) background in both the European and traditional Islamic schools."[105]

The new Arabist also strived to have gainful employment as the ultimate goal of his educational endeavour, in addition to the intrinsic value of knowledge for its own sake. Consequently, while in school, all his effort is energised towards graduating with an excellent certificate. Unlike the traditional Arabist, the modern Muslim intellectual often used the Roman script to write Hausa in his communication with colleagues and teachers. The two intellectual "types" (traditional and modern Arabist) represented mutually exclusive entities, with one seen as modern while the other as primitive. The initial scepticism of the European system of education gradually transformed into admiration.

The Arabist's choice of books was transformed as well. He was trained under a modern pedagogical tradition marked by the demarcation of knowledge boundaries to a specific, attainable segmented lesson structure. This was accomplished by studying a blend of traditional and modern texts in the *naskhī* variety of the Arabic script. The modern Arabist could read both the text in the *Sudani* and *naskhī* varieties since, in many cases, he had some background in the traditional educational system in which the texts studied were in *Sudani*. However, his exposure to the modern

[105] Abubakar Gumi with Isma'il Abubakar Tsiga, *Where I Stand*, (Ibadan: Spectrum, 1992), 64

pedagogic tradition dominated his intellectual commitments while pursuing the occupational goals of his career.[106]

The *Islamiyya* school system, pioneered by the new intellectuals, also impacted the post-colonial Islamic Book Market.[107] Its evolution in the 1950s was primarily meant to graduate pupils for absorption in higher Islamic institutions such as the SAS. Ironically, this effort came from the Western-educated Muslims, not from the Arabists. However, in the post-colonial period, the Arabists made up by animating the new schools with the authorship of texts. The trajectory of Islamiyya text production and distribution is an integral part of the post-colonial Islamic Book Market.[108]

Two parallel initiatives were pursued simultaneously in Zaria and Kano, leading to the proliferation of *Islamiyya* schools in the North. The one in Zaria was under Malam Abubakar Imam (b. 1911 – d. 1981), the celebrated author of the Hausa fiction. The origin of the school, according to Imam, is traced to 1948 when one Alhaji Gambo Sawaba, a Hausa resident of southern Nigeria, requested Imam to build a modern Islamic school for children. With the financial support of a trader, Alhaji Shafi'i and the voluntary service offered by Alhaji Haliru Binji in preparing the syllabus and curriculum of the new institution, improvised classes commenced in 1949. A teacher, Malam Shuaibu Usman, was employed on a salary of £3 per month.[109]

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[106] Up to the present the booksellers of the Islamic books often distinguish between the members of the two communities of readers based on their choice of texts. Often the modern Arabist has preference for books in *naskhī* variety of Arabic script although he, as well, buys books in the local calligraphic styles. However, circumstances in the market have begun to force the traditional readers to also rely on works in *naskhī* since sometimes the printed books in the *Kanawī* style would be out of stock for a long time. The key guiding word in distinguishing the two is preference not exclusivity.

[107] These were Islamic schools with a modern and formal setting established in northern Nigeria from the 1950s on wards.

[108] For discussion on the book market of the Islamiyya texts, see chapter five.

[109] Abubakar Imam, "Islamic Education and Pilgrimage Problems" in Abdurrahman Mora (ed.) *Abubakar Imam Memoir*, (Zaria: NNPC, 1989), 189

From October 10, 1950, the new educational institution began to be called *Islamiyya* school and moved to its new premises.[110] The school, named Nurul Huda Primary School, became a model for other institutions in northern Nigeria. The pioneer students of the school, according to Haliru Binji, were drawn from diverse areas, including Lagos, Sierra Leone and Kano.[111]

Almost the same period when Imam was trying to establish Nurul Huda, Aminu Kano (b. 1920 – d. 1983), the leader of the northern opposition party, Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU), was trying to set up a similar institution in Kano. Although the two were friends, it is not clear whether they communicated their plan and aspiration for the new system of Islamic education. In 1948, the future leaders of NEPU, Sa'adu Zungur and Aminu Kano brainstormed on the prospect of a state-of-the-art Islamic institution.[112] The idea was to model it after elementary school with its students having to wear uniforms and their lessons guided by syllabus and curriculum.[113]

In 1950 the key figures of NEPU established an *Islamiyya* school in Kano.[114] Parents resisted the attempt to introduce the three Rs in the school. Similarly, the school encountered opposition from some Islamic scholars, such as Malam Nasiru Kabara, Tijani Usman and Garba Tudun Nufawa. Kabara reported its activities to the emir's palace. Eventually, the school issue became politicised. In 1953, gangsters who were, in all probability, the supporters of the Northern Peoples' Congress

[110] *Ibid*., 190
[111] Dahiru Binji, "A Short Biography of Alhaji Abubakar" in Mora, *Abubakar Imam Memoir*, 262
[112] The two were influential opposition figures in the politics of Northern Nigeria.
[113] See John Weir Chamberlin, "The Collected Field Notes of Research into the History of Mallams and Islamic Scholarship in xixth and xxth Century Kano, Vol II" (Unpublished Research Notes, 1971), 1
[114] NEPU was a populist and leftist political party. It is important to note that NEPU's activities were mainly political.

(NPC) broke into the school and burnt books.[115] The school had to close temporarily. In 1955 when a parent offered a space in the neighbourhood of Kofar Wambai, it re-opened.[116]

The two initiatives for the new school system have become a model for many Islamic educational institutions in the following decades. The *Islamiyya* schools, most of which were Islamic primary schools, were integrated into modern Islamic education. The new hierarchical system comprised the Islamiyya primary schools at the bottom; institutions for secondary education and higher learning at the middle; and universities, either conventional or specialised ones, at the top.

The varieties of the schools examined above became centres for the creation of reading publics. As evident from the subsequent chapters, both public and private initiatives were made to start book markets that would address the demands of students and graduates of traditional and Western-style schools. For example, a regional Islamic book trade began in the 1940s to meet the demands of NPLS through a partnership between Osman El-Tayeb (b. 1919 – d. 2011) and an Egyptian bookseller in Kano, Ahmed El-Sa'ud.[117] Similarly, a section of *ulama* in Kano affiliated with the Tijaniyya brotherhood created a niche in the Islamic Book Market by pioneering a transnational trade. The target customers, in this case, were primarily the students and graduates of Qur'ānic and *Ilm* schools.

Consequently, one can argue that the basis of the segmented structure and diversity of the KBM was the division and complexity of the educational institutions. Setting up different segments of the KBM was made possible through another critical initiative of the colonial administration —

[115] The NPC was the dominant political party in the North and it emerged as the ruling party in the Nigeria's First Republic (1960 – 1966)
[116] Chamberlain "The Collected Field Notes," 3 – 4
[117] See chapter seven

the establishment of printing and publishing enterprises. This initiative, examined below, was conceived and executed to sustain the new reading public.

Towards Sustaining the Modern Community of Readers

From the early colonial period, the British set up the necessary structure to ensure the introduction and sustenance of Hausa in Roman script in the Northern Region.[118] Several measures were taken to accomplish this objective. One of the early initiatives was setting up printing and publishing firms, first in Kano and subsequently in Zaria as the newly founded community of literates required literature for its sustenance. Consequently, several institutions were established by the colonial authorities to ensure the production and distribution of literature. The aim of which was to provide an enduring legacy that would outlive British rule. This section examines these initiatives.

The KNAP was the first to be established in northern Nigeria in 1918 primarily to produce tax receipts, forms and other government documents for the Northern Provinces.[119] Initially, its building was located near Dan Agundi outside the city. It began with two presses operated by three African staff under one Malam Haruna Madaki Isma'il, supervised by a colonial official, Mr Morphy.

In 1938, the Press relocated to Kofar Nassarawa. Although the building was completed in 1918, the operation only began in 1920 – 1921. The central figure in the history of the company was Mr Morphy. Having trained the African staff of the Press, Mr Morphy was both the supervisor of the

[118] As early as 1904, at Lugard's suggestion, missionaries established a school in Bida where they taught Hausa and Nupe in Roman script to a section of previously literate scholars for one shilling per month. See Philips, "Hausa in the Twentieth Century" 66

[119] For a history of the evolution of printing in Nigeria see chapter six while for the trajectory of the Arabic printing in the Muslim world and its implication for Islamic literature in the Kano Book Market, see chapter seven.

company and the Head of the Survey Department. He was, thus, an essential pillar of the Kano administration.

By 1924, the KNAP had produced over two million impressions on the manual letterpresses. The machines were operated manually because of the lack of electricity in Kano, which was only made available in 1931. In light of the increasing demand for printed materials, the KNAP kept on expanding. In 1937, new machines were ordered at the cost of £7,232. This amount excluded the cost of installation and improvement of the electrical features of the plant.[120] Right from its establishment, the KNAP pursued a policy of providing the bulk of its services to the Native Administrations of the Northern Region; only in rare cases did it engage in commercial ventures. The latter mandate presumably took up the publications of Arabic and Ajami text primarily for the traditional community.

Although the company's primary aim was to provide the printing requirements of the colonial government, its facilities were deployed in the services of sustenance of the new reading public. By May 1953, it started publishing a weekly newspaper called *So-Dangi* (literally love for the relatives).[121] The Editor was Malam Audi Howeidy.[122] According to the Kano Province Annual Report of 1954, the paper had a print run of 10,000 copies, but it had to be closed down shortly to obtain registration under the Newspaper Ordinance.[123] Later, the publication of the paper was taken up by the Government of the Northern Region.[124]

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[120] Umar Bature Abdullahi, "A History of Printing Trade in Kano," (BA Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 1980) 1 – 10
[121] The initial title of the paper was *Labaran Kano* (Kano News).
[122] Abdullahi, "A History of Printing Trade," 11
[123] Kano Province. "The 1953 Kano Province Annual Report," KSHCB/SNP/8323/1953. (1953) 13 – 14
[124] See Kano Native Authority Press. "Kano Native Authority Printing Press Policy and Finance." KSHCB/NAF/225/. (1965), 1

The Northern Regional Government took the most elaborate and comprehensive measures to sustain the new community of readers. In the 1920s and 1930s, the graduates of colonial schools were growing, and Hausa fiction was absent. If the new orthography was to survive, reading materials had to be provided for the literates. Thus, the Education Department of the Northern Region founded the Translation Bureau in Kano in 1929 and transferred it to Zaria in 1930 or 1931.[125] It was later renamed Literature Bureau. Mr C.E.J. Whitting initially headed it, but Rupert East took over in 1932.[126] Its initial aim was to produce Hausa literature for schools, but that scope later widened as it laid the foundation for more general literature in Hausa.

The Bureau set about to actualise its mandate. The success of which can be attributed to the role played by Rupert East (b. 1898 – d. 1975), a passionate secular educationist who was committed to the long-term goal of sustaining the new orthography.[127] However, like many other Europeans, his passion for the Hausa language did not target the ultimate replacement of English as the language of instruction at a higher level of learning. After all, it was unlikely, argued East, in many years to come that "it will be possible or desirable to adapt African languages to the teaching of

[125] According to Rupert East, who was the second and only Director of the Bureau after his takeover, the Translation Bureau was established in 1930. See Rupert Moultrie East. "Recent Activities of the Literature Bureau, Zaria, Northern Nigeria," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 14, no. 2 (1943), 71. Alhaji Hussaini Hayatu, on the other hand, who had a long career in the Gaskiya Corporation, a successor organisation for the Literature Bureau, maintains that it was established in 1929 in Kano and transferred to Zaria in 1931. And the name was changed to Literature Bureau in 1935. See Husaini Hayatu, "NORLA and Story of Publishing in the former Northern Nigeria" in Husaini Hayatu (ed.), *Fifty-Years of Truth: The Story of Gaskiya Corporation Zaria.* (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Limited, 1991), 55 – 59

[126] Husaini Hayatu, "NORLA and Story of Publishing in the former Northern Nigeria," in Sule Bello and Abdullahi Augi (eds.), *Culture and Book Industry in Nigeria*, (Lagos: National Council for Arts and Culture, 1993), 196

[127] For the biography of East and criticism of his works, see Aliyah Adamu Ahmad, "Rupert Moultrie East: *Gudunmawarsa da Adabin Hausa da Kuma Sharhi kan Aiyukansa*," (PhD Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 2009)

the more technical branches of knowledge which belonged to the higher stage of education."[128] Instead, the main goal of the new literature was to ensure the new orientation is permanent.

In 1933, the Translation Bureau, under Rupert East, organised a competition for writing Hausa fiction. The assignment was a daunting task for East. The first difficulty was that of convincing the potential authors that writing fiction was worthwhile. The influence of the traditional literary practice on the authors made it difficult for East to persuade them on the project. The primary function of literacy was for understanding religious literature. Such kind of endeavour was immoral.

Five books were published at the end of the competition, about fifty pages each, selling at sixpence. This amount approximately represented the cost price, the author's royalty, and the sales agent's commission.[129] Among the successful competitors was Malam Abubakar Imam, with his book, *Ruwan Bagaja*. The other two works were, *Gandoki* by Imam's brother, Malam Bello Kagara, and *Shehu Umar* by Tafawa Balewa.[130] In addition to these, two other books were published — *Jiki Magayi* by John Tafida and Rupert East and *Idon Matambayi* by Muhammadu Gwarzo. The latter book is believed to have been lost.[131]

In 1939, the Bureau started a newspaper known as *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo,* which became very popular right from the beginning. The first print run of the paper in January 1939 was 5000 copies. This figure was increased to 8900 copies in February and further raised to 11,200 copies in March.[132] The story of the distribution of this newspaper demonstrated how the colonial

[128] Rupert Moultrie East, "A First Essay in Imaginative African Literature" Africa: *Journal of the International African Institute* 9, no. 3 (1936), 351
[129] East, "A First Essay," 356 – 357
[130] Abubakar Imam, "Life as a Teacher," in Mora (ed.) *Abubakar Imam Memoir*, 23
[131] Umar, "Muslims' Intellectual Response," 384
[132] Hayatu, (ed.) *Fifty Years of Truth*, xiii

government invested considerable resources in moulding the new community of readers. The British were aware of the potency of media in shaping national identity. The statistics of the newspaper's buyers would give us an insight into the population of the new community in the late 1940s. It is, however, important to mention the limitation of this approach.

Such data may not necessarily represent the actual readers since some of the papers purchased might end up not being read. And not all literates would afford to buy the papers. Even if they could, their scale of preference might be targeted to other demands. Also, a single paper could be read by several readers. Despite this shortcoming, the data can give a vague idea of the newspaper's patronage in the late 1940s. Figure 2 provides the figures for the sales of selected issues of *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* between 1947 and 1948:

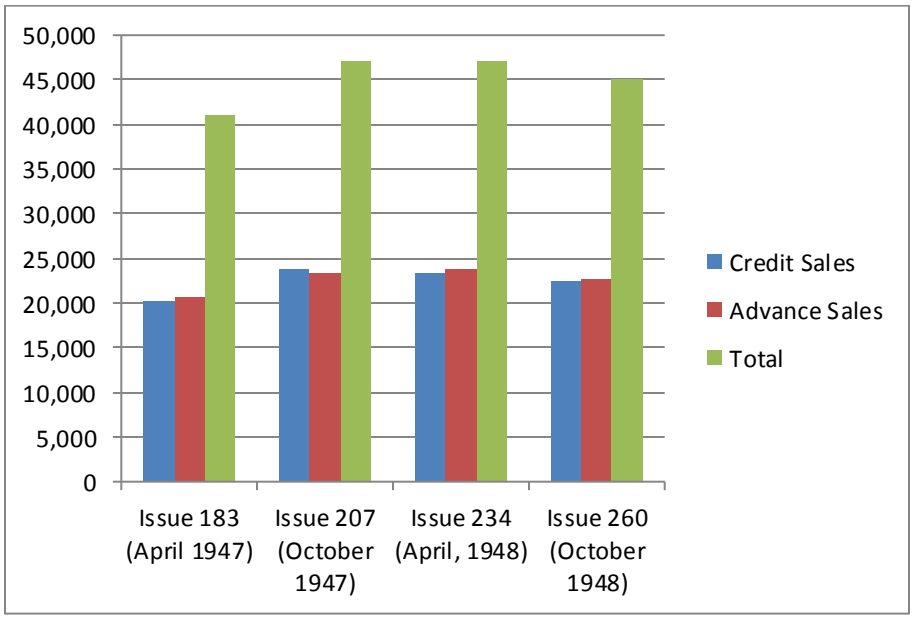


Figure 2: Sales of Four Issues of *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* Newspaper, 1947 – 1948. Adapted from NAK/ZARPROF/GP Kaduna 726/748/500/"Gaskiya Corporation Distribution and Circulation"

The commitment of the colonial government to the wide circulation of the paper is remarkable. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the government kept on exploring different ways of effective

distribution. According to East, the paper was sent to 225 different locations on alternate Tuesdays and reached most of their destinations by Thursday. Its intended audience received the paper well. The Editor received an average of 150 letters every month from the readers, most of which he replied by himself, and in a few cases, he would have to consult his European superiors.[133]

Most of the pioneering members of the modern community of readers had a background in the traditional educational system. They were, in the 1940s, adjusting to conform to the ethos of the new community. It is not surprising that their reading practices — which were intensive as opposed to extensive reading — reflected the pattern dominant in the traditional community. In the traditional educational setting, texts were often committed to memory. A text would be thoroughly studied from beginning to end under the teacher's guidance who had a certificate (*Ijaza*) for transmitting its content. Unlike the European perspective of reading, where the reader has freedom for interpretation, the traditional model favoured interpretation of a text closest to the authorial intent. East noted this tendency among the new audience and commented disapprovingly: "The unsophisticated Hausa reader who has paid his penny for it does not read as we read a newspaper. He goes conscientiously through it, in order, from the page to the last."[134]

The Literature Bureau was transformed into the Gaskiya Corporation in 1945.[135] The printing of books and the newspaper continued under the new name. In July 1944, the Colonial government approved an initial grant of £90,000. As outlined in the application for the fund, one of the

[133] East, "A First Essay," 72 – 73
[134] *Ibid*., 74
[135] Abubakar Imam, "Policy Revision in Gaskiya Corporation" in Mora, (ed.), *Abubakar Imam Memoirs*, 142

Corporation's objectives was to provide the 11,000,000 inhabitants (mainly Muslims) of the Northern Provinces with responsible news and publication in standard Hausa language.[136]

Perhaps the government realised that so much attention was given to the newspapers produced in Gaskiya Corporation that the book production suffered. For that reason, coupled with the pressing demand for the expansion of literacy, Governor Bryan Sherwood Smith in 1953 formed a committee for the adult education campaign. The government-appointed Malam Ahmadu Coomassie as Chief Adult Education Officer in charge of the operation, and for each of the 12 provinces, a Provincial Education Officer (PEO) was appointed. Each PEO was given a cine projector for showing films related to the campaign. Land-Rovers were assigned to each province for the distribution of reading materials every month.[137]

The Northern Regional Literature Agency (NORLA) was founded in 1953 under the new campaign to facilitate the circulation of the reading materials. It inherited the publication wing of the Gaskiya Corporation and sponsored the production of more books and pamphlets. In March 1953, a grant of £18,000 was approved for the Agency. However, the Director of NORLA would have to invest the grant to Gaskiya to expedite the purchase of new machinery for the printing requirements of the Agency. This applied to another £2000 also approved for the building of distribution warehouse.[138] In the following years, the relationship between Gaskiya and NORLA became ambivalent. The agency had to rely on other companies for the printing of its works. It developed an extensive network for book distribution throughout northern Nigeria, thus playing a significant role in providing the new community with reading materials. According to the index of

[136] Gaskiya Corporation. "Gaskiya Corporation Finance," NAK/ZARPROF/GP Kaduna/726/748/500, (1945).
[137] Hayatu, "NORLA and Story of Publishing," 57
[138] Gaskiya Corporation. "Gaskiya Corporation Minutes." NAK/1/1952/52/" (1952).

books published by the Agency in 1959, analysed by Skinner, it had 147 works with less than 32 pages and 49 others that were more than 32 pages.

As highlighted in the subsequent chapters, Gaskiya Corporation and NORLA played a significant role in the growth of northern Nigeria's printing industry and book markets. Their role is two-fold. One, they provided a platform for the sustenance of the new community, and two, their printing infrastructure supported the demands of the traditional community, thus setting the pace for the take-off of the post-colonial book trade in northern Nigeria. All the modern KBM pioneer-entrepreneurs had a link with either NORLA or Gaskiya Corporation. The two entities were, in most cases, their starting point in the bookselling business.

Conclusion:

This chapter has highlighted the various projects introduced by the colonial government to create a new reading public that would service the colonial establishment. Institutions such as the Northern Provinces Law School had produced Arabists who served as teachers and judges of the Shari'ah courts after graduation. While on the other hand, purely secular educational institutions had produced a class of Western-educated elites who eventually took over power from the British. A part of the educational project was to meet the book demand of the colonial schools' graduates. Also, institutions, such as the Kano Native Authority Press, Gaskiya Corporation, Northern Regional Literature Agency, were set up to actualise the above objective.

The chapter argues that colonial projects (printing presses, colonial Islamic schools among others) were introduced to create and sustain the modern reading public. However, these colonial initiatives had unintended consequences as they empowered the traditional community by providing them with printing presses and the colonial infrastructure which enabled them to pioneer

both local and transnational book trade discussed in chapters five, six and seven. The next chapter contextualizes the KBM by mapping out its geography of book distribution.

Chapter Four

The Geography of the Kano Book Market

Introduction

A market, or more specifically, a book market, is a complex entity integrating complex social interactions embedded in the economic transactions within its boundaries. It is almost impossible to use a single analytical tool for its study. One of the lenses through which its research can be approached is its geographical space as opposed to its economic or social spaces.[139] It would be interesting to map out the geographical space of the book in other societies other than the Western world, where substantial literature has been produced on its book history.

The central question governing the discussion in this chapter is what do we learn when we examine the intersection between geographical space and book distribution in Kano? What model do we derive from close examination of empirical data on the subject? Engagement with these questions sheds light on the complexity of the world of books across its diverse geographical spaces.

The chapter maps out the geographical spaces that dotted the city of Kano, which served as centres of the book trade. Kurmi Market, established in the fifteenth century, was the oldest centre of the Islamic manuscript book trade since the pre-colonial period. It has retained that position ever since then. The chapter demonstrates that the most decisive factor in the spatial distribution of bookselling spaces was the dual city project of the colonial period when two parts of Kano metropolis: the walled city (reserved for the citizens of Kano) and township (for migrant

[139] The *Coming of the Book by Lucien Febvre*, one of the pioneering works on book history underscores the importance of this approach in the study printing in early modern Europe. See Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450 – 1800*, Translated by David Gerard (London and New York: Verso, 1997) 167 – 212

communities including the Europeans and the Syrians) were demarcated. This division was responsible for the pattern of book market distribution in Kano. From the 1950s to the 1970s, different segments of the Kano Book Market (KBM) emerged in the two areas. The walled city became the main centre of the Islamic book trade while the township hosted the English and Hausa Book Markets. A distinct pattern of distribution punctuated these spaces.

Colonialism and Transition into the Modern Market Distribution

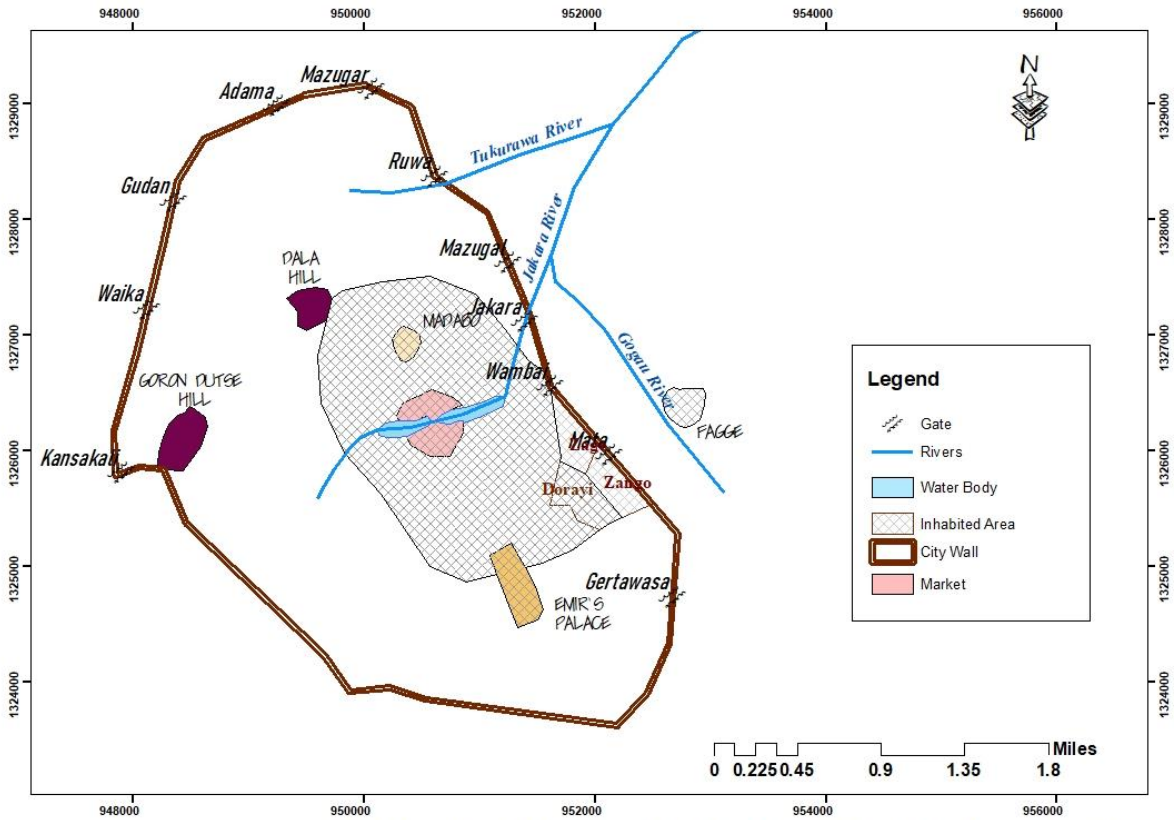
In the reign of Sarki Abdullahi Burja (r. 1438 – 1452), a market was established at Karabka to the south of the ancient walls of Kano city. In the same century, in Muhammad Rumfa's reign (r. 1463 - 1499), the economy of Kano expanded through the accumulation of substantial wealth and the growth of industries. Thus, it emerged as a centre of the trans-Saharan trade. There was surplus production of leather goods, dyed clothes and other products. Consequently, Sarki Rumfa established the Kurmi Market to accommodate the expanding economy of the state.[140]

Its popularity resulted in the decline of the Karabka Market. Kurmi Market's location was in a forested area with a large pool of stagnant water known as the Jakara River surrounded by mangroves used previously as a place of worship.[141] The following map, adapted from the dissertation of Frishman, gives an insight into the outlook of Kano with its walls in the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. From the map, the market was surrounded by settlements of people in the city.

[140] Alan Ivan Frishman, "The Spatial Growth and Residential Location Pattern of Kano, Nigeria" (PhD Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1977), 35

[141] Tijjani Muhammad Naniya, "A History of Kurmi Market as an Institution," (BA Dissertation, Bayero University, Kano, 1983) 10

Map 1: Kano 1500 – 1625



Source: Adopted from Frishman (1970s) Drawn at Geography Department Bayero University, Kano(2019)

From its establishment until the colonial period, Kurmi retained its position as the central market for Kano. The description of the market and its operation were obtained from nineteenth-century explorers. According to Hugh Clapperton, "…indeed there is no market in Africa so well regulated."[142] The market was located in the middle of two swamps. The chief of the market rented out the stalls, and he got commissions from the sales of goods, which constituted the state's revenue. The interior of the market was full of stalls made of bamboo. Bands of musicians moved up and down to attract buyers. Some of the goods displayed were coarse writing paper manufactured in France, scissors and knives, armlets and bracelets of brass and other wares. The

[142] Hugh Clapperton, Dixon Denham and Walter Oudney, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Years 1822, 1823 and 1824*, vol. II, (London: John Murray, n.d.), 253

market was crowded from sunrise to sunset daily.[143] According to the estimate of Clapperton, the population of Kano in the nineteenth century ranged between 30,000 and 40,000.[144]

The last description of the market in the nineteenth century was given by Charles H. Robinson, who came to Kano in December 1894. He described Kano as the commercial capital of Hausaland, well-known among people within several hundreds of miles from the city. He was particularly impressed by the Kurmi Market. According to him: "The market of Kano is the most important in the whole of tropical Africa. Its manufactures are to be met with from the Gulf of Guinea on the south to the Mediterranean on the north and from the Atlantic on the west to the Nile or even the Red Sea on the east."[145]

In 1904, the colonial government initially earmarked £250 for the reconstruction of the Kurmi Market. It was to be constructed in a circular form with a circumference of 1886 feet, 400 shops each with 35 feet square and flat mud roofs.[146] The old structure was demolished, and a new one was built using forced labour to reduce the project's cost. Despite the frugality of the colonialists, they spent a sum of £600 to reconstruct the Kurmi Market eventually. On April 26, 1909, the market was officially opened, and the new structure comprised 755 stalls, a mosque and a court building.[147]

The European colonisation and opening up of new routes linking northern Nigeria to the coastal areas of the south had resulted in the decline of the trans-Saharan trade routes, which held sway in

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[143] Ibid, 253 ff.
[144] *Ibid*, 251
[145] Charles H. Robinson, *Hausaland or Fifteen Hundred Miles through the Central Sudan*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1896), 111
[146] A. Hakim, "A History of Kurmi Market before 1904" in C.J. Greenhill, *Kurmi Market Study*, Metropolitan Kano Planning and Development Board Report. (Kano: Metropolitan Kano Planning and Development Board, 1972), 13 – 15
[147] Naniya, "A History of Kurmi Market" 40

the previous centuries as the primary channels for the overseas trade of West Africa. New routes linking northern Nigeria to the southern region through rail lines and roads displaced the previous ones. The transition was, however, gradual. The desert caravans to Kano continued to operate with few disruptions well into the twentieth century.[148]

In the early colonial period, Kano experienced a setback in its economy due to the new orientation of its trade. Kano manufacture, which sustained its economy for centuries, lost its relevance. Gradually, the British replaced the previous trading partners from North Africa. The construction of a rail line linking Kano to Lagos and the Amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 brought the Northern and Southern Regions together and further strengthened the trade's southward direction. Movement along the former routes became difficult due to the imposition of taxes. Nonetheless, Kano soon recovered and became a dominant centre for the marketing of cotton and groundnuts, which sustained the economy's new direction.

The reorientation of the trade routes resulted in the structural changes of commercial spaces in Kano. The position held by Kurmi Market for centuries as the nerve centre for commerce in Kano was lost to the Sabon Gari Market established in 1918 in an area dominated by the southern migrant community.[149] This symbolically reflected the transition to the new economic realities of the colonial period when the movement of goods was mainly to and from the South. The cash crops

[148] See Marion Johnson, "Calico Caravans: "The Tripoli-Kano Trade after 1880," *The Journal of African History* 17, no. 1 (1976), 96 – 97

[149] Sabon Gari is located outside the Kano city. It was created by the colonial administrators to accommodate southern migrant community. The emergence of the Sabon Gari Market had transformed the area into the CBD of Kano. For its history, see Ahmed Bako, *Sabon Gari Kano: A History of Immigrants and Inter-Group Relations in the twentieth century,* (Sokoto: Usmanu Danfodiyo University Press, 2006)

purchased in Kano and other areas of the North were transported to the seaport in Lagos for onward transmission to Europe.[150]

Another vital factor for the new transformation was the British township policy that segregated the Hausa people's settlements in the old walled city from the new evolving areas occupied by migrant communities comprising Nassarawa for the Europeans, Sabon Gari for southerners and Syrian Quarters for Syrians/Lebanese. In 1917, the colonial government issued a statute making the Kano Cantonment and railway station a single township under direct British control. By this, Kano was officially made a twin city with the walled town — inhabited by the citizens — administered under the Indirect Rule and the township occupied by the migrants.[151] From then onwards, the township received the most significant attention from the British. European companies, banks, residences, a railway station, post offices, and a host of other modern structures were established in this area.[152] The English and Hausa Book Markets emerged in this area while the old Kurmi Market was transformed into a local and regional market.

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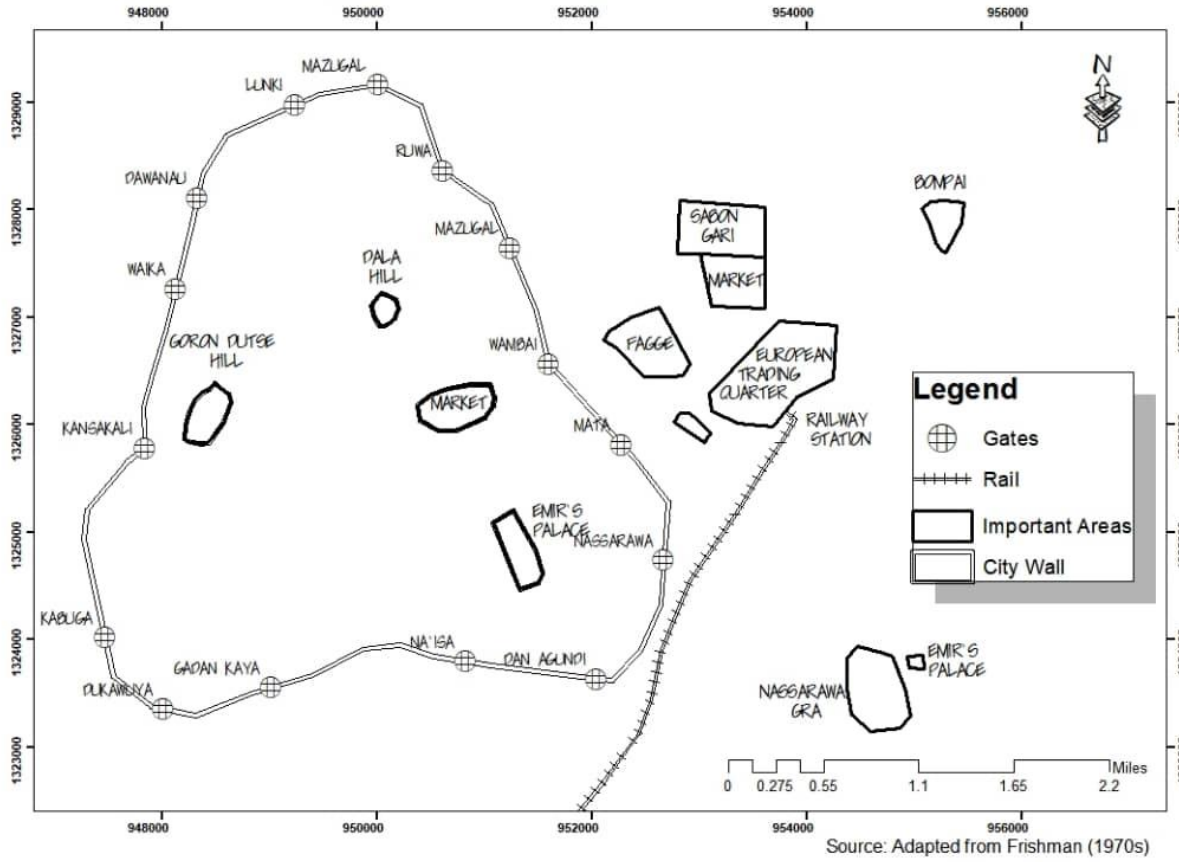
[150] According to Adamu Muhammad Fika, in the early colonial period, the trade between Kano and Lokoja as well as Kano and Lagos expanded, See Adamu Muhammad Fika, *The Kano Civil War and the British Over-rule 1882-1940,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 146

[151] The dual city project of the British was a gradual process which can be traced back to 1911 when the railway station was established outside the walled city. A half of a square mile was allocated to the European companies adjacent to the station. These European companies required manpower in their lower administrative structures, and they could not find such workers from the Hausa people since Western education was a new phenomenon in northern Nigeria. The few Hausa graduates from the Nassarawa school were immediately employed into their Native Administrations that sponsored their education. The European companies, therefore, had to rely on southerners, Ghanaians and Gambians who would have to settle permanently in Kano. Between 1913 and 1914, an area known as the Sabon Gari (Hausa term for new town) located north to the European Quarters was carved out for them. Then the Syrians who, beginning from the 1920s, flooded the groundnut market in Kano serving as agents of European companies were allocated a chunk of land — to be known as Syrian Quarters — to the south of Fagge (an area located outside the eastern border of the walled city that served the function of warehouse and terminus for caravans for centuries) and due east of the railway station. See Frishman, *The Spatial Growth*, 95 – 100

[152] *Ibid*., 106 – 107

Map 2: Kano City and the Township



Map 2 indicates the settlement pattern after the creation of the township. Walls surrounded the old city while the township was dotted with European trading space and essential infrastructures such as the rail lines and railway station. The rail line entered Kano from the southern edge of the city. This movement symbolised the new pattern of commodity movement towards and from the south departing from the old predominant northwards movement in pre-colonial times.

From the late colonial period, the two cities emerged as two separate markets for the two communities of readers. Thus two significant loci of book distribution in Kano developed — the township or Sabon Gari Axis for the new circle of literates and the Kurmi or city axis for the traditional community.

The Kurmi/City Axis

The primary book market in this axis has been a segment within the Kurmi Market known as '*Yan Littatafai* (The Book Sellers' Section). With the growing demand for books in the post-colonial period, new outlets for selling books emerged within the city. The most popular among them is the one which developed around the Kano Central Mosque. Then few booksellers ran their business from their houses outside the market.

The Islamic book trade in Kurmi Market began right from the pre-colonial period but not on a large-scale basis. Unfortunately, there are no available records on the trade during pre-colonial times. However, specific sources have offered insights into certain niceties that could be used to reconstruct how the market might have operated primarily in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In all probability, the Kurmi Market was the main centre of the Kano book trade in pre-colonial Kano.[153] This does not rule out the possibility of booksellers holding transactions in the merchants' residences as that was a widespread practice in pre-colonial Kano.

The explorers' accounts indicated that all sorts of European goods were sold in the market, including writing paper.[154] It is important to note that the printed books in circulation in the nineteenth century were very few. The traditional community relied heavily on the manuscripts, whose ownership was mainly through copying. The paper sellers were different from the booksellers. Probably, they served a dual role previously. However, in the early colonial period, as the account of Koki indicated, there was a kind of specialisation. The booksellers played the role of intermediaries and brokers who connected buyers and sellers of books.

[153] In the pre-colonial and even up to the early colonial period, it was the major market for the sale of goods other foodstuff

[154] See the account of Hugh Clapperton quoted above.

The brokerage services were embedded in the pre-colonial economy of Kano. Hugh Clapperton noted that if a *tobe* (a cloth) or *turkadee* (a woman cloth) purchased in Kano were found to be of low quality after being taken to Borno or other distant places, it would be returned with the name of the broker written in the parcel who would return it to the seller. The latter was under obligation to return the money to the buyer. In the kola nut trade, the brokers ensured the honesty of the transaction. They also took the itinerant sellers to the private compounds of the local importers where the deal would take place.[155]

In the same way, presumably, the booksellers of Kurmi Market in the early colonial period collected manuscripts and few printed books in their shops and sold them to their customers. Even when they did not have a book but knew someone who owned it, they linked the potential buyer with the owner. If he were not willing to sell, they would convince him to lend it for copying. Through that, they got paid for their services.[156] Although the brokers and sellers were independent agents in the pre-colonial trade of Kano, in the case of the book market, the booksellers seemed to play the two roles simultaneously.

Presumably, the modern book trade in printed books began in Kurmi Market in the colonial period, possibly in the 1920s, due to the limited services rendered by the Kano Native Authority Press to individuals. Moreover, in the same period, local Islamic scholars had a connection with printing presses in Egypt. Sales of printed books began since then. Unfortunately, the only evidence we have was the account from the colonial records, which indicated that the work of Malam Mahmud,

[155] See Paul Ellsworth Lovejoy, "Polanyi's "Ports of Trade": Salaga and Kano in the Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 16, no. 2 (1982), 262
[156] See Mahmud Koki, *Alhaji Mahmudu Koki: Kano Malam*, Edited by Neil Skinner. (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1977), 34 – 35

the son-in-law of Malam Salga, was sold to local Islamic scholars. There was no proof that the sales occurred in Kurmi Market.[157]

However, given the increasing availability of the printed books coupled with the existence of market structure for the manuscript books, it was likely that the booksellers began to sell printed works in the market. The trade progressed when the booksellers were allocated a segment previously occupied by the kola nut traders in the colonial period.[158] It is not clear when the allocation occurred.

The bookstalls of the market went through different changes. In 1909 when the new structure erected by the British was completed, permanent stalls were built.[159] However, they were doorless, but they protected their occupants and their goods from rain. The booksellers then had to bring samples of their books in book boxes. Then they returned home after the market transactions closed. Since most of them lived close to the market, they could easily supply the items on demand.[160] It was only in the 1950s that some locked-up shops were constructed in some sections of the market. The booksellers, however, continued to operate in the old shops.

[157] For an account of how the work was printed, see chapter two.
[158] See Naniya, "A History of Kurmi Market" 79
[159] In the pre-colonial period, the traders used thatched sheds (Rumfunan Zana). Therefore, the new building in the colonial period represented a progress over the previous structure yet the old practice of returning the articles of trade home after the market was closed continued.
[160] For a sociological study of the neighbourhoods located close to the Kurmi Market, see N. Perchonock, "Social Studies of the Area surrounding Kurmi Market," in C.J. Greenhill (ed.), *Kurmi Market Study*, 67 – 82

- Book Box used by the Booksellers in the Past. Image courtesy of author

- Former Kurmi Market Stall. Image courtesy of author

Picture 1: Wooden Book Box and Bookstore used previously by Booksellers. Image courtesy of author

Some of the earliest booksellers in Kurmi Market, most of my informants can remember were: Alhaji Ajuji, Alhaji Sule and Alhaji Awafi.[161] The latter was said to have stayed in Saudi Arabia before returning to Kano, where he started a business in manuscripts and a few printed books. Perhaps he returned to Kano with the items which he sold.[162] Those who were believed to be the founders of the modern book trade in the market were: Abdullahi Yasari, Sani Adamu, Malam Baban Kabu, Zakari Salga, Malam Ayuba and Muhammad Danjinjiri.[163]

[161] Interview with Malam Musa, Kurmi Market, conducted by author, 22 May 2018.
[162] Interview with Malam Sani Durumin Sambo, Kurmi Market, conducted by author, 22 March 2016.
[163] There is a kind of consensus among all my informants that these were the pioneers of the modern Islamic book trade in the Kurmi Market. I have not found a single informant who contradicted this information.

However, it is evident that in the 1950s, the trade had experienced modest expansion when the modern entrepreneurs who joined the business introduced innovation in the market. Several factors are responsible for this expansion. Around 1945, when Gaskiya Corporation was established, the economy of Nigeria, which compressed during the Second World War, began to recover. The booksellers were already printing their works from the company at that time. Then in the 1940s, private presses owned by the Yoruba were in operation. These developments further enhanced the sources of books for the traders.[164]

From the 1950s, the newly established markets that emerged in the township began to overtake Kurmi Market, which could no longer serve the growing demand of the expanding population of Kano. The main rival became the Sabon Gari Market, strategically located in Kano's new Central Business District (CBD). The two critical centres gradually took up different specialisations. While Sabon Gari became a market for goods mainly obtained from the European companies, Kurmi Market specialised in local products. However, it became more regional than Sabon Gari. This latter feature had helped it to emerge as a regional centre of the Islamic book trade.

From a survey of 557 stalls in 1971 and 1972 in the Kurmi Market, stocks worth 120,660 and weekly sales of 53,000 pounds were recorded. Textiles and clothing represented the highest percentage in terms of sales per week, constituting about 22.5 percent. Moreover, out of 195 purchasers interviewed, only 51 percent came from the Kano metropolis, and 21.6 percent came from outside Kano. Conversely, in Sabon Gari Market, at least 82 percent of 144 purchasers

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The children of most of these sellers have inherited the profession of their parents at present. Two other booksellers joined these pioneers: Sharif Bala Gabari and Muhammad Inuwa. The former was initially a copyist of Alhaji Abdullahi Yasari. He established his business subsequently while the latter was a friend to Sani Adamu who invited him to join the business. The stories of these great booksellers can be found in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

[164] For a full account of the emergence of the local printing industry, see the chapter six.

interviewed came from the metropolitan area, and only 8 percent were residents outside Kano. This shows that Kurmi was more regional than Sabon Gari.

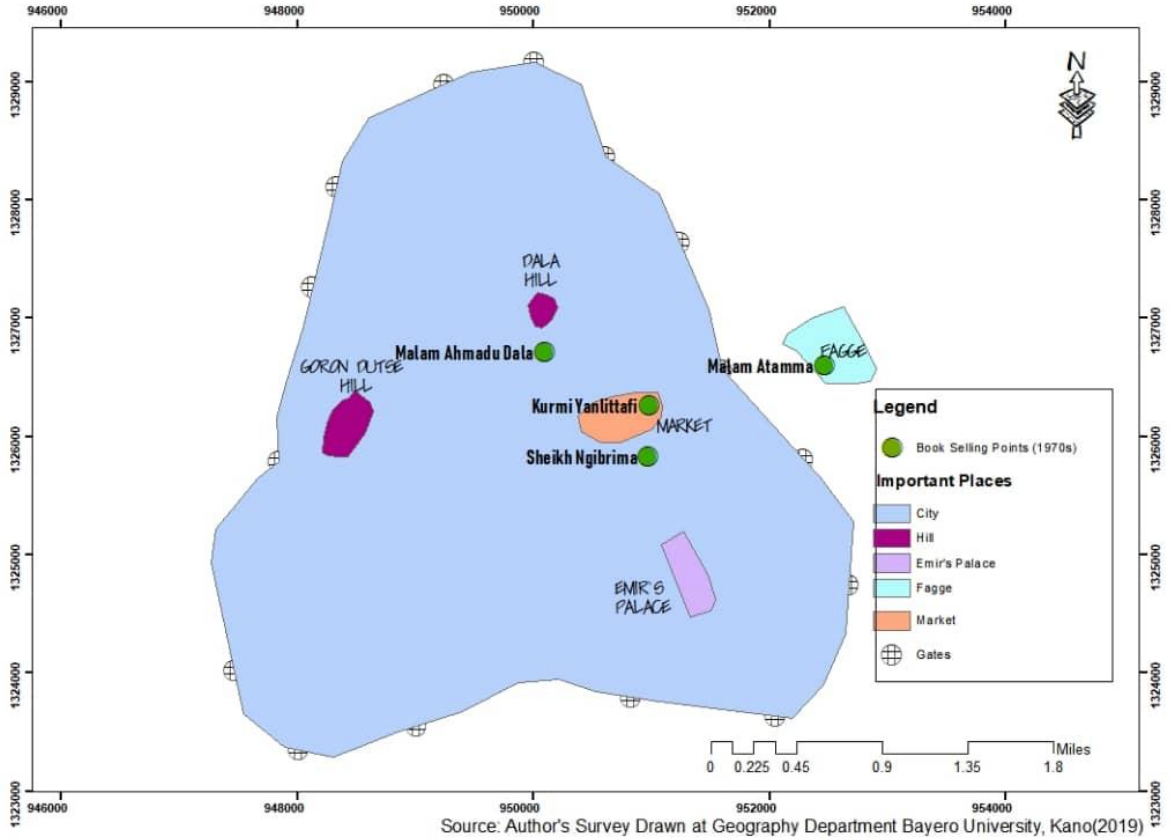
The statistical figures also show that up to the early 1970s, the book trade was very modest since no mention was made of books in the report among the dominant products in the market.[165] The market, however, expanded in the late 1970s when the principal book dealers established a link with a company in Beirut.[166]

An indication that the Islamic segment of the KBM grew in the 1970s was the emergence of other Islamic booksellers in the city axis whose shops were located outside the Kurmi Market. Some of these sellers had ventured into the profession before the 1970s, perhaps as small-scale traders. It was, however, in the 1970s that their business ventures reached their peak.

On the other hand, three Islamic booksellers operated from their residences around this time. Malam Amadu Dala established his business in Dala Quarters, Muhammad Ngibrima in Lalloki, and Muhammad Atamma Fagge (1904 – 1977) in Fagge Quarters. They engaged in wholesale and retail trade. The itinerant traders purchased from them sometimes on credit.[167]

[165] This has been vindicated by several oral interviews I conducted in which all my informants emphasised that the expansion of the bookselling section of the Kurmi Market was in a fairly recent period, possibly in the late 1970s.
[166] The account of this connections is discussed fully in chapter seven.
[167] For his biography and analysis of his works, see Sani Ibrahim Bello, "*al-Shaykh Muḥammad Atamma Ibn Aḥmad al-Aghdasiy* (1904 - 1977)*, ḥayātuhu wa musāḥamatuhu al-ʿIlmiyya min khilāl kutubihi*" (PhD Dissertation, Bayero University, Kano, 2014)

Map 3: Kurmi Market and other Bookstalls in the City Axis in the 1970s



Source: Author's Survey Drawn at Geography Department Bayero University, Kano(2019)

The most prominent was Shaykh Muhammad Ngibrima (b. 1902 – d. 1975), originally from Nguru in Yobe, north-eastern Nigeria. He had operated an international book business in Kano from the 1950s. This is evident from the information on cover pages of some books he either published, compiled or supervised their publication.[168] One such book was Aliyu Harazim's *al-Faḍlu wal Imtinān,* printed by a Cairene publisher, Mustapha al-Babi al-Halabi (MBH). Ngibrima supervised the publication of this text. The vague phrase — it was published under the supervision of (*ṭubiʿa bi ihtimām*) Shaykh Gibrima bin Muhammad — was written on the cover page indicating that Ngibrima was not its publisher, but played a role in its compilation, publication logistics or some

[168] Aliyu Harazim, *al-Faḍlu wal Imtinān* (Cairo: Mustapha al-Babi al-Halabi, 1954)

form of editing. In the cover page of another book, *majmūʿat thalāth majālis saniyya*, also printed by MBH and compiled by Ngibrima, it was explicitly indicated that Ngibrima was its publisher, and the back cover page was used for advertising four other books he presumably published recently, two of which were personally authored by him.[169] This latter evidence clearly shows that Ngibrima was already an established publisher and bookseller by 1954, and he had a connection with Egyptian publishers since then.

Playing the dual role of author and bookseller, Ngibrima was one of northern Nigeria's most prominent Tijani scholars. His residence in Kano perhaps dated back to the 1940s.[170] The books he dealt with were either those he authored or imported/printed from especially Egypt. He had several copyists whom he commissioned to copy texts for him, many of them based in Nguru. One of his scribes in Kano was Malam Sani Darma.

The books were sold wholesale to local, national and international dealers. He had customers from Central African countries. One of his erstwhile shop assistants could remember Abba Aswad from Chad and Alhaji Ali from Cameroon as some of Ngibrima's international customers.[171] Some of his shopkeepers became booksellers running their independent business; one of them was

[169] Muhammad Ngibrima, *majmūʿal-thalāth majālis saniyya,* (Cairo: MBH, 1954). The book contains homilies of some descendants of Shaykh Ahmadu Tijani as well as a poem by Muhammad Khamis Shuaibu (b. 1902/903 – d. 1955/1956). Like Ngibrima, the latter was a disciple of Shaykh Abubakar Atiku. See *ALA II*, 275

[170] It is not clear when he settled permanently in Kano. It is, however, certain that by 1950, he was living in Kano. This was the period when Aliyu Harazimi, (not to be confused with Harazimi the associate of Ahmadu Tijani, the founder of Tijaniyya brotherhood) an emerging Islamic scholar in Kano became his disciple and settled in his residence for Sufi training. See Auwalu Muhammad Hassan, "The Impact of the Teachings of Shaykh Aliyu Harazimi on Tijaniyya Tariqa in Kano C. 1950 – 2013." (MA Dissertation, Bayero University, Kano, 2014) 47 – 48. Also it is not certain when his book business began. According to Muhammad Abubakar Wasiri, one of his sales clerks, Shaykh Ngibrima started selling books during the reign of Sarki Sanusi (1954 – 1963). However, it was in the late 1960s and early 1970s that the business reached its peak.

[171] Interview with Muhammad Abubakar Wasiri, conducted by author, 18 May 2016.

Muhammad Sani Kurna.[172] After Ngibrima died in 1975, his family could not manage the business effectively, leading to its decline. The same fate befell the two other enterprises mentioned above.

The expansion of the late 1970s and early 1980s resulted in the proliferation of roadside booksellers, the prominent among whom were those who established their businesses in the premises of Friday (*Juma'at*) mosques in Kano. Among the latter category, the most famous was the booksellers' market of Kano Central Mosque located right in the northern gate of the Kano Emir's Place.[173] Another outlet emerged adjacent to Waje/Fagge Juma'at Mosque in Fagge Quarters outside the walled city.

Several factors can be attributed to the proliferation of these markets. The growth of the itinerant book trade in Kano was one of the contributing factors. In the 1970s, such vendors advertised books as they were riding bicycles. Others carried books on their heads and went round the city and township for sale. The need to establish permanent space for their business made some of them settle permanently around mosques. Malam Ibrahim Mandawari (b. 1948) was the first bookseller to start selling books in the premises of Kano Central Mosque in the late 1970s or early 1980s.[174]

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[172] See Lawan Jafar Tahir, *A Scholar of his Generation: The Life and Times of Sheikh Muhammad Ngibrima*, (Beirut: CAS, 2006) 88

[173] The role of mosques as a centre of book trade has been an old tradition in Africa. This can be at least traced back to the nineteenth century according to the study of Stewart. In his analysis of the nineteenth-century book buying trip of Shaykh Sidiyya, from West Africa to North Africa, he highlighted the Shaykh's purchases from mosques and zawiyas which constituted more than one quarter of his total of his purchase. He bought 35 items from the mosque of the Zawiya of Ibn Yusuf and another 20 items were bought from the Zawiya of Sidi Ibn Abbas. See Charles Stewart, "A New Source on the Book Market in Morocco in 1830 and Islamic Scholarship in West Africa," *Hespéris Tamuda* 11(1970), 209 – 246

[174] Ibrahim and Aminu were the children of Malam Muhammadu nicknamed Mai Charbi for his sale of Muslim prayer beads (*misbaha*). A profession inherited by Ibrahim but who went further to sell books in addition to the *misbaha*. His training was entirely in traditional Islamic educational system. He began an itinerant career buying books from Kurmi Market and going round the city and township on his bicycle for sale. Eventually, he established himself permanently around the Kano Central Mosque. Afterwards, other booksellers joined him such as Malam Amadu Mai Diwani and Malam Garba.

On the other hand, Ashafa Zarewa (b. 1964) founded the book market of Fagge Mosque almost around the same period.[175]

Picture 2: The Kano Central Mosque. [176]

[175] Born 1964, Ashafa was a student of Shaykh Abubakar Atiku. Just like Malam Ibrahim, he also ventured into the profession as an itinerant bookseller before he found a permanent space around the premises of Fagge Mosque.
It is difficult to say exactly in which years the two book markets were established. In interviews with the two pioneers, none of them mentioned exact date. According to Malam Ibrahim Mandawari, he began selling books in the premises of Kano Central Mosque when his son, Abdulhadi (forty years old in 2019) was between five and seven years old. That gives us an approximate dates of between 1984 and 1986. On his part, Ashafa Zarewa mentioned that he used the premises of the Waje Mosque as a resting place after he went round for book sale. He only settled permanently during the period of Obasanjo administration (1976 – 1979). From these two accounts, the Fagge book market was older, however, the booksellers of Central Mosque generally believe that their market predated that of Fagge Mosque.

[176] A Picture of Kano Central Mosque, "Great Mosque of Kano," https://hotels.ng/places/ accessed August 22, 2020,
https://hotels.ng/places/media/poi/845/kano%20mos.jpg-845-576209c6b6347.jpg?w=300

The two markets have had a moderate population of between 20 and 50 booksellers at different periods of their history. They more or less went through a similar trajectory in terms of the nature of marketing. Initially, the booksellers arranged the books on mats or sack material spread on the ground to display books to customers. The increasing criticism from the public on disrespecting sacred texts by spreading them on the ground made them start arranging the books on tables and in kiosks.[177]

Because the trade operated outside the formal economic sector, the sellers were prone to harassment by government and traditional authority resulting in their intermittent closure or relocation. The incident of the Kano Central Mosque Book Market is a case in point. In the early 2000s, the booksellers received directives from the Emir of Kano, Ado Bayero (b. 1930 – d. 2014), to relocate to the other side of the road and barely a year or a few years later were they asked to vacate the premises of the mosque for good. Some of them rented shops opposite the mosque; others established themselves in other Friday mosques. This incident and similar experiences by the roadside traders have exposed the tension between the economic actors that operate outside the structure of the modern state and the government itself.[178] Such clash is encapsulated in divergent narratives and often opposing views on the legitimacy of occupying space for business purposes without approval from the government.

The fate of these roadside outlets is inextricably linked to the Kurmi Market. Since their inception, the booksellers relied heavily on the dealers of Kurmi. In the early 1980s, during the military

[177] Interview with Ibrahim Muhammad Mandawari, Kabara Ward, Kano, conducted by author, 21 July 2019
[178] This information was received from several booksellers of the Kano Central Mosque: Malam Ibrahim Mandawari, Kabara Ward, July 21, 2019; Abubakar Yahaya, BUK Old Site, April 27, 2019; Nasiru Jibril, BUK Old Site, April 12, 2019 and Mustapha Dandume, Red Bricks Quarters, June 8, 2019

administration of Muhammadu Buhari, when many restrictions were imposed on importation, the KBM was generally struck by book scarcity. The value of old books rose. To satisfy the demands of their customers, the booksellers began to deal in old books by buying from readers or deceased families who were willing to sell individual books or a whole collection.[179] Since then, the selling of used books became part of their specialisations. In the following decade, the Kano Central Mosque Book Market became a centre of attraction for Islamic scholars, students and bibliophiles who searched for rare items, especially when an old valuable collection was available for sale.[180] The booksellers also offered their services to the deceased's families as they gave estimates of the pecuniary value of the library collections left by the dead. Similarly, they bought from such collections.

Limited capital and proximity to the main centre made the sellers of the Kano Central Mosque frequent the Kurmi Market. Fridays were special days for them because many congregants would attend prayers. Some of them would stop by and purchase books and other goods displayed on the market premises. Most sellers would go to the Kurmi Market on Saturdays to get new stock after the previous day's sales. The weekly bulk purchase from the main centre varied from one merchant to the other depending on their capital, but on average, the small-scale traders purchased between 20 and 50 books while those who had enough capital could buy between 300 and 500 copies of several or many titles. These purchases excluded stocks they would buy on other days of the week when buyers showed up asking for books that could fetch reasonable profit for the bookseller, such that the profit margin could cover the transportation cost to and from Kurmi Market.[181]

[179] Interview with Ibrahim Mandawari, July 21, 2019
[180] Interview with Mustapha Dandume, June 8, 2019
[181] Interview with Hassan Nuhu, Fagge Mosque, conducted by author, 25 April, 2019; Interview with Abubakar Yahaya, 27 April 2019

On the other hand, the rise of the Kano Market Literature (KML) resulted in the proliferation of bookshops that specialised in Hausa novels that operated mainly in the township axis but with few others within the city.[182] One of such shops was Jakara City Bookshop. The owner, Muhammad Na Alhaji, was a roadside bookseller in the 1970s who was operating around the Plaza Cinema near Kwari Textile Market but relocated to Jakara in 1984. He was an agent of Gaskiya Corporation/NNPC. He sold newspapers and a few Hausa books around the cinema.

During the military administration of Muhammadu Buhari (1983 – 1985) and following the government programme of War against Indiscipline, draconian measures were put in place to curb what the government considered as disorderly actions such as habitual rush and scramble to secure services, disregard for queues, littering the streets and homes, reckless driving, negative work ethic exemplified in truancy and many others.[183] The implementation of the programme varied from one state to the other. In the case of Kano, part of the local initiatives was to ban roadside trade. For that reason, Na Alhaji relocated to Jakara Quarters about 850 metres west of Kurmi Market.

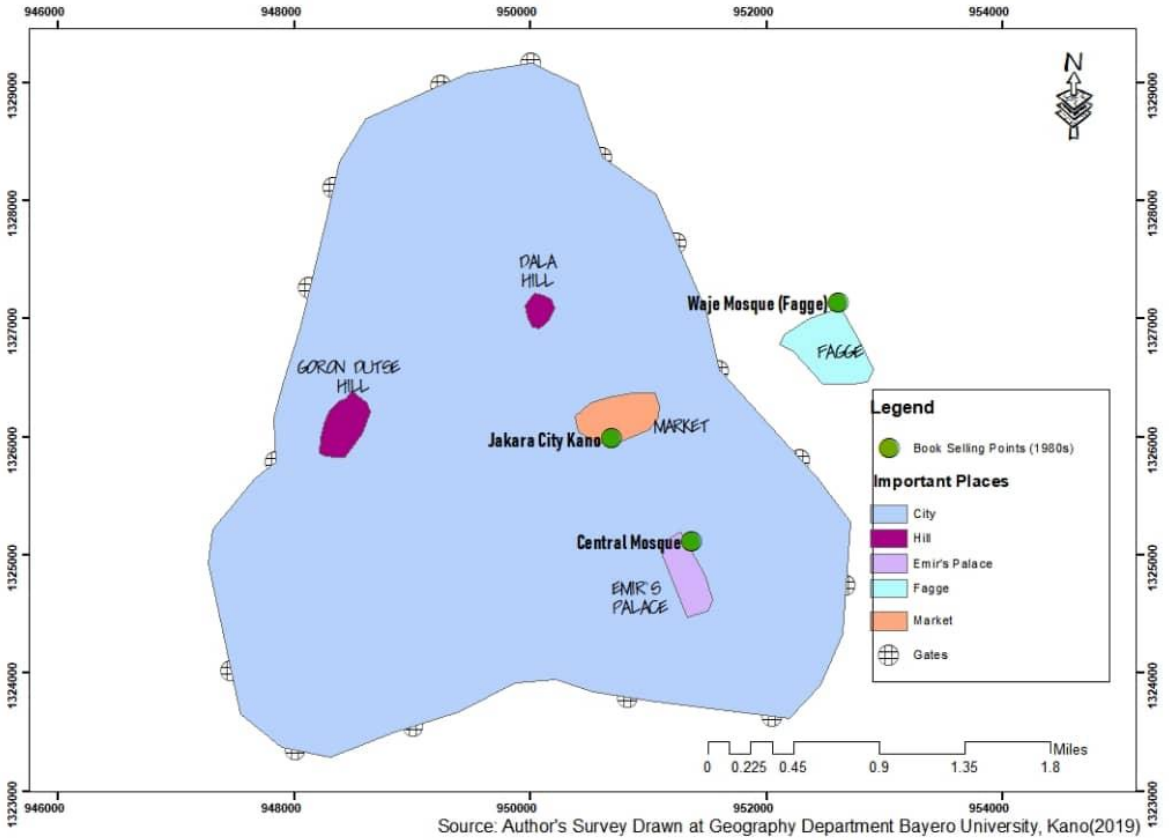
These bookselling outlets remained the central rallying point of buyers and readers within Kano old city. As the population expanded, more bookshops opened in isolated locations within and outside the city. Map 4 indicates the prominent bookselling locations in the city axis in the 1980s. These locations, by no means, captured all the individual bookshops or stalls. The focus here is on areas of large concentrations of booksellers. It is noteworthy that the market has further expanded due to the growing demand for books, especially in the Kurmi market neighbourhoods. In a

[182] For the Hausa Book Market, see chapter eight

[183] See Chikwendu Christian Ukaegbu, "Indiscipline in Nigeria: Causes, Patterns, Interventions and Implications for National Development," *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 25, no. 1, 1997, 63

nutshell, three new centres emerged: the Jakara Bookshop and two mosque markets, while the previous stalls belonging to individual traders collapsed.

Map 4: Major Book Outlets in Kano in the 1980s



English/Hausa Book Markets and Evolution of the Township Axis

The two axes specialised in different texts. As noted above, in the city axis, the main centres engaged in Islamic book trade while outlets of English books dotted several areas outside the walled city, especially places around Sabon Gari.[184] Perhaps it is pertinent to sketch the trajectory

[184] However as the population grew rapidly, especially in the first decade of the new millennium, scattered bookshops with different specialisations have emerged all-over places in the two axes. It is therefore simplistic at present to talk of division of the two axes in terms of their specialisations.

of the English Book Market in Kano to contextualise the discussion around the evolution of geographical spaces in the township.

The origin of the English Book Market in Nigeria can be traced back to the early twentieth century when European publishers and Christian missionaries established book distribution channels in southern Nigeria.[185] In southwestern Nigeria, the books were both in Yoruba and English. A report of the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) Bookshop in Lagos in 1924 indicated the sales of 90,000 reading textbooks, 10,000 Yoruba-language Bibles and 9,000 prayer books, with an increase by over 2,000 in sales of Yoruba-language Bibles and hymnals from the previous year. The store only sold 769 town histories and other non-religious texts during the same period.[186]

With many branches in southern Nigeria, the CMS book business was centralised with a committee overseeing the West African market. Although there were local bookshops from the 1930s in Lagos, the CMS became the dominant supplier of books almost throughout the colonial period. In 1950, all its branches were incorporated as CMS (Nigeria) Bookshop, and profits for the year totalled £200,000 in Lagos and £100,000 in Port Harcourt, their two largest shops.[187]

In the 1950s, there was a re-orientation of the content and aims of education towards local needs. The new syllabi required new reading materials. Thus British publishers began to establish new structures for local publishing. From 1949 onwards — with the opening of an office in Ibadan by Oxford University Press (OUP) — the multinational publishing companies began to open local branches. This endeavour re-echoes the case of India, where the local needs dictated the activities

[185] We can, however trace the development of the book in the first half of the nineteenth century when various Christian missions established printing presses for the production of tracts and other religious materials.
[186] Regan Buck Bardeen, "Utilitarian Pleasures: Print Culture and the Development of a Reading Public in South-western Nigeria," (PhD Dissertation, University of California, 2013), 70
[187] *Ibid*, 141 – 143

of British publishing companies contrary to the simplistic understanding of the colonies as dumping ground for the unwanted colonial literature.[188]

The establishment of local branches was pursued vigorously by other multinational publishers in the 1960s. These were: Longman Nigeria (1961), Oxford University Press (1963), Macmillan (1965) and Pilgrim Book Limited (1963). Other multinational publishers from this period were: Evans Brothers, Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited, Cambridge University Press, William Collins Son and Co., Heinemann and Pilgrim. The latter operated under the imprint, African Universities Press Limited. Most of these companies concentrated on textbook publishing. Nigerian publishers also emerged during this period joining the pioneer Onibonoje Publishers. In addition, many printers/publishers also founded their businesses across the country: the most popular were those who printed Onitsha Market Literature.[189]

In 1964, the National Library for the whole country was established.[190] On April 14, 1965, the Nigerian Publishers Association (NPA) was formed with Chief T. T. Solaru of Oxford University Press as its first president. Also, academic publishing began with the foundation of Ibadan University Press in 1966.[191] Thus in the 1960s, the structure of the modern Nigerian book industry was well underway.

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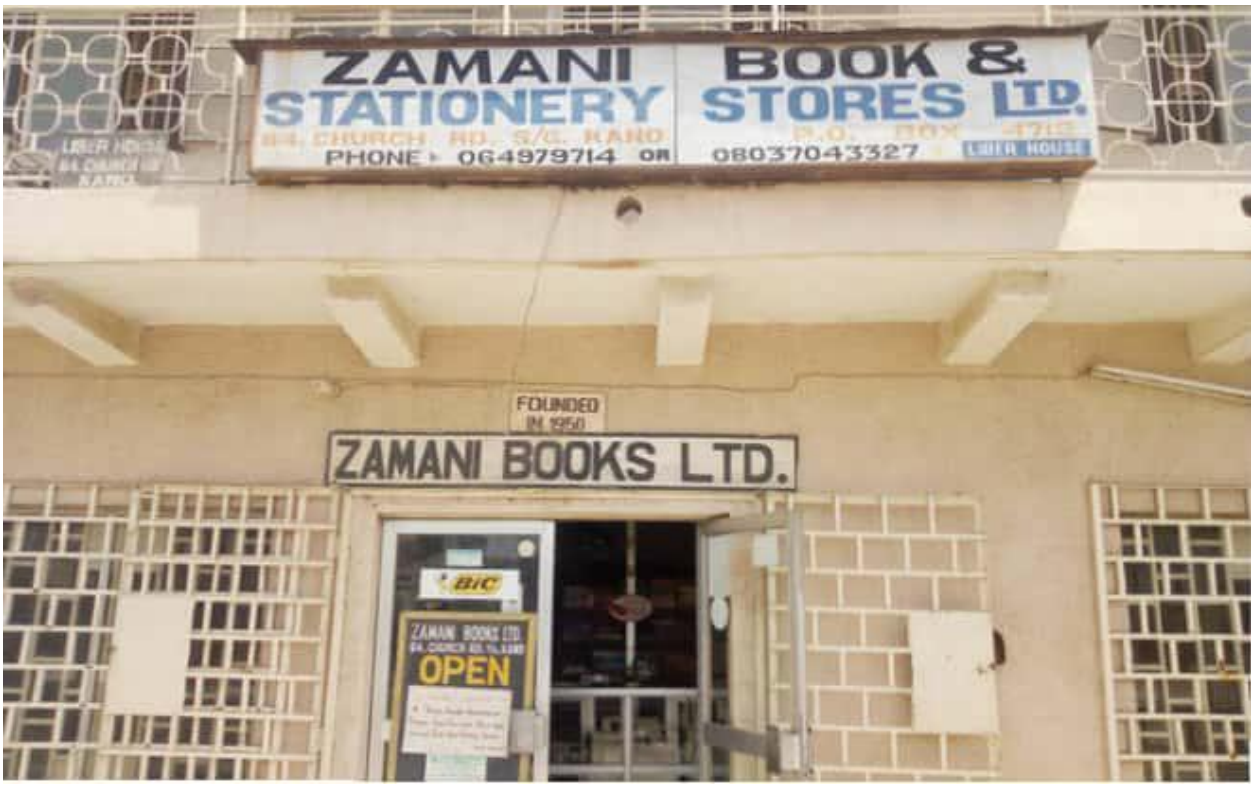
[188] See Rimi B. Chatterjee, "Every Line for India:" The Oxford University Press and the Rise and Fall of the Rulers of India Series" in Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakravorty (eds.*), Print Areas: Book History in India*. (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010), 65 – 102

[189] See Mabel Segun, "Book Development: Policies, Programmes and Prospects," in Tekena Nitonye Tamuno and Joseph Adebowale Atanda (eds.), *Nigeria Since Independence: The First Twenty-Five Years* Vol III, (Ibadan: Heinmann, 1989), 191 – 192

[190] In 1970, National Library Decree was promulgated which mandated the Library to be preparing national bibliography, and to become the legal depository of all publications. From 1974, it began to process the applications for ISBN and from 1976 for International Standard Serial Number Code.

[191] By 1979, the University of Ibadan Press had nearly 300 titles in print. Presses were established by other universities such as University of Ife, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and the University of Lagos.



Picture 3: Zamani Bookshop Kano[192]

In the case of Kano, the 1950s and 1960s were also critical periods in the expansion of the geography of the English Book Market.[193] Two bookselling centres emerged, which remained dominant to date. The first one sprang up around Church Road in Sabon Gari Quarters, pioneered

[192] A Picture of Zamani Bookshop, "Kano Bookshop now Lonely Shadows," Daily Trust, accessed August 22, 2020, https://content.dailytrust.com.ng/wpcontent/uploads/2018/06/2018_6large_Kano_bookshops_now_lonely_shadows.jpg

[193] Before 1950, there were a few bookshops in Kano metropolis. Throughout colonial period there was no evidence to indicate the existence of roadside book markets. In the 1930s, in addition to the few stalls in Kurmi Market, few books were sold at Kano City Arab Canteen probably located within the city axis. Then there was the Syrian Bookshop in the Syrian Quarters. The latter shops were outlets for selling Literature Bureau books. See Provincial Superintendent of Education, Kano Province, Letter to the District Officer, Kano Emirate, April 2, 1935, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration.

by Zamani Bookshop established on January 26, 1950, by Pa Abraham Amutsaghan Ogbodobri.[194] After his death, his sons, Bernard and Raphael, took over the business.[195] The first location of the bookshop was Bello Road. Later it relocated to Church Road, which later formed the nucleus of the English book trade.[196] Gradually other booksellers opened their shops on the street. It became the most prominent location of standard bookshops in Kano.

On the other hand, in January 1966, one Jibril Muhammad Ibrahim, a Hausa man and founder of the roadside book market in the township, began to sell books around the present Bata Roundabout (Bayan Bata) located opposite the Sabon Gari Market.[197] He was initially a newspaper vendor. His career began when his uncle asked him to buy books for his children on January 15, 1966, which he purchased from Zamani bookshop.[198] Instead of buying the number of copies requested, Jibril bought extra and sold them. Since then, he began to sell books in addition to newspapers. Few others had joined him before some of them relocated to the roadside book market of Post Office Road. The latter development occurred immediately after the Nigerian Civil War (1966 - 1970) in 1970.[199] Therefore, by the 1970s and 1980s, the three major centres of the township book market emerged: Church Road, Bata and Post Office.

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[194] See David L. Smith, "Kano is a book lover's paradise" *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg and Cape Town), 10 March 2016, https://mg.co.za/article/2016-03-10-kano, accessed onhttps://www.dailytrust.com.ng/kano-bookshops-now-lonely-shadows.html accessed November 24, 2019; Ibrahim Musa Giginyu, "Kano bookshops now lonely shadows" *Daily Trust Newspapers*, (Abuja), 16 June, 2018, https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/kano-bookshops-now-lonely-shadows.html accessed November 24, 2019.

[195] After the death of the founder, the business was taken over by his son Mr Bernard M. Ogbodobri who was Chief Executive Officer since 2010

[196] Interview with Jibril Muhammad Ibrahim, Bata Roundabout, conducted by author, 25 April 2019

[197] According to Jibril Muhammad, around that period, the only standard book stores were Zamani Bookshop, Emma Bookshop and Johnson Bookshop

[198] I think my informant easily remembered this date because it was an important period in the history of Nigeria. It was on that day that the first military coups was staged, and the Premier of Northern Region, Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, was killed.

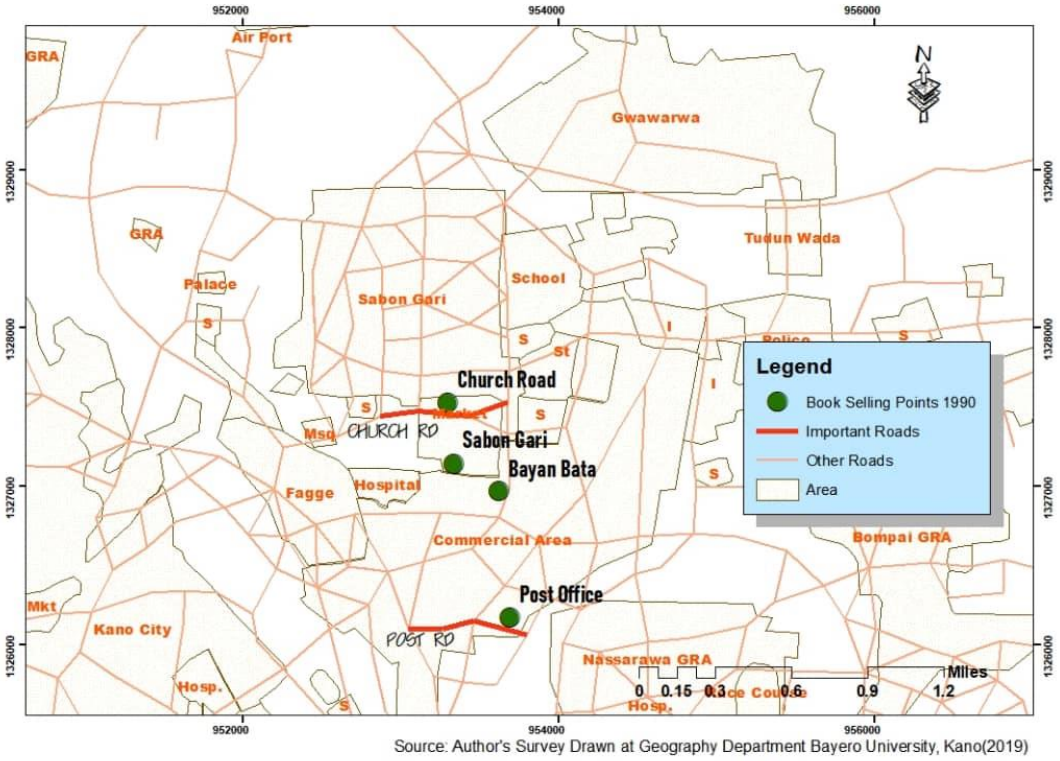
[199] The Igbos who sold newspapers in front of the Post Office left Kano during the war period for fear of attacks.

Picture 4: A Photo of Jibril Muhammad Ibrahim. Image courtesy of Auwal Muhammad

The period between the 1970s and 1990s was that of modest growth of the English Book Market. The expansion can be attributed to several factors. One, Sabon Gari Market since the 1970s became a significant centre in Kano, overshadowing the Kurmi Market. Two, sections of the market specialised in Hausa and English book trade. Although the business growth in English literature was moderate, that cannot be true of the Hausa popular fiction. The latter experienced a boom, especially in the 1990s, and the Sabon Gari Market became the central distribution centre.[200]

[200] The account of this expansion has been discussed in chapter seven.

Map 5: Major Book Outlets in the Township in the 1990s



Source: Author's Survey Drawn at Geography Department Bayero University, Kano(2019)

Two, population growth resulted in the expansion of reading communities which meant a rise in demands for books. The following table gives statistics for the trend in the Kano population.

Table 1: Changing Pattern of Kano Population (1963 – 2006)

Year	Population
1963	5,407,183[201]
1991	5,846,404[202]
2002	7,786,043
2003	8,150,465
2004	8,379,216
2005	8,608,921
2006	9,383,682[203]

[201] Kano State Government. *Kano Statistical Year Book 1970*, (Kano: Economic Planning Division, n.d.), 21

[202] Kano State Government. *Statistical Year Book 2006*. (Kano: Kano Statistics Department, 2007), 6. The figures from 2002 up to 2005 were obtained from the same source.

[203] Kano State Government, *Statistical Year Book 2012*. (Kano: Ministry of Planning and Budget, 2013), 5

It is evident from the above population figures that Kano had experienced tremendous expansion from the 1990s onwards. Between 1963 and 1991, there was a marginal increase in the population of just a little over 400,000. However, between 1991 and 2002, the population increased by about 1.9 million people. Although the state's territorial boundaries changed between 1963 and 1991, the population increased significantly between 1991 and 2002, when the boundaries remained the same. Between 1991 and 2006, there was an increase of 62 percent of the population.

Three, people's attitude kept on shifting in favour of Western education, especially when it became evident that only through the certificates of formal schools one could get gainful employment in both public and private sectors of the economy. Except for subjects on local languages, the language of instruction in all other subjects has been English; thus, the indispensability of English textbooks in schools. Table 2 shows the trend in primary school enrolment in Kano since the 1960s.

Table 2: Number of Primary Schools and Enrolment of their Students in Kano (1962 – 2011)

Year	Number of Primary Schools	Enrolment
1962	212[204]	31,758
1967	241	47,138
1972	530	96,383
1993	2091	1,008,169
2010	3,324[205]	1,054,994
2011	3,560	1,115,224

[204] Kano State Government, *Kano Statistical Year Book 1972*. (Kano: Economic Planning Division), 89 – 90. The figures for number of schools and enrolment from 1967 up to 1993 were obtained from the same source.
[205] Kano State Government, *Statistical Year Book 2012 Edition*, 130

The table indicates a tremendous increase in the number of primary schools and enrolment of students. Students of all levels of education account for 95 percent of total book use in Nigeria. The implication of this is that most of the books in circulation were textbooks. From the late 1990s, higher demands of textbooks had expanded all the centres for the book trade in the township. Since the school textbooks have constituted the most significant percentage of the literature sold in Nigerian markets, expansion of schools resulted in higher demand for English books.

Mobility within the Geographical Space

According to Osundina, there are four easily identifiable channels of book distribution in Nigeria: the academic (universities and other institutions of higher learning), general (bookshops), government (distribution of books to schools by the government) and the libraries.[206] It is simplistic to classify the distribution networks into four broad categories due to the multitude of overlapping relationships among the various components of the distribution. It would be better to assess the mobility of texts within their geographical spaces. That would reveal the implicit complexities permeating the channels of distribution. This approach would be more useful than simply using specific categories as if the channels existed independently. In the case of the KBM, its three principal segments (English, Hausa and Islamic Book Markets) have developed distinct patterns of distribution, which became well entrenched in the trade, especially from the 1990s. The following paragraphs account for the text mobility in each of the three segments of the KBM.

[206] Ibid., 59 – 70

Starting with the Islamic Book Market, its sources are either internal or external.[207] The external provenance was dominated, since the colonial period, by two Arab countries — Lebanon and Egypt. From these areas, the importers from Kurmi Market or local authors who self-published their works abroad would transport their stocks to Kano, primarily via Lagos and distribute them to wholesalers within and outside Kano. The roadside Islamic booksellers obtained their supplies chiefly from the importers in Kurmi Market for retail trade. The external geography of the market has been consistent: the predominant sources of the Islamic books right from the colonial period, as noted above, have been either Egypt or Lebanon. The only exception is the case of Islamic English books that were mainly imported from Pakistan. In addition to the distribution channel starting from importers through wholesalers and retailers, educational institutions such as universities and colleges of education would buy stocks directly from the Islamic booksellers or, in some cases, contract the latter to supply books for their libraries.[208]

The internal geography of the Islamic Book Market is much more complicated but has been consistent since the 1950s. The two primary sources of books have been either Kaduna or Kano. In Kaduna, the leading supplier was Gaskiya Corporation. It had been dominant for about three decades. From the Corporation in Zaria or from Kano-based printing presses, the books would reach Kurmi Market, from where they dispersed to several categories of wholesalers who ran their businesses within and outside Kano. Recently, the booksellers printed their books from a few

[207] The internal dynamics of the Islamic book distribution is treated in chapters four and five while the external one is discussed in chapter six.

[208] Interview with Hassan Yasari, Kurmi Market, conducted by author, 22 May, 2016. For example, Bayero University Kano had contracted this informant to supply English Islamic books for them from India. However, he met the terms of the contract only partially due to delays in processing his visa application and the change in the exchange rate with the weakening of naira.

publishing companies in Kaduna. In either of the cases, Kano played and still plays a dominant role as a distribution centre of Islamic books in Nigeria.

On the other hand, a kind of reversed track from the bottom to the top is the dominant mobility pattern regarding used Islamic books and manuscripts. Most of these books were obtained from the deceased's families in a bulk purchase of a whole collection or from a living owner who needed cash. Instead of Kurmi Market playing a central role, in this case, the roadside book outlets were the starting point. Most of these books were bought and sold in the same location. As a result of the close relationship between these traders and the buyers, they were aware of their customers' preferences; once a particular book was available, they knew to whom to advertise such a book. Often they would not display rare texts they procured for general sale. They reserved it for their target customers.[209] They kept such rare books for particular clientele for two reasons. Such particular buyers would pay a reasonable amount for the book, and secondly, satisfying customers' demands was a way of improving one's business. In some cases, the dealers in Kurmi Market referred their customers to the roadside markets to purchase used books.

For the English/Hausa Book Market, the geography links northern Nigeria to the southern region. The books have two major provenances: The dealers in Kano, primarily from Sabon Gari Market or Church Road, obtained their stock from the multinational publishers mainly located in Lagos and Ibadan and from leading dealers in these areas and Aba in south-eastern Nigeria. For Hausa academic books, the primary source had been Northern Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC) in Zaria.[210] The NNPC had inherited the publishing aspect of the Gaskiya Corporation. From these

[209] Interview with Mustapha Dandume, Red Bricks Quarters, Kano, conducted by author, 8 June 2019. Dandume took old books to Shaykh Umar Kabo who, before his death, had one of the largest collections in Kano.

[210] In the 1960s, Gaskiya Corporation entered into partnership with Macmillan. The latter suggested the splitting off of the publishing activities from the main body leading to the creation of the Northern

two sources, the books came to Kano, which served as a secondary centre. These Kano dealers distributed the books to the wholesalers in Bata Roundabout, Post Office and other locations. The leading dealers also sold to schools and engaged in retail trade.

The roadside and small scale booksellers (in Bata Roundabout/Bayan Bata and Post Office Road) played a critical role in the distribution network. After buying from the leading dealers, they sold to schools or readers directly. They, at the same time, performed several other functions. They dealt in old books, advertised and promoted amateur self-published authors' works, and offered advice to writers on marketing strategies. Some of them experimented with buying books directly from Lagos, but such undertakings ended in failure because of the limited capital they had, and after obtaining their stocks and paying for transport fare, they ended up with little or no profit. They, therefore, preferred buying from dealers, who also ordered from Lagos but with a more robust capital base.[211]

The publishing companies also have had their offices in Kano, and they assigned educational representatives to supply the books to bookshops based on 'sale or return' or, in rare cases, to roadside booksellers who would have to make payment upfront before goods were supplied. The roadside booksellers, in some cases, went to the branches of the company themselves to purchase the items they needed.

In the Hausa popular fiction sub-segment of the Hausa Book Market, the sources have been within Kano. The books were purchased from the various printing houses scattered in different areas of

Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC) which took over the publishing aspect. In the partnership Gaskiya owned 51% and Macmillan 49% with the former giving out the rights of 253 title while the latter gave over only two titles. See Hussaini Hayatu, "NORLA and the Establishment of Publishing in the former Northern Nigeria: an Overview from the Colonial Times to the Present," in Hussaini Hayatu (ed.), *50 Years of Truth: The Story of Gaskiya Corporation Zaria*, (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation), 83

[211] Interview with Auwal Muhammad, Bayan Bata, Kano, conducted by author, April 22, 2019

the metropolis. From there, they dispersed to the two axes. They moved to several bookshops (such as Jakara City and Gidan Dabino Bookshops) and a few bookstalls in the Kurmi Market. These outlets are all located in the city axis. However, the dominant Hausa book market in the township has been the Sabon Gari Market, where the leading dealers had their bookshops. From these two critical centres, the novels travelled to various destinations within and outside Kano. Wholesalers from different areas of Nigeria and beyond came to Kano to purchase books from these dealers.

Conclusion

Since the invention of print technology, which resulted in the emergence of the modern book, print media became pervasive in human history. The print technology not only modernised books but also resulted in the expansion of their markets. The example of Europe from the early modern period is a case in point. Perhaps the main similitude we can derive between European printing history and sub-Saharan Africa, as exemplified by the KBM, is the role of print technology in the expansion of the book market. The influential work of Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin titled *the Coming of the Book*, mapped out the geography of the print areas in early modern Europe. Following Fevbre and Martin, this chapter has used a conceptual tool of studying the circulation of the books through the lens of geography.

The geography of the book market in Kano has gone through rapid transformations, especially with the introduction of print technology which quickened the circulation of texts. There was a single dominant market where exchanges involving writing paper and manuscripts occurred in the pre-colonial period. During that period, the population was estimated between 30,000 and 50,000. In the twentieth century, however, when printing became part of the intellectual life, and the population ran into millions, the spaces kept on stretching, and the market grew into perpetual complexity. During the colonial period, the establishment of the township to accommodate

immigrants from other areas of Nigeria and other countries necessitated the expansion of the market spaces resulting in the proliferation of the book outlets outside the old city. The enduring impact of the dual town project of the colonial administration was the division of the two geographical entities into specialisations, with the walled city meeting the demands of the traditional community and the township for the modern community of readers.

However, by the end of the millennium's first decade, the picture had become much more complicated. The establishment of many Islamic and secular schools allowed booksellers to make fortunes in the book trade. Thus, isolated bookselling spots dotted many locations within the metropolis. These include school-based bookshops located predominantly in the tertiary institutions; stalls in various neighbourhoods; crossroads where itinerant booksellers would hang around traffic lights to display books' cover pages to the motorists held by traffic jam; small kiosks selling books for school pupils; book outlets in almost all the Friday mosques and many others. Kano is referred to as "Book Lovers' Paradise" for this chaotic picture of its book market.[212]

[212] See David L. Smith "Kano is a book lover's paradise" *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg and Cape Town), March 10 2016, https://mg.co.za/article/2016-03-10-kano, accessed onhttps://www.dailytrust.com.ng/kano-bookshops-now-lonely-shadows.html accessed November 24, 2019

Chapter Five

The Internal Communications Circuit of the Kano Islamic Book Market I: The Authors and Publishers

Introduction

The Kano Book Market (KBM) has a complex structure because the role of the bookseller is played at some point by almost all key actors in the communications circuit: the author, the publisher, the printer, and, more importantly, the bookseller. The internal circuit of the book market brings together multiple individuals into a working relationship with the single goal of production and distribution of books. The field of book history in western societies has received attention from scholars working on the various segments of the book cycle. Other studies have tackled the impact of the printing revolution from early modern Europe. This is in addition to multiple models that can be used for the study of the printed book.

Similarly, in the book history of western societies, specialisation is prominent among the key actors in the circuit (readers, authors, publishers and other key actors play distinct roles). To be sure, there are cases of overlap among the agents. However, it is not as well pronounced as the case of the KBM, where the book trade operates at virtually every level of the cycle. What made the book culture particularly *sui generis* is its integration of certain aspects of the manuscript culture into the modern book producing industry.

This chapter unpacks these complex social and economic entanglements and documents the internal dynamics of the Islamic Book Market in Kano. It demonstrates how the book trade operates at the level of authors and publishers. The chapter, first of all, unpacks the two phases of

authorship trajectories in Kano. In the first phase, most authors engaged in multiple forms of relations with other agents such as copyists, financiers, and booksellers. The introduction of computers and the need for authors to obtain International Standard Book Number (ISBN) for their books inscribed them in a new "social network" during the second phase. Instead of relying on patrons and financiers, most authors engaged in self-publishing this time around. However, they were not independent. Their profession relied heavily on the services of typists' shops, graphic design companies and the National Library of Nigeria (NLN), which issues the ISBN. Perhaps the most common attribute that united the authors in the two phases was their direct engagement in the book trade. The rest of the chapter demonstrates how publishers also perform the book-selling role.

The Authors, the Copyists and the Distributors

Islamic books and manuscripts in northern Nigeria are diverse in the subjects they cover. They are classified into four broad categories: research and writing, polemical, devotional and secular. Although shaped by religious discourse, the latter does not deal with the traditional religious sciences of Islam.[213] The dominance of one subject over others is the product of the intellectual atmosphere of a particular period — the social, economic, political and intellectual forces which operate outside the "communications circuit" always shape book production.[214] Reform movement and interstate warfare dominated most of the nineteenth-century Hausaland, and the centre was the Sokoto Caliphate; a substantial percentage of the literature was, therefore, on the justification of the Jihad and the Sokoto Jihadists produced it. Kano did not feature prominently in the intellectual

[213] This categorisation is given by John Hunwick, see John Owen Hunwick, "Overview," in John Owen Hunwick and Rex Seán O'Fahey, *Arabic Literature in Africa Vol. II: The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa*, (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 8. Henceforth *ALA II*

[214] See Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books*? Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982), 74

output of the Caliphate then.[215] However, in the twentieth century, when debates over funeral rituals and folding arms in prayers engulfed the city, rich literature was produced. Kano emerged as a dominant centre of a revival of the two Sufi brotherhoods in Nigeria from the late colonial period: the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya.[216] The brotherhoods in Kano produced two of the most prolific authors of twentieth-century northern Nigeria: Shaykh Abubakar Atiku (b. 1909 – d. 1974) and Shaykh Muhammad Nasiru Kabara, (b. 1925 – d. 1996).[217] Therefore, the literary output of the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods can be seen against the background of this intellectual landscape.

Authorship of the Islamic Books in Kano: The First Phase

The pattern of authorship of Islamic books in Kano can be discussed in two main phases. In the first phase, dating back to the pre-colonial period until the 1960s, the dominant locally authored books were mainly manuscripts, lithographs or handset texts imported from Egypt or printed by the northern Nigerian colonial presses. The manuscript tradition continued well into the colonial period (1903 – 1960). The books were substantially published locally. The writer often played the role of author, publisher and distributor, sometimes with the support of a patron or financier. In the traditional community, most of the authors were driven by spiritual considerations in their

[215] On the history of the Sokoto Caliphate, see Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate,* (London: Longman, 1967)

[216] On Qadiriyya in Nigeria, see Asif Folarin Ahmed, "The Impact of Qadiriyya in Nigeria" (PhD Dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1986). On the Tijaniyya revival, see Rüdiger Seesmann, *The Divine Flood: Ibrahim Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth Century Sufi Revival*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2011); Yasir Anjola Quadri, "The Tijaniyya in Nigeria: A Case Study" (PhD Dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1981). On religious and political development in Kano with extensive discussion of the two Sufi brotherhoods, see John N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Loimeier, Roman. *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria,* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997)

[217] For a list of Kabara's works, see Roman Loimeier, "The Writings of Nasiru Kabara" *Sudanic Africa,* 2 (1991), 165 – 174

production. They saw the ultimate goal of their labour as that of getting a reward from God.[218] Therefore, the guiding principle was not to profit but to recoup the investment outlay for the sustenance of the subsequent productions.[219]

The authors, most of whom were successful Islamic scholars, would seldom compose a religious tract in their own handwriting.[220] They relied on their acolytes (*murids*) to copy their handwritten drafts in most cases. The author would either dictate the draft to his disciple or write it himself and ask a student with good handwriting to copy it. The copyists would see his services as a form of *khidma* (obligatory service) to his master. The Shaykh, on his part, could, once in a while, provide gifts in appreciation of his student's assistance. However, such presents were not considered the reward for the *murid* as it is generally believed that only God could reward such kind of services.[221] Instead, it would be viewed as a token of the author's appreciation.

To illustrate the dynamics of relations between scholar-authors and their acolytes, the case of Shaykh Atiku (noted above as the most prolific Tijani author) and his copyists is discussed here.[222] This case study would help to demonstrate the nature of relations between the author and the copyist in colonial and immediate post-colonial Kano. Atiku had many copyists, but the most

[218] I observed this fact through interaction with the old booksellers and authors. This does not in any way imply the absence of profit motive. The new generation of the book traders who dominated the market from the 1990s are primarily driven by profit making goal.

[219] I observed this disposition from the interviews I conducted with authors of the Islamic books. In fact, many authors would ask a professional bookseller to undertake the production and distribution of their works without collecting any form of royalty even if the book sold well in the market. That is why in the colophons of many texts, the preamble *ṭubiʿa ʿalā nafaqat* (published at the expense of) is followed often by the name of the bookseller who undertakes the publication and distribution of the book.

[220] One of such exceptions was the work written by Shaykh Abubakar Atiku in his handwriting as indicated in the colophon. And it was printed by the Northern Maktabat Printing Press. See Abubakar Atiku, *Risalat tanbīh al-buhāʾi liʾallā yaghtarrū bi-qawl al-sufahaʾ* (Kano: Northern Maktabat Printing Press, 1971), 4.

[221] This is in sharp contrast to the booksellers' copyists who are paid for their services often after reaching an agreement on the terms of the contract.

[222] For the biography of the Shaykh and analysis of his writings, see Abdur-Razaq Solagberu, "A Study of the Sufi Works of Shaykh Abū Bakr ʿAtīq." (PhD Dissertation, University of Ilorin, 2009)

prominent among them was one Mahmud Isma'il Dan Fanna who was the son of Atiku's teacher.[223]

It is difficult to mention the number of scriveners in his service since he often commissioned visiting students with good handwriting to copy his texts.[224] Those who recurrently featured in the colophons of his works were: Muhammad Bashir al-Habashi, Uthman Muhammad al-Sakkwati, Malam Adam Katibi and Ashir Shuʿaibu Baƙin Ruwa.[225] In addition to his authored works, he sometimes asked his students to copy manuscripts he obtained from other parts of the Muslim World.

A good example is a work titled, *Rawḍ al-qulūb al-mustaṭāb* authored by Hassan Riḍwān. It is a poem of 1041 lines. Before its printed version emerged, the work circulated in manuscript form; after a long search for the text, Shaykh Atiku found it. His student, Adamu Katibi, reproduced two copies for his teacher. It took six years to complete. One copy was kept for personal use, while the other was used as an exemplar lent to colleagues and students for copying.[226]

After completing the work, the shaykh wrote a note on the last page to acknowledge the services of his student. The picture of the copyist and his friend appeared on the page while the notes were on the margin. The notes complemented the copyist, followed by a panegyric verse:

[223] Interview with Sanusi Abubakar Atiku, Sanka Quarters, Kano, conducted by author, December 27, 2018. Also the author's observation of the colophons of the books he authored reveal that most of his writings were copied by Mahmud Isma'il. This confirms the information received from Sanusi Abubakar Atiku.
[224] Interview with Sanusi Abubakar Atiku, Sanka Quarters, Kano, conducted by author, December 27, 2018
[225] I came across some of these names after examining his works. The names of the copyists were also mentioned to me by Shaykh Atiku's son, Sanusi Abubakar Atiku who is familiar with his father's works.
[226] I am grateful to Sanusi Abubakar Atiku for showing the copy of the manuscript to me.

Picture 5: Malam Adamu Katibi (right) and his Friend, Ibrahim Balarabe Jega (left). Image courtesy of author

Oh! God Reward Adamu, the copyist
With all that one is rewarded with
Treat him with all the treatment you give
To the noble ones who are close to you
Exalt his position, oh! My God and
Exalt his remembrance Oh! God
And include him among your chosen servants
Save him from the hellfire and surround him
With forgiveness and compassion
Reward him for all the alphabets he had written
While doubling (the reward) and forgiving all his sins
Include him among your special servants,
Those who work and slave (for you) Oh! God
Praise (him) with your mighty holy being
Together with the family (of the Prophet) and his companions
May You be pleased with Shaykh Ahmadu Tijani
The seal of Allah's saints, together with
His companions and the rest of his followers
And grant us the full benefits of his followership.

It is essential to mention that writing of panegyric verse complimenting the copyist in the colophon was not common in the relations between scholar-author and his scribe.[227] The above exceptional example can be rationalised by taking into consideration the great labour of the copyist. In most of the works I examined, the postface would only give the composition date, the copyist's name, and other related information.

The role of the copyist became minimal after the establishment of colonial presses. Many works that were previously in manuscript form appeared in print; new religious tracts were, as well, printed. The printing machines allowed the authors to reproduce their works in many copies. This

[227] In all the colophons of more than 50 "printed manuscripts" that I examined, none of them contain, panegyric verse dedicated to the copyist. Typically, the colophon would only mention the name of the copyist with the preamble: "by the pen of"

enhanced the distribution and accessibility by a large group of people. The Sufi brotherhoods, especially the Tijaniyya, used its network of scholars for book distribution throughout northern Nigeria. In the 1920s and 1930s, the most prominent figure in the Kano Tijaniyya brotherhood, Malam Muhammadu Salga, seemed to be the distribution facilitator.[228] As noted elsewhere, he distributed *Sabīl al-Muḫtadī*, a book written by his son-in-law, Mahmud Hassan, for eightpence per copy.[229]

Perhaps the most influential figure in the circulation of religious tracts among the twentieth-century Sufi networks of northern Nigeria was Shaykh Atiku. He had a connection with other Tijani scholars throughout northern Nigeria who consulted him on matters of publication.[230] He also had a relationship with publishers in Egypt.[231] As evident from his correspondence, he shouldered enormous responsibilities of intermediary between his disciples in Nigeria and publishers in Egypt. He also mediated between local authors and a network of colleagues and *murids* throughout Nigeria.[232]

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[228] For his career and his encounters with colonial government, see chapter two

[229] See chapter two for a brief discussion of the controversy surrounding the publication of the book. Also see KSHCB Archival File, Confidential No PIB/226/Kaduna/8th July, 1929

[230] This is evident from his correspondences with Tijani scholars of other regions of northern Nigeria. For example, a letter from Shaykh Ibrahim Salih, a Maiduguri based Tijani scholar with following across Africa, mentioned that a deposit of 500 pounds had been paid to Shaykh Atiku for the publication of *Kitāb al-Shifā'* and the balance would be paid later. Ibrahin Salih, Letter to Abubakar Atiku, undated, Personal Collection of Sanusi Abubakar Atiku

[231] For the account of his relations with the Egyptian publishers, see chapter seven.

[232] I am acknowledging Malam Dahiru Mu'az, here, for sharing copies of about 40 letters of Shaykh Atiku, the analysis of which gives me some insights into Shaykh Atiku's enormous responsibility as a go-between among authors, publishers and buyers of books.

A letter sent to Atiku by a Tijani *muqaddam*, Shaykh Adam Azare, has given insights into Atiku's intermediary role.[233] In that letter, Azare intimated to Atiku that among the 1000 copies of a book — authored by one Malam Ashiru — he received from the Shaykh, 200 copies were distributed in Adamawa in north-eastern Nigeria, presumably among their network of Tijanis, and he was selling the remaining copies.[234] However, because the author had mounted pressure on him, Shaykh Azare had to recall the unsold copies and send them back to Shaykh Atiku for onward submission to the author.[235] Meanwhile, 13 pounds and 12 pence (the cash realised from sales) accompanied the consignment.[236] Here, it is clear that authors such as Atiku played a central role in the book trade. In this example, he mediated the distribution of somebody else's work. In addition, oral sources have also indicated that he distributed the books he authored through a network of *murids* and colleagues.[237]

Although the copyists played a central role in the publication of texts at the author's level, other stakeholders also contributed significantly. Central to this were the booksellers and the financiers. The patrons often sponsored the publications of their *shaykhs* and also undertook their distribution. The authors would often mention that the publication was at the expense of a particular sponsor. Some well-to-do *murids* could patronise their *shaykh* by taking full or partial responsibility for a book printing, and they could allow the book to be distributed for free.[238] When a professional

[233] Shaykh Adam, originally from Damagaran in Niger Republic was Azare-based Tijani muqaddam in north eastern Nigeria.
[234] The title of the book was not mentioned in the letter.
[235] Presumably, the author sent private letters directly to Azare by-passing Shaykh Atiku.
[236] Adam Azare, Letter to Abubakar Atiku, undated, Personal Collection of Sanusi Abubakar Atiku. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the letter was written before 1973. A reference was made to pounds and pence, the currency used in Nigeria before 1973 when they were replaced by naira.
[237] Interview with Sanusi Abubakar Atiku, December 27, 2018
[238] *Ibid*.

bookseller was the financier of the publication, he would sell the printed copies to recover his expenses and make a profit.[239]

The last two decades of the first phase (the 1950s and the 1960s) saw the publication of nineteenth-century literature and the intra-tariqa debates. The polemical literature was often a source of tension in the religious public sphere resulting in conflicts. This period marked the emergence of publications of Hausa Islamic books in Roman script. In 1949, Alhaji Abubakar Imam, the Editor of *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo*, a Hausa Newspaper, sought the permission of the Sultan of Sokoto to publish the works of the nineteenth-century Sokoto Jihadists, especially the triumvirate: Uthman Dan Fodio, Muhammadu Bello and Abdullahi Danfodio. Subsequently, some of their works were published by Gaskiya Corporation.[240] During this period, *Islamiyya* schools emerged, paving the way for the market of local Islamiyya texts in the following decade.

In 1951, when the Senegalese Sufi Shaykh, Ibrahim Niasse, with a large following in Nigeria, made his first public visit in Kano, he was seen folding arms while praying (a practice known as *Qabd*). This contradicted the dominant practice in northern Nigeria then of praying with hands by the side (a practice known as *Sadl*). This singular act resulted in debate over the permissibility or otherwise of *Qabd* in Islam. The leading figure of the *Qadiriyya* in Kano, Shaykh Kabara, wrote *Qamʿ al-fasād fī tafḍīl al-sadl ʿalā l-qabd fī hadhihi l-bilād*.[241] While the disciples of Niasse in

[239] Interview with Muhammad Okene, Kurmi Market, Kano, conducted by author, March 26, 2019
[240] See Abubakar Imam, "First Political Leaders," in Abdurrahman Mora (ed.) *Abubakar Imam Memoirs*, (Zaria: NNPC, 1989), 174 – 175.
[241] According to *ALA II*, the text was written in 1956, See *ALA II*, 333. For a comprehensive biography of Shaykh Nasiru Kabara, see Roman Loimeier, Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 52 ff. Also see Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform in Twentieth-Century Africa*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 151 – 152

Kano, such as Shaykh Sani Kafinga authored, *sabīl al-rashād fi ʾl radd ʿalā muʿallif Qamʿ al-fasād*.[242] This opened up a polemical encounter that lasted for more than a decade. In Kano, there were clashes between the followers of the Tijaniyya and the Qadiriyya brotherhoods due to the controversy. The conflicts erupted when congregants attempted to force followers of Niasse, who folded their arms in congregation out of mosques.

The Second Phase

In the second phase, the traditional polemical literature took a new form — instead of the intra-tariqa debates, this time around, the polemics were between the Sufi brotherhoods on the one hand and the Salafis on the other hand. Also during the second phase, starting from the 1970s to the beginning of the new millennium, the modern Islamic book which departed significantly from the "printed manuscript" became dominant.[243] The "printed manuscript" which John Hunwick and Nikolai Dobronravin called the "market edition" is a book style that forms "a halfway house between the manuscript tradition and the printing."[244] In other words, a "printed manuscript" is an Arabic or Ajami manuscript printed by offset lithographic machines mostly in large quantities for wide distribution in the book market.

The modern Islamic book was dominant in the second phase, starting from the 1990s. Its emergence, however, did not displace the "printed manuscripts." The two produced for distinct

[242] Muhammad Sani Kafinga, *Sabīl al-rashād fi ʾl radd ʿalā muʿallif Qamʿ al-fasād* (Kano: Oluseyi Press, n.d.) According to *ALA II*, the work was composed in Jumādā I 1392 AH, equivalent to June 30, 1972. It is not clear when it was published. See *ALA II*, 307

[243] I adopted the term "printed manuscript" from the work of Adeeb Khalid. See Adeeb Khalid, "Printing, Publishing, and Reform in Tsarist Central Asia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 26 (1994) 187 – 200.

[244] See *ALA II*, 7; Nikolai Dobronravin, "Design Elements and Illuminations in Nigerian "Market Literature" in Arabic and ʿAjamī," *Islamic Africa*, 8 (2017), 45

reading constituencies found separate distribution networks. The modern Islamic book began to have recognisable features that clearly distinguished it from the "printed manuscript." One of such attributes was the title page in established usage, which contains a title of the work and the author's name; the colophon began to disappear. The modern book was often typeset in a computer. Moreover, International Standard Book Number (ISBN) began to feature in the preliminary pages. Three main factors have contributed to making the modern book more common during the second phase.

First and foremost, in the early 1990s, there was the emergence of computer shops in Kano that specialised in digital typesetting and ancillary computer services, popularly known as Business Centres. The pioneers include Abacus Computer Services, Midtown Business Services, City Business Centre and the SALFACOM. Abacus was the first to specialise in Arabic typesetting. It was the first to own the DOS-Based Universal World Programme, which had an Arabic Language facility in its multi-lingual structure.[245]

The SALFACOM, founded by one Muhammad Sani Kibiya, dwarfed the other Business Centres by its ownership of windows computers. The company rendered several services, including typesetting and computer training. Thanks to the services of Shehu Hassan Ahmad (b. 1967), SALFACOM integrated Arabic typesetting into its business. [246] Ahmad's career as a typist began after he graduated from Kano State Polytechnic, where he took courses in secretarial studies. He then worked with Bayero University Kano as a typist before enrolling in the SALFACOM

[245] See Abdallah Ubah Adamu, "Hausa Literature and Information Technology in the Decade of the 1990s," *New Nigerian Weekly, July 3,* (*1999*) 14 – 15
[246] Interview with Shehu Ahmad Hassan, Bata Roundabout, Kano, conducted by author, June 9, 2019

computer training programme, where he concurrently served as a trainee and part-time typist. He received training in Arabic typesetting in the company through a Sudanese who worked for Kano State-owned Triumph Publishing Company and who was, at the same time, a part-time instructor in SALFACOM.[247] Around this time, self-published authors and booksellers patronised the company and other Business Centres in Kano.

Almost all the pioneer Business Centres collapsed in a decade, and some of their staff founded their independent businesses. Ahmad is a case in point. After leaving the services of SALFACOM, he established himself as a professional typist. In addition to his services as a typist, Ahmad became a guide to new authors. He took them through modern self-publishing, and he also connected them with printers and other artisans. The new computer centres advised authors on the authorship of modern Arabic books.

Secondly, a branch of the National Library of Nigeria (NLN) was opened in Kano on January 8, 2004.[248] The library is responsible for processing applications for the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) as one of its mandates. Although very few authors had been patronising the library's services, the number kept on increasing modestly due to the threat of piracy encountered by the authors.

The Copyright Commission, which receives and intervenes on complaints of copyright violations, insists that an author with a case of copyright infringement must get an ISBN for their books before

[247] Interview with Shehu Ahmad Hassan, June 9, 2019. The Triumph Publishing Company was founded by the Kano State Government. The company was the publisher of the Triumph newspaper. By early 1990s, one of the main sources of the company's revenue was commercial printing. For example, between January and June, 1994, the company had printed work worth N 1,214,241. See Kano State Government, *Col M.A. Wase's Stewardship in Kano State*, (Kano: n.p. 1994), 30

[248] For a brief note on the library development in Nigeria, see chapter four.

the Commission investigates the author's case. This has compelled many authors to apply for the ISBN. The NLN, on its part, requires applicants to ensure their writings have features of a modern book. The application procedure involves submitting a written request for the ISBN to the Kano Branch of NLN. Then a prescribed fee is paid. A written commitment to provide the required number of copies for legal deposit after publication would accompany the application. [249] Afterwards, the NLN would process the application and obtain the ISBN on behalf of the author. The library organises workshops to sensitise stakeholders in the book industry for their services, particularly the issuance of the ISBN.[250]

Thirdly, and more importantly, modern Arabists who graduated from either Nigerian Universities or other institutions of higher learning in the Middle East began to venture into local authorship of mainly polemical, doctrinal and, especially, school-based texts. By their training in modern educational institutions, they adopted modern conventions of writing Arabic books in their publications. The authors, like their predecessors, engaged in self-publishing.

Perhaps it is pertinent to take a few self-published authors who produced school-based textbooks, which became dominant, during this phase and examine their marketing strategies. Their selection is informed by representation and chronology. The first author, Kamalu Na Ma'aji (b. 1941 – d. 1981), was a crucial figure in the Qadiriyya brotherhood; thus, he epitomised both the old tradition

[249] Interview with the National Library Coordinator, Kano Zone, Yakubu Kekere, his Office, Kofar Nassarawa, Kano, conducted by author, May 28, 2019

[250] I attended one of such workshops in June 2019 held at Kano State Library Complex where lectures were presented on the activities of the NLN. Unfortunately, most of the participant were university lecturers, librarians, publishers and authors of English textbooks. The authors of Islamic books and Hausa popular fiction who hardly apply for the ISBN were not present. Apparently, such workshops only target elites of the book industry. In any case, many authors see ISBN as a guarantee for the protection of their copyright. In cases where such rights are violated, they hardly see the usefulness of the ISBN.

and a Sufi brotherhood.[251] He was the founder of *Jundullāhi*, a youth wing of the *Qadiriyya*. Abubakar Abbas (b. 1969) and Abdulkadir Islama'il, on the other hand, are *Salafis*. Both graduated from the Islamic University of Madinah. It is hard to specify the doctrinal affiliation of the fourth author, Mansur Bawa (b. 1970). His background is both shaped by exposure to Sufi brotherhoods and Salafism. He was a graduate of Arabic from Bayero University, Kano. In terms of chronology, the career of the three authors (Abbas, Isma'il and Bawa) began after and in response to what authors like Na Ma'aji represented.

Since their emergence in northern Nigeria, the *Islamiyya* schools relied solely on the texts that have been in circulation in Hausaland for centuries, most of which were authored in other parts of the Muslim world. Two of the most prominent of such texts on Islamic Jurisprudence have been the *Mukhtaṣarfi ʾl-ʿibadāt ʿalā madh'hab al-imām Mālik* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Akhḍarī (d. 1585) and *al-Muqaddima al-ʿAshmāwiyya* by ʿAbd al-Bārī al-Rifāʿī al-ʿAshmāwī (fl. 16th century). Few others were authored locally, such as *Kitāb al-suʾāl wa ʾl jawāb fī shurūṭ wird shaykhinā Abī ʾl ʿAbbās al-Tijānī wa Kaifiyyatiha ʿala ʾl-Iqtiṣār wa ʾl Ikhtaṣār* by Muhammad Salga used in *Islamiyya* schools with affiliation to the Tijaniyya brotherhood.[252]

Most of these texts were difficult to comprehend by the teachers, let alone the pupils. For that reason, Na Ma'aji decided, in 1979, to write short texts for the *Islamiyya* school he founded known

[251] For his brief biography, see Yakubu Ahmad Dukawa, "The Position of Arabic in Kano State 1960 – 1980" (PhD Dissertation, Bayero University Kano) 144

[252] Muhammad Salga, *Kitāb al-suʾāl wa ʾl jawāb fī shurūṭ wird shaykhinā Abī ʾl ʿAbbās al-Tijānī wa Kaifiyyatiha ʿala ʾl-Iqtiṣār wa ʾl Ikhtaṣār* (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1958). The book was circulated in manuscript form. It was afterwards printed by varieties of printers. For analysis of this text, see John N Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) 90 – 93.

as *Dārul Maʿarif* and other institutions.[253] He wrote *Majʾmaʿul Bahrayn,* volume I, a short Hadith text of 19 pages. Other works he authored with the same objective were: *al-Nūr al-Mubīn, Tahdhīb al-akhlāq,* and *Nafaḥat al-Raḥmān.*

Isma'il and Abbas, as noted above, graduated from the Islamic University of Madinah. Their story represents the Salafis' growing discontent with the curriculum used in Nigerian schools due to their exposure to Salafi literature in their alma mater. The emphasis on authentic Hadith following modern Salafi discourse is the hallmark of their writings. They are at the same time critical of the textbooks written by foreign Salafi authors produced in the Arab world, which, according to them, did not suit the Hausa society.

Isma'il published his first book in 1996, with an initial title of *Minhāj al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf,* which was later changed to *al-fawākiḥ al-shahiyya*. Its publication was sponsored by a Salafi educational institution, Uthman Ibn Affan School. Initially, it was recommended for its students; other schools, however, adopted it subsequently. In the rest of the 1990s and 2000s, he published other books: *al-muḥarrar fi fiqḥ al-muyassar* and *muniyat al-murīd fi ilm al-tauhīd*.

Abbas and Bawa focused on Arabic and Islamic textbooks for nursery schools in addition to books for the Islamiyya primary pupils. The two authors pioneered this genre in Kano. After his return from Madina in 1997, Abbas decided to venture into writing. His first book in Romanised Hausa — *Duhun Kai: Gaba da Kishiya* — was primarily written for public enlightenment. He subsequently focused on textbooks for *Islamiyya* schools. He was more prolific than any of the other authors. His writings were in Arabic and Hausa in both Roman and Ajami characters. The following table gives a sketch of his works:

[253] See the introduction of *Majma'ul Bahrayn*, Kamaluddin Adamu Nama'aji, *Majma'ul Bahrayn fi Ahadith Sayyid al-Kaunayn*, (Kano: Adamu Nama'aji Printing Press, n.d), 2 – 3

Table 3: Islamic Books Written by Abubakar Abbas

S/N	Book Title	ISBN	Year	Number of Volumes	Language/Script
1	*Taskar Shiriya*	No	1997	1	Hausa/Ajami
2	*Duhun Kai: Gaba da Kishiya*	No	ND	1	Hausa/Roman character
3	*Hattara Dai 'Yan Siyasa Musulmi*	No	2005	1	Hausa/Roman character
4	*Nagartacciyar Rayuwar Aure*	No	2008	1	Hausa/Roman character
5	*Albishirinku Manema Aure*	No	2012	1	Hausa/Roman character
6	*ʾUlul azm minʾl-rasul*	No	2012	1	Arabic
7	*Macen Kwarai*	No	2012	1	Hausa/Roman character
8	*Manzon Allah Annabi Muhammad Kamar ga ka ga shi*	No	2013	1	Hausa/Roman character
9	*Anīsʾl-ʾAṭfāl*	No	2014	3	Arabic
10	*al-murshid fī khaṭ al-ʿArabī*[254]	Yes	2014	4	Arabic
11	*Zādʾl-tilmīdh*	Yes	2014	1	Arabic
12	*Naylʾl-ʿuluwwi*	No	2014	1	Arabic
13	*kaifa tuʿallimu tilmizaka al-qiraʾat al-ʿArabiyya*	No	2014	1	Arabic
14	*makārimʾl-akh'lāq*	No	2015	1	Arabic
15	*al-fiqḥ al-muyassar*	No	2016	3	Arabic
16	*khayr al-marām*	No	2016	1	Arabic
17	*Sahihin Sirrin Kul'huwallahu*	No	2016	1	Hausa/Roman script
18	*Sahihin Sirrin Izaja'a*	No	2016	1	Hausa/Roman script
19	*kanz al-huda*	No	2017	1	Arabic
20	*al-tibyān fī maʿarifat al-marātib al-dīn*	No	2017	1	Arabic
21	*Iẓhar al-ḥaq liʾiʿtaʾiʾAṣḥāb al-ḥaq*	No	2018	1	Arabic
22	*nashr al-salām*	No	2018	1	Arabic
23	*Tsumagiya*	No	2018	1	Hausa

From the above table, the focus of Abubakar's writings, for more than a decade, was on religious enlightenment. He only began to venture into the authorship of school-based Islamic texts in 2013.

[254] The book is actually in four volumes; the first three, published in 2014, were for primary school students while the fourth volume was written in 2015, and it was meant for pupils in nursery schools.

It is also important to note that only three out of his 23 titles have ISBN, indicating that even modern authors hardly applied for ISBN. Abbas only began to apply for ISBN for his current and previous titles when his works were threatened by piracy.[255]

Abbas inspired Mansur Bawa, whose books departed significantly from that of the other authors in the quality of the publication. His books were of high quality and thus more expensive than those of the other authors. They provided instructional guides for teachers on how to teach the texts. Consequently, his significant customers have been elite Islamic schools. It is on this and other points that Bawa differed from the other three authors. While the three authors (Nama'aji, Isma'il and Abbas) maintained the philosophy of keeping the production cost low by using paper and other materials of low or moderate quality to keep the prices affordable for the school children, Bawa preferred using materials of higher quality to produce good products with luminous cover designs. He did so for two reasons. One, to change the attitude of associating low quality with Islamic texts, which might represent inferiority compared to English texts. Two, to satisfy the demand of the elite schools that always went for textbooks of high quality.[256]

In terms of the distribution of the books, the four authors tried several experiments before settling eventually on the sales pattern that worked for them. They used three main marketing methods: direct sale, the principle of "sale or return," and quasi royalty kind of arrangement.[257] Three of the four authors — Nama'aji (and his family), Abbas and Bawa — combined a direct sale and "sale or return." Before his death, Nama'aji had established Nama'aji Printing Press, where his books were printed. After he died in 1981, his elder brother, Adamu Nama'aji, took over the business.

[255] Interview with Abubakar Abbas, June 9, 2019
[256] Elite educational institutions always prefer books of high quality in Nigeria.
[257] The main principle used in the Nigerian Book Market by publishing companies. It's an arrangement by which the retailer only pays for the items sold while returning the unsold ones.

He sponsored the publication of *Maj'maʿul Bahrayn* from volume two to volume four. Like the other authors, he self-published the books. This entailed a tedious process of going through the various stages of book publishing.[258]

However, the bulk of the stock would be taken to Kurmi Market to be distributed to specific dealers: Ghali Tijani Musa, Garzali Ibrahim Tofa and Shehu Abdulrazaq. The main principle used — which has been dominant in the market — is "sale or return." The dealer would collect a specific number of books in this arrangement, ranging from two hundred to one thousand copies from the supplier/author on credit. He would then sell them to the local and international wholesalers. After a week or two, the supplier would come by and count the remaining books and collect money for the sold products. He would then decide whether to leave the unsold books for further sale or take them to another dealer in demand.[259] For the authors, bringing their works to Kurmi Market was a way of advertising them to local and international customers as the market has been an international conduit for book distribution in West and Central Africa.[260]

In the mid-2000s, two members of the Nama'aji family were actively involved in the marketing of the books. They had two stalls that served as the main centres of distribution. Henceforth, they served as the main dealers distributing to other minor dealers and the wholesalers in the Market with different degrees of discount. On average, they would keep a stock of five thousand copies of *Maj'maʿul Bahrayn* and a total of two thousand copies of a combination of the other works. The high sales season was the beginning of the first term in the primary/secondary school calendar. According to one of the two primary dealer's estimates, they could sell up to an average of 7000

[258] Interview with Hassan Inuwa, Rijiyar Zaki Quarters, conducted by author, February 4, 2020
[259] Interview with Kamalu Garba, Kurmi Market, conducted by author, March 28, 2019
[260] Interview with Abubakar Abbas, June 9, 2019

copies of *Maj'maʿul Bahrayn* in the high season. Presumably, he was referring to the quantity supplied to the dealers, not necessarily the number of copies sold, since it would be difficult to determine that number because records of transactions were not kept.[261]

The authors went through varying degrees of experience in their interaction with the booksellers. The transactions were built more on trust than any legal procedure. Often no contract agreements were signed between the two parties. The implication of this was the occasional squabble over non-payment to the authors. Abbas had such experience before he finally found trustworthy dealers in the Kurmi Market to whom he supplied books at a 20 percent discount. The dealers, in turn, sold the books to wholesalers at a 10 percent discount.[262] In addition to the Kurmi Market distribution channel, Abbas also maintained a bookshop in Hotoro neighbourhood, managed by a sales agent for whom he paid monthly allowances. Occasionally, schools would buy directly from him for their students.[263]

Bawa is slightly different from the other authors in his marketing strategies and method of distribution. He went for an annual tour to several states of northern Nigeria to interact with the management of schools to find out their complaints about his books to improve the subsequent publications. The business is managed under his company, known as Hikima Publication. He printed his works both in Kano and Cairo. He had an agent in Egypt who would ensure the printing and shipment of the books taken there.

Bawa also advertised his titles by including their list on the preliminary pages of his books. Furthermore, like the other authors, he would also provide a phone number on the back cover page

[261] Interview with Kamalu Garba, March 28, 2019
[262] Interview with Abubakar Abbas, June 9, 2019
[263] *Ibid*.

of the books. In that way, buyers could contact him directly. The market operates on some degree of discount to the main dealers to maintain some order. The primary dealer was given the highest discount, followed by the dealers then the wholesalers. The reader — even if he bought books directly from the author — would not enjoy any discount. As a result of his bad debt experience in his interaction with the Kurmi Market dealers, Bawa restricted supplying books on credit to a trustworthy dealer in the Market.[264] He insisted that the other dealers obtain the books from this dealer or buy directly from him with a lesser discount. The bulk of the sales, however, was from elite schools based mainly in Kano and Abuja.[265]

On the other hand, Isma'il radically departed from the methods used by the other authors in the distribution of his works. After his bitter experience with dealers, he eventually partnered with a graphic design company, MAHAR Investment, founded in 2006 in Gwammaja Quarters in the walled city.[266] The company took over the publishing and distribution of his works while giving a sort of royalty to the author. MAHAR inherited the stock and liquidity from the author, and a period of three years was used for re-investment. Within those years, all the profits made were re-invested to increase the capital base of the business. Afterwards, Isma'il was paid a commission of three to five *naira* per copy of his works printed by MAHAR.[267] The company managed the distribution by supplying to Darul Umma, a bookselling company based in Kurmi Market, distributing the books to local and international dealers. The result of this arrangement was a tremendous increase in the number of copies produced. Previously, the author could only produce

[264] His main dealer is one Dahiru who was previously with Darul Umma, one of the biggest Islamic book vending company in Kano at present.
[265] Bawa had allowed me to take photos of receipts issued to some of these schools.
[266] Interview with Abdulkadir Isma'il, Kano, conducted by author, June 11, 2019
[267] Interview with Muhammad Haroun (CEO MAHAR Investment), Gwammaja, Kano, conducted by author, June 24, 2019

a print run of 1000 or 2000 copies and supplied them to the dealers. They would not request more copies until after several months. However, the firm was estimated to produce between 30,000 and 50,000 copies of Isma'il's works per annum with the new partnership. This discrepancy fuelled the suspicion that previously pirated copies of his works found their way into the market.[268]

It is evident from the above that the self-published authors did not have a homogeneous marketing strategy. Virtually, each of the four authors examined above had their distinct channels of distribution. It is also clear that the authors themselves carried out the bookselling role since almost all the four subjects of study engaged in a direct sale, with the possible exception of Isma'il, who delegated the distribution of his work to MAHAR Investment.

The Publishers as Booksellers

The modern Islamic book trade began as an oligopoly, with few merchants supplying the books to dealers and wholesalers. These entrepreneurs (doubled as publishers (*nāshirs*) and booksellers) began to publish classics that previously circulated in manuscript form studied for centuries in the local Islamic curriculum of West Africa.[269] The *nāshirs* had many of these texts printed; some of the widely printed titles were: *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and *Muwaṭṭaʾ* of Malik Ibn Anas (d. 796 AD), the eponym of the Maliki School.[270] By far the most popular among the published classics were Jurisprudential manuals such as *al-Muqaddima al-ʿiziyya* by al-Shādhilī (d. 1532), the *Risāla* of

[268] *Ibid*.
[269] These texts are described as core curriculum by Hall and Stewart. See Bruce S. Hall and Charles C. Stewart, The "Historic Core Curriculum" and Book Market in Islamic West Africa" in Graziano Krätli and Ghislaine Lydon, *The Trans Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011)
[270] Mālik Ibn Anas *al-muwaṭṭaʾ*

Ibn Abī Zayd (d. 996 AD) and *Mukhtaṣar* of Khalīl Ibn Isḥāq (d. 1374).[271] These two were among the most widely copied texts in West Africa in the pre-colonial period.[272] Original works by contemporary authors constituted an insignificant percentage of the *nāshirs'* output.

These entrepreneurs realised the potentialities of a market for these texts. They took the manuscript samples and commissioned local copyists with good handwriting to reproduce them. Then they would take the copy to a professional printer in Sabon Gari or Gaskiya Corporation in Zaria, who would give them a quotation. The printers would often encourage their clientele to print many copies as the price would inversely decrease with a higher print run.[273]

The most illustrious among these publishers were Abdullahi Yasari (b. 1919 – d. 1991), Sani Adamu (b. 1924 – d. 1996) Ayuba Sani Magoga (d. 1983) Zakariya Musa Salga (d. 1997), Malam Baban Kabu (d. 1998), Saminu Sa'adu 'Yan Tandu (d. 2006), Muhammad Danjinjiri (d. 1993) and Sharif Bala Gabari (d. 2016). The *nāshirs* emerged from a class of Islamic scholars connected to the "Reformed Tijaniyya," to borrow the term used by Paden.[274] They dominated the Kano Islamic Book Market for three decades (from the 1960s to 1980s) until the early 1990s when young entrepreneurs took over. The period also corresponded with the Islamic revivalism in the two main Sufi brotherhoods: The Tijaniyya and the Qadiriyya.

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[271] Alī Ibn Muhammad al-Shādhilī, *al-Muqaddima al-Iziyya li-ʾljamāʿa al-Azhariyya*. Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī, *al-Risāla*. Khālid Ibn Isḥāq, *Mukhtaṣar al-Khalīl*

[272] Hall and Stewart, "The Historic "Core Curriculum" 132 - 133

[273] That is one of the advantages of the offset lithography when a large quantity is to be produced. The highest percentage of the production cost was incurred in pre-press stage. Such cost is constant irrespective of the number of copies to be produced.

[274] The only exception here is Sharif Bala Gabari who belonged to the Qadiriyya brotherhood. These publishers were also the key actors in the transnational Islamic book trade. See chapter seven.

Perhaps the most outstanding and prosperous among the *nāshirs* was Abdullahi Yasari.[275] Yasari, like most of his colleagues, belonged to a family of Qurʾānic teachers, he was teaching Qurʾān before he ventured into the book trade. He was the first among the Kano booksellers to start taking his works to the Northern Regional Literature Agency (NORLA) for printing.[276] He previously printed his works in Egypt. After learning about the prospect of getting them published in Nigeria, he began to patronise the Gaskiya Corporation. He was said to have been introduced into Gaskiya Corporation by one of his students, Sa'id Bala.[277]

According to Zahra'u Alpha, the first set of his works was printed on January 1, 1957, by "*Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*." This preposterous assertion creates confusion since *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* was only the name of a Hausa newspaper. Perhaps the author was referring to the Gaskiya Corporation as the printer of the works. Even at that, the point made by Muhammadu Ƙani that NORLA printed Yasari's first books seem to be more plausible since from 1953 when NORLA was founded until 1960 when it was disbanded, all the publishing responsibilities of the Gaskiya Corporation were handled by the Agency.

As a *nāshir*, Abdullahi Yasari distinguished himself from his colleagues by his unique editorial procedure. He would submit manuscripts to Islamic scholars for thorough editing before he took

[275] According to oral sources from Yasar's family, his ancestor was said to have migrated from Baghdad and settled in Katsina in the nineteenth century. The descendants of this ancestor dispersed to Zaria and some of them settled in Kano in 1895.
[276] Interview with Muhammad Ƙani , Gwale Quarters, conducted by author, December 18, 2018
[277] Zahra'u Abdulyasar Alpha, "The Biography of Shaykh Abdulyasar Alpha (1919 – 1991) and his Contribution towards the Development of Islamic Education in Kano City," (BA Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 2005), 37

them for printing.[278] In this regard, some of his consultants were Muhammad Ḳani (d. 2021), Sani Kafinga and a host of others.[279] Unlike most of his colleagues who kept shops in the market, his business operated from his residence. However, Yasari had stalls in the Kurmi Market ran by his children and other sales agents. His principal subordinates and stall keepers in the market would meet him in his house to settle their previous debt and obtain new supplies. He would record the transaction in his notebook and would order the release of the books purchased. He had storerooms in his houses and those of his children where he kept the bulk of the stock.

A list of the books he published obtained from his grandson indicates a total of 93 titles. A casual examination of the list reveals the predominance of local classics on various subjects, which include: Traditions of the Prophet (Hadith), Islamic Jurisprudence, Exegesis of the Qurʾān in addition to Qurʾān and volumes containing some of its chapters prepared for beginners. Yasari died in 1991, leaving behind "an empire of books." By then, a new group of young booksellers had already taken over the book trade. Unlike their predecessors, they were ready to venture into printing which the Yoruba previously dominated.[280]

Abdullahi Yasari and his colleagues produced "printed manuscripts" in thousands of copies and distributed them throughout Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The printing technology was used

[278] Interview with Muhammad Ḳani, December 18, 2018. This information was corroborated by several other informants. Some of them include: Danladi Sani Adamu (interview December 23, 2018), Hafizu Abdullahi Yasari (Interview, April 1, 2019). According to Hafizu Abdullahi Yasari, Malam Ibrahim, one of Yasari's copyists had told him that his benefactor challenged Islamic scholars by promising them a reasonable amount of money for whoever discovered any error in his books; and they hardly found any.
[279] Muhammad Ḳani (b. 1937 – d. 2021) is a distinguished author and Islamic scholar based in Gwale Quarters, Kano. He was a close friend of Abdullahi Yasari. His residence provided one of the storerooms for Yasari at the peak of latter's career. For his profile and works, see *ALA II*, 302 – 303. Shaykh Sani Hassan Kafinga (b. 1914 – d. 1989) was one of the most famous Tijani scholars and a follower of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse in Kano
[280] On the new entrepreneurs, see chapter seven.

in keeping the manuscript culture alive. Instead of the *nāshirs* using the modern conventions for Islamic book production, most of their locally published works retained certain manuscript features. At the same time they imported typographically produced books from the Middle East.

The features of the "printed manuscripts" paralleled those of the early printed books in nineteenth-century Egypt and Tsarist Central Asia, where the conventions of the modern book such as indexes and table of content were never used.[281] Instead, the elements of Islamic manuscripts featured prominently. These included the colophon, which provided information on the composition of the lithograph and its physical manufacture. Similarly, the text's date of authorship and the name of its copyist appeared in the postface. The date was sometimes stated using the numerical value of certain words preceded by the phrase in the year (*fi sanat or fi'am*). The name of the *nāshir* was mentioned mainly by using the statement: "at the expense of" (*ʿala nafaqat*). The title page typically started with a doxology, then a preamble (such as this poem/book is called) introduced the title. Then some common pious words would also be presented on the last pages, often embellished with *taqrīz*, a short text often in verse by a distinguished colleague praising the work.[282]

Moreover, catchwords were used either exclusively or simultaneously with page numbers. It was the exigency of modern printing rather than conformity to the international convention that

[281] Khalid, "Printing, Publishing and Reform" 192. For the features of the "printed manuscript" in the nineteenth century Egypt, see Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, "Sufism and Printing in Nineteenth Century Egypt," in Rachida Chih, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Rüdiger Seesemann (eds.) *Sufism, Literary Production and Printing in the Nineteenth Century*, (Wüzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2015), 30

[282] This is not peculiar to the Muslim societies. Even in Europe, after the invention of printing technology, the books initially didn't have title pages. Title page made its debut between 1475 and 1480. See Febvre & Martin, *The Coming of the Book*, 71. In fact it was the market forces rather than the aesthetic consistency that warranted the need for the title page. See Ann M. Blair (2010), *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age.* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 53

warranted page numbers. The difficulty in arranging pages during imposition necessitated the use of page numbers. This drives home the point that as much as the *nāshirs* wanted to use manuscript traditions for their books, the technicalities of modern printing methods compelled them to compromise that choice. This also raises the question of the complicated relationship between Arabic manuscripts and print in Muslim societies. Despite the availability of print technology, manuscript culture is still very much alive. How do we explain this irony?

Conclusion

With time the internal dynamics of Islamic book production and distribution in the KBM developed many unique conventions. We have to pay attention to them to understand the nuances of the market. Demand and supply cannot be the sole determinants of market operations. As the case of the self-published authors of the first phase demonstrates, the market demand was not the primary consideration for determining the price of a book. Instead, the entire driving force of production was to recoup the investment outlay to sustain the subsequent production.

Moreover, our case study illustrates that a particular function within the circuit can operate at different levels of the cycle. In addition to the bookseller, other agents also perform the bookselling role. At the level of authors, writers such as Abubakar Abbas maintained a bookshop and supplied stocks directly to schools. Similarly, many publishers who printed their works at the Gaskiya Corporation from the 1950s were mainly booksellers who maintained bookstalls throughout their careers. Apart from the example of Abdullahi Yasari mentioned above, his other colleagues also had shops in the Kurmi Market where they engaged in direct sales to dealers, wholesalers and even readers. This indicates that the Darntonian "communication circuits," which assigns bookselling role exclusively to the bookseller, is defective in accounting for the complex relations that

permeate the KBM. The next chapter further demonstrates that the book trade can also operate at the level of printer. Thus, the whole process of book circulation is too complex to describe in a single linear model.

Chapter Six

The Internal Communications Circuit of the Islamic Book Market II: The Printers as Booksellers

Introduction

In northern Nigeria, printing presses made their first appearance by the beginning of the twentieth century. Before then, a rich manuscript culture had flourished for many centuries. The printing technology paved the way for the emergence of a new book culture whose main feature was the central role of the state-owned and private printing infrastructure. This chapter is the second in the series on the internal circuit of the Kano Islamic Book Market. Its primary focus is on how the book trade operates at the level of printer. However, that cannot be well understood without a background on the Kano printing industry.

The chapter explores the evolution of the Kano printing while highlighting two significant transitions that marked its history. First, it explicates how the transformations in the printing technology, with the transition from letterpress technique to offset lithography, impacted the book industry. Secondly, it demonstrates the changes in the industry from a Yoruba-dominated affair to a diverse entity that was principally shared between the Yoruba and Hausa printers. The latter played the dual role of printing and bookselling. The Hausa printers emerged from a class of booksellers who were determined to print and distribute their works in the book market. This class of booksellers-turned-printers founded their presses in various parts of Kano.

Printing in Northern Nigeria

The printers could as well play the role of the bookseller. The class of the bookseller-printer in northern Nigeria evolved when the book merchants began to become well conversant with the processes involved in the production of religious tracts. The book trade, therefore, exists at the level of printers. Such a discussion can only be adequately contextualised by giving a brief account of the trajectory of printing in Nigeria.

The history of printing technology is traced back to the nineteenth century. It owed its origin to the efforts of Christian missionaries in the South, where the Europeans made their first contact with the people of Nigeria. The Presbyterian Mission, under Mr Hope Waddell, founded the first printing press in Calabar. Mr Waddell arrived in Nigeria in 1846 with a British printer, Samuel Edgerley, who came with a letterpress machine.[283] By August 1849, the Presbyterian Mission had printed 800 copies of Primer, 500 copies of Bible lessons and 500 copies of almanac with comments in Efic, among other items.[284]

However, the nineteenth-century press with far-reaching effects on the spread of the technology in Nigeria was established by Reverend Henry Townsend of the Church Mission Society in Abeokuta, Yorubaland, in 1854. He set up the press with his brother, James Townsend, who was a printer. After learning the hand press technique, Townsend began to print religious tracts.[285]

[283] See Rashid Olaniyi, "Yoruba Printers in Kano Metropolis: A Case Study of the Printing Industry 1943 – 1983" (MA Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 1998), 50

[284] Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841 – 1891: The Making of a new Elite*, (London: Longman, 1965), 158

[285] See Regan Buck Bardeen, "Utilitarian Pleasures: Print Culture and the Development of a Reading Public in Southwestern Nigeria," (PhD Dissertation, University of California, 2013), 33

He started publishing a Yoruba newspaper known as *Iwe Irohin* in 1859, which eventually became bi-lingual produced in both English and Yoruba. The estimate of its audience ranged between 400 and 3000.[286] Soon the example of Townsend was followed by other missions so that most of the one-room printing works that became a feature of the nineteenth-century missionary stations owed their origin to the role of Townsend.[287]

The first modern printing presses in northern Nigeria were the Kano Native Authority Press (KNAP) and the Government Press in Kaduna, founded in 1918 and 1930 respectively. Then the Gaskiya Corporation was established in 1945. These companies rendered both printing and publishing services. In terms of book publishing, however, Gaskiya played the most crucial role.

Up to the 1930s, the Islamic books were printed using letterpress machines owned by Gaskiya and Native Authority Press.[288] This explains the reason why there were a few locally produced works during that time. The letterpress method of printing was a wearisome and time-consuming technique with many inconveniences for the printer — the types are weighty, and they occupy much space. Similarly, setting types is a difficult task, and it requires unique expertise.[289]

The profitable venture of publishing Arabic text was left in the hands of the booksellers. However, these booksellers printed a significant number of their works with the Gaskiya Corporation. However, Gaskiya dedicated most of its resources to publishing Hausa writings in Roman characters. Northern Regional Literature Agency (NORLA), founded in 1953, ventured into the

[286] See Christiana Best, *Press Development in Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis*, (Jos: Midland Press, 1996), 12 – 13; L. H. Hydle, "Press and Politics in Nigeria" (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 1972), 60
[287] See Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria*, 159
[288] See Graham Furniss, *Ideology in Practice: Hausa Poetry as Exposition of Value,* (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag), 17
[289] Interview with Ibrahim Kurawa, Kano School of Technology, conducted by author, February 9, 2020

publication of Islamic texts both in Arabic and Ajami. This was to meet the demands of the Arabic literates. The first Arabic work published by NORLA was a book popularly known as *Zuhudu*, a traditional poem in praise of asceticism which was printed with a Hausa (Roman) translation on the opposite page.[290] The catalogue of NORLA gives insights into the kind of Arabic books it published and their prices in 1959:

Table 4: Islamic Books in the Arabic Language Published by NORLA[291]

S/N	Name of author	Title	Price in Pounds
1	Muhammad Bello	*Infāq al-maysūr*	18/6d
2	Abdullahi Fodio	*Ḍiyāʿ al-hukkām*	1/3d
3	Abdullahi Fodio	*īdāʿ al-nusūkh man akhadhtu ʿanhu min al-shuyūkh*	1/3d
3	Muhammad Umaru	*Waraqat al-Islām*	6d
4	Nasiru Kabara	*al-Nafaḥāt al-Naṣiriyya*	1/3d

From Table 4, the first three texts were authored by the Sokoto Jihadists: one by Muhammad Bello, the son of Uthman Danfodio and two by Abdullahi Fodio. The availability of print technology had enabled the publication of Islamic books that were previously in the manuscript form, as in other parts of the Muslim world.[292] Abubakar Imam sought the permission of the Sultan of Sokoto Abubakar III (r. 1938 – 1988) to publish the works. The Qadiriyya leader in Kano, Nasiru Kabara, wrote the last title. It is not clear whether NORLA paid him any royalty for the text. In addition to

[290] See Neil Skinner, "NORLA: An Experiment in the Production of Vernacular Literature, 1954 – 1959" in Hussaini Hayatu (ed.) *Fifty Years of Truth: The Story of Gaskiya Corporation Zaria 1939 – 1991*, (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1991), 66

[291] Northern Literature Agency (NORLA), *Tsarin Littatafan NORLA* (NORLA Hausa Catalogue). (Zaria: NORLA, 1959). 12 – 14

[292] This trend has continued to date. According to Ibrahim Khalil, a prominent Islamic scholar and bibliophile of Kano, the Muslim countries in the Middle East still sponsor publications of works that were previously in manuscript form. Also see Johannes Pederson, *The Arabic Book*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)

these Arabic texts, NORLA also published a few Islamic works in Romanized Hausa, as also indicated in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Islamic Books in Hausa Published by NORLA[293]

S/N	Name of author	Title	Price in Pounds
1	Usman Mani	*al-Haj Mabrur*	4/-
2	Baba Ahmed	*Almajiri da Malam*	6d.
3	Shu'aibu Usman	*Addini a Saukake*	3/-
3	Haliru Binji	*Ibada da Hukunci*	4/-
4	Shehu Idris Dayyib	*Jagorar Mai Sallah*	2/-
5	Sa'idu Lado	*Darajar Aure*	6d
6	Sa'idu Lado	*Renon Aure*	6d

It is important to note that the colonial legacy of using the Roman script for writings in the Hausa language was further consolidated by producing Islamic texts in Romanized Hausa. This initiative recognised the growing modern community of readers who could read and write Hausa in Roman script. Until this period, Islamic tracts in the Hausa language were written in *Ajami*; secular texts in Romanised Hausa had been used since the nineteenth century.[294]

Until the 1950s, letterpress was the dominant technology used in Gaskiya, which enabled the company to achieve some efficiency in producing Islamic texts.[295] The Arabic and Roman types were set manually or through the use of either Linotype or Monotype machines.[296] The Monotype

[293] NORLA, T*sarin Littatafan NORLA*, 1

[294] See chapter eight for a brief history of the Hausa writing in Roman characters. Although the Hausa language is still written in Arabic characters particularly among the traditional reading public, by far, the Roman script is used in written communications.

[295] Letterpress is one of the relief printing techniques that has been dominant for centuries until the mid-twentieth century when other methods of printing overtook it. It preceded the Gutenberg invention of the 1450s but was significantly improved by it. See Hugh Williamson, *Book Design: The Practice of an Industrial Craft*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 210 – 231

[296] Both Linotype and Monotype machines improved the letter press printing by introducing the hot metal typesetting system. The Monotype was invented by Tolbert Lanston (1844 – 1913). The system was perfected in 1895 and was advertised in the United States. The large scale commercial exploitation was only achieved in 1897 with the establishment of Monotype Corporation in the United Kingdom in 1897.

keyboard was used for typing texts. It punched holes on the spool paper. Then every hole was transformed into an alphabet when the paper was inserted into a casting machine. This process continued until a galley was obtained, which was taken to the proofreading and hand composing sections where the proofreaders would go through it and make all the necessary corrections.[297]

The most significant turning point in the history of book production during the colonial period was in the 1950s, with the diffusion of offset lithography. It eventually enabled the booksellers to venture into the printing business. It is perhaps pertinent to explain this printing method briefly as it defined the book production process in northern Nigeria since the 1950s by creating a particular social space that brought the agents of book production into a close relationship. Such interaction, however, has not been static. It kept on transforming over time.

Offset Lithography in Action: the Yoruba Printers and the Islamic Book Market

Lithography is a planographic process because both the printing and the non-printing surfaces lie on the same level.[298] As the third printing method — after the relief and intaglio processes — lithography was invented by Alois Senefelder (b. 1771 – d. 1834).[299] The technique is based on the principle that water repels oil. Therefore, the printing area is defined by an oil-based chemical, and the whole surface is then dampened with a water-based chemical before inking so that the ink, which is also oil-based, adheres exclusively to the oily areas of the printing surface. This initial

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The first working machine for the line casting technique known as the Linotype was invented by Ottmar Mergentheler (1854 – 1899).

[297] For a description of how this process worked in Gaskiya Corporation, see Yakubu Balarabe, "Present Structure of Gaskiya Corporation" in Husaini Hayatu (ed.), *Fifty Years of Truth*, 149 – 150

[298] Williamson, *Book Design*, 232

[299] The name in some old literature on lithography is spelt Aloys Senefelder, see Louis Prang, "Lithography," *Modern Art* 4, no. 3 (1896) 82 – 86. The technique used by Senefelder involved drawing with wax crayon on a slab of polished limestone.

lithographic process was gradually displaced by photomechanical operations, which became widely available in the twentieth century. In this case, photographically generated plates were used for printing in a method known as offset lithography.[300]

The offset lithographic process went through various improvements throughout the twentieth century, but the basic principle remained. The offset lithographic process begins with the pre-press stage, where a reprographic camera takes the photos of the image or text, either hand-written or typed. Then a lithographer would use a plate maker to transfer the negative to an aluminium plate known as the press plate, which is then loaded onto a roller known as the plate cylinder.[301] Each revolution of the cylinder dampens the non-image area of the plate. The ink would pass to the image areas of the plate. The impression is then offset (transferred) to a blanket cylinder and finally onto the paper.[302] However, if the material is a four colour image, then the colours have to be separated, and four plates corresponding to CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black) have to be produced, and each has to be impressed on the paper.[303]

The offset method had revolutionised the Islamic book industry in northern Nigeria. For the first time, it became possible for handwritten texts in local "*Kanawī* style" to be printed in large

[300] John Feather, *A Dictionary of Book History*, (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), 164 – 165
[301] At present some printers use the new imaging technology known as Computer-to-Plate (CPT) in which camera is not used at all. The image is etched from the computer to the plate directly. This is opposed to the old system of computer-to-film (CTP). The new system has been introduced to Kano around 2015. This information is based on three interviews: Malam Ibrahim Kurawa, (interview February 14, 2019), Hassan Inuwa (interview, February 5, 2020) and Lukman Abdulkarim Shitu (Interview February 14, 2020)
[302] The process has been explained to me by Malam Ibrahim Kurawa, a lecturer at the Printing Department, School of Technology, Kano State. He demonstrated in their laboratory how the various printing methods work.
[303] This process is known as chromolithography. Most of the printing presses in Kano at present use full colour offset machines.

quantities without using types.[304] It enabled the Muslim world to reproduce a replica of handwritten texts in millions of copies while using a mechanical process. Thanks to the lithographic method, the transformation of Islamic book culture had become a feature of printing trajectories in many Muslim societies. For this reason, Khalid Adeeb, while examining the printing and publishing trade in Tsarist Central Asia, argues that: "Lithography allowed the age of script to continue under the guise of print."[305]

Since its emergence, offset lithography became the dominant process for Islamic book production. Both the KNAP and the Gaskiya acquired offset machines in the 1950s. Likewise, several private printing presses in Kano began to use the new method in the same period.[306] The 1950s was also a period of modest expansion of the KBM. The 1954 Kano Annual Report indicates that the colonial records on firms and businesses in northern Nigeria had increased to over 800 files, among which 428 were based in Kano.[307] This figure is an indication that the Kano Native Administration had registered more than 50 percent of northern Nigerian businesses.

A pertinent question is why did the lithographic method of printing overshadow the relief process in northern Nigeria? The same question had confronted scholars working on the nineteenth-century Muslim Middle East. Three reasons have been advanced. The technique's technical versatility in handling varieties of images is one of the factors. The second reason is termed artistic as

[304] *Kanawī* is a term used by Andrea Brigaglia to designate a variety of calligraphic style within the *Sūdānī* family that is dominant in Kano. See Andrea Brigaglia, "Central *Sūdānī*c Arabic Scripts (Part 1): The Popularization of the *Kanawī* Script," *Islamic Africa* 2, no. 2 (2011)
[305] See Adeeb Khalid, "Printing, Publishing, and Reform in Tsarist Central Asia" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 2 (1994), 192
[306] For example, Oluseyi, one of the Yoruba printing companies in Kano, had printed a lithograph book in the 1950s.
[307] Kano Province, "Annual Report 1954, Kano Province Material," KSHCB/SNP/8655//1954, (1954), 76

"lithography lends itself well remarkably to the reproduction of writing."[308] In other words, it enables the reader accustomed to the manuscript works to read the lithographs in a handwritten form with all its calligraphy and beautiful decorations.

This last point seems to be the primary reason for its predominance in the Islamic Book Market of Nigeria. Its versatility is also applicable since it enables both computer-supported typewritten texts on the one hand and handwritten works in local calligraphic styles, on the other hand, to be printed lithographically. A third reason is linked to its cost-effectiveness, especially when many books are to be produced. A large percentage of the cost is incurred at the pre-press stage, including text copying, scanning, and plate making. In the subsequent print runs, the same plates are used for subsequent reproductions.

The acquisition of the lithographic machines resulted in two significant developments that drastically transformed the Islamic Book Market. Firstly, realising the potentialities of the market, a new set of publishers exploited the new printing technique to carve out a niche in the Islamic publishing industry. Secondly, the Kano private presses began to venture into Arabic book printing in the late 1950s thanks to their acquisition of the lithographic machines.

Ifeolu Printing Works was the first private Press to be established in Kano in 1943. The proprietor, Mr I. W. Oshilaja Washington was a Yoruba from Ijebu-Ode in Ogun State, south-western Nigeria. However, the Yoruba-owned presses that played a vital role in printing Arabic works were Oluseyi and Adebola Printing Presses (later Bola Print), founded in 1947 and 1951, respectively. Other

[308] See Brinkley Messick, "On the Question of Lithography," in Geoffrey Roper (ed.) *The History of the Book in Middle East* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 301 – 302

Yoruba-owned printing outfits such as OMOADE Printing Press, AFOSCO Press Limited, SAMKARI and Sons Limited and RASCO Press joined these two in the following years.[309]

Although the history of lithographic printing is traced to the 1950s, it was not until the 1980s that the Kano printing industry played a significant role in local Islamic book production. A major contributing factor for the expansion of the local printing presses, especially in the early 1980s, was the Nigerian Federal Government's restrictions on the import, forcing the booksellers that previously relied on the Arab publishers to print a significant percentage of their works locally.[310]

A typical printer's workshop in the 1980s would have Platen Machines, an offset machine such as Gestetner A B Dick 350 machines or Kord 64, a fully equipped darkroom with a camera, plate makers, a ruling table and stitching machines. These Yoruba printers' workshops had the basic requirements for the printing of Arabic books. They also had various artisans such as the pressmen, lithographers, compositors and artisans who specialised in book finishing. In subsequent years, smaller workshops that handled one aspect of the book printing process were also founded. Some of them specialised in plate making, such as Kallitho, Fuja Lithographic, and others.[311]

The 1980s seemed to be a period of expansion in the local printing industry in Nigeria at large. Many book importers had looked inward for book production due to the state policy of restricting

[309]OMO-ADE was established in 1968, AFONSO Press Limited in 1974, Samkari and Sons Limited in 1975 and Rasco Press also in 1975. The founder of Rasco, Remi Oshineye, was formerly an apprentice of Oluseyi Printing Press.

[310] For a discussion of how the International book trade impacted on the local printing industry, see chapter seven.

[311] Interview with Lukman Abdulkarim Shittu, (the Chairman of Printers' Association in Kano), Sabon Gari, Kano, conducted by author, February 14, 2020

imports in the face of the economic crisis.[312] Table 6 indicates the upsurge in the printing presses in the early 1980s.

Table 6: Printing and Publishing Companies in Nigeria with more than Ten Employees

S/N	Year	Number of Companies	Number of Employees
1	1972	77	9,874[313]
2	1974	76	9,147[314]
3	1976	97	12,455[315]
4	1978	68	8,079[316]
5	1980	182	20,320[317]
6	1982	168	25,270[318]
7	1983	167	20,729[319]

From Table 6 above, it is evident that there was an expansion of the printing industry. The number of firms increased from 68 in 1978 to 182 in 1980. Although the number decreased in the next two years, the figures still represented a tremendous increase over the figures of the 1970s. The same pattern can be observed from the figures of workers from 1980 to 1982.

Paper is a *sine qua non* of any printing undertaking. Thus, the emergence of the Kano printing industry also entailed the proliferation of the paper dealers who obtained their consignments from Lagos. Some printers purchased their paper directly from Lagos as well. Initially, the Yoruba dominated the paper selling business, but they were overtaken subsequently by the Igbo traders who invested significantly in the trade. The pioneering Yoruba paper traders were: Ajibaye Paper

[312] See chapter seven for elaboration on this point
[313] Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), *Digest of Statistics Vol 25* (Lagos: Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics, 1976), 7
[314] *Ibid.*, 19
[315] FGN. *Industrial Survey of Nigeria 1975 – 1978*. (Lagos: Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics 1978), 13
[316] *Ibid.*, 15
[317] FGN. *Industrial Survey of Nigeria 1980 – 1983* (Lagos: Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics, 1983), 1
[318] *Ibid.*, 31
[319] *Ibid.*, 47

Industry, Renafor Stores, Ola Oluwa Paper Stores, Odusco Paper, Faithful Brothers, Sodiq Stores, Kayode Paper and so on.[320] The 1985 Kano Directory of Industries mentions six companies that were engaged in paper-related business:

Table 7: Firms with Connection to Paper Manufacturing and Trade in Kano (1985)[321]

S/N	Name of Company	Location	Engagement Size	Year of Establishment
1	Atasco Abbey Office Machine Services and Stationery Nigeria Limited	No 45, France Road, Kano	30	1970
2	Challenge Bookshop	No 27 A, Airport Road	13	1949
3	Ibe Bookshop and Stationery Limited	France Road, Sabon Gari	14	1985
4	Nigerian Stationery Factory	No 54, Sharada Industrial Estate	20	1978
5	Star Modern Paper Mill Limited	No 6, Challawa Industrial Area	120	1976
6	Universal Education Supplies Limited	No 3, Bompai Road, Kano	11	1969

The printers also obtained their paper from government-owned companies. The first Nigerian paper factory, Nigerian Paper Mill, was commissioned at Jebba, Kwara State, in 1969. Then the government set up the Nigeria Newsprint Manufacturing Company located at Oku-Iboku in Rivers State.[322] The Iwopin Pulp and Paper Company was established in 1976 to produce writing and printing papers. The latter company opened a storeroom on Beirut Road in Kano, where printers

[320] These enterprises were operational from the 1980s to date.
[321] Kano State, *Directory of Industrial and Commercial Establishments,* (Kano: Budget and Economic Development Directorate, 1985), 46
[322] See J. O. Adegbehin and J. E. Omijeh, "Raw Materials for the Pulp and Paper Industry in Nigeria," *The Commonwealth Forestry Review* 68, no. 1 (214) (1989), 36

purchased their paper directly, especially in the 1980s and 1990s before it was eventually closed in 1998.[323]

The relationship between printers and paper stores has not always been cordial. It has been marked by ambivalence and distrust. The relationship began to deteriorate when the paper dealers began to venture into printing. This transgression, coupled with the perennial complaint of exploitation of paper sellers by charging printers exorbitant prices, especially during high demand, further worsened their relations.[324] Consequently, the printers' association had to begin purchasing paper directly from Lagos.[325]

The Expansion of the Printing Industry: the Hausa Booksellers as Printers

At what point did Hausa people, or more specifically Kano Islamic booksellers, begin to venture into printing which was hitherto an exclusive preserve of the Yoruba? Indeed, the Press of the Indigenes (*Maɗaba'ar 'Yan Kasa*), which subsequently became Northern Maktabat Printing Press (NMPP) was the first printing company to be established by the Hausa people. The NMPP was founded in 1964.[326] The growing concern of the Islamic booksellers on how the Yoruba printers handled the damaged copies of the sacred Islamic texts accounted for the establishment of presses

[323] Egbewole Zaccheaus Tunde and Rotowa Odunayo James, "Effects of Declining Paper Industry on Nigeria Economy and the Way Forward" *American Journal of Agriculture and Forestry* 5, no. 6 (2017), 182

[324] Interview with Abdussamad Danladi Sani, Kano, conducted by author, February 13, 2020

[325] Interview with Lukman Shittu, February 14, 2020

[326] See Nassir Bello, "Planning and Development of Public Libraries in Kano State," (MA Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 1976), 73; Olaniyi, "Yoruba Printers in Kano Metropolis" 84 – 85; Aliyu Garba Shirawa *al-Kitāb al-Islamī: Aswāquhu wa atharuhā fī nashri al-thaqāfat al-Islāmiyya fī madīnati Kano (sūq Kurmi anmūdhajan)* (MA Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 2013), 55

by the followers of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse.[327] Similarly, Niasse had encouraged his followers in Nigeria to set up printing outfits.

The Press was founded by Faruq Abdullahi Salga (d. 1985) with the support of other Tijaniyya clerics.[328] The transfer of printing skills from the Yoruba to the Hausa people was through a Yoruba printer, Sa'adu Jola Ade, who previously worked for Bola Print as the head of the Arabic Printing Unit.[329] This technological and "cultural agent" was the pioneer pressman for the *Maɗaba'ar 'Yan Ƙasa*. He trained Hausa workers how to operate the offset lithographic machine. Being a Muslim, literate in Arabic and having professional training made him an outstanding figure in the company's history. After its establishment, most of the self-published Tijani scholars printed their works there.

The *nāshirs*, however, took their works to a variety of the presses because the NMPP alone could not handle their high printing demands. An analysis of 50 religious tracts (Table 8) that were randomly selected, printed between 1944 and 2000, indicates high patronage of the NMPP within this period.

[327] Information from several informant including Malam Lawan Dogo (April 24, 2019) and Ahmad Saƙali (March 28, 2019)

[328] The other co-founders, according to some sources were: Abdullahi Salga (d. 1962), Mahmud Salga (d. 2012) and Wada Haladu (d. 1991). See Shirawa, *al-Kitāb al-Islamī* 54 – 55. However, according to Malam Lawan Dogo who was one of the pioneering workers in the company, Malam Faruq single-handedly founded the company. Interview with Malam Lawan Dogo, Fagge Kano, conducted by author, April 24, 2019

[329] For his biography and career in printing, see Olaniyi, "Yoruba Printers in Kano Metropolis" 84 – 85

Table 8: The Percentage of Religious Tracts Printed by Presses in Kano 1944 - 2000[330]

S/N	Printing Press	Number of printed texts	Percentage
1	Northern Maktabat Printing Press (NMPP)	16	32 percent
2	Kano Native Authority Press (KNAP)	3	6 percent
4	Gaskiya Corporation	4	8 percent
5	Jola-Ade Press	1	2 percent
6	Nurul Islam Press	3	6 percent
7	Oluseyi Press	4	8 percent
8	Bola Print	2	4 percent
9	Al-Mash'had El-Hussain	1	2 percent
10	*Maṭbaʿa al-Zāwiya al-Tijāniyya*	2	4 percent
11	Books with no publication Information	14	28 percent
12	Total	50	100 percent

Most of the books that constitute the above data were short texts of fewer than 30 pages. About 41 titles out of 50, representing 82 percent, were works of less than 30 pages; only 18 percent of them were 30 pages and above. The data indicates that the NMPP had the highest number of printed titles representing 32 percent. The figures also reveal that, between the 1940s and the 1990s, the KNAP and Egyptian presses had printed few works. This is hardly surprising since the *nāshirs* printed most of their short texts in Kano while they took large volumes to Egypt or Lebanon for printing.[331]

Also, in the 1960s, one of the booksellers, Ayuba Sani Magoga, established a printing press to print his works, such as the Qurʾān in *Kanawī* calligraphic style and *Ishiriniyyat*, a famous devotional poem by Abd al-Rahman al-Fazazi (d. 1230). Magoga employed a former apprentice

[330] This information was derived from examination of 50 selected samples of "printed manuscripts" most of which were obtained from the Library of Alhaji Uba Ringim. I am grateful to Dr Andrea Brigaglia for introducing me to the library.

[331] To date, the large volumes are mostly printed in Egypt or Lebanon. At present (2020), one of the major Hausa printers is Barhama Ayuba. His press presently prints the text of large volumes in Kano, but the cover pages are designed and printed in Egypt. In the case of four-colour lithographs of the Qurʾān, he prints them entirely in Egypt. Interview with Barhama Ayuba, his residence in Kano, conducted by author, February 14, 2020

with the NMPP, Lawan Dogo, to work in his firm as a pressman. The Press had a limited capacity. Therefore, it played a limited role in the KBM. The period between the 1960s and 1970s was that of the proliferation of more Hausa owned presses. However, only a few of them specialized in Arabic printing.

Except for Ayuba Magoga, the rest of the *nāshirs* relied on the services of professional printers. In this regard, the publisher would take their manuscripts to the printer and specify the number of copies they wanted. The printer would then give them a quotation, and they would often make an upfront payment. Then the printer would handle all stages of the book production, from plate making to printing, cutting and binding. That would be the case if the printer had the required workforce and the machines. Otherwise, he had to subcontract other workmen such as lithographers and owners of cutting machines to do some of the work. The bookseller would only receive the finished product.[332]

From the late 1980s, however, the relationship between the *nāshirs* and the printers began to change. Recurrent complaints of the printers' failure to keep their promises punctuated the relationship. Moreover, by the late 1980s to early 1990s, a new set of young energetic booksellers took over from their predecessors. Two of such booksellers, Malam Habib Ayuba (b. 1954 – d. 2017) and Ibrahim Khalil Sani Adamu (b. 1950), began to handle all the printing stages by themselves. The following paragraph described the stages they followed to transform a manuscript into a printed book.

These young booksellers would first take their manuscripts (copied in *Kanawī* style by a copyist with good handwriting) to a lithographer who would take the photographs of all the pages and

[332] Interview with Naziru Abdullahi Yasari, Kano, conducted by author, June 20, 2019

prepare the required number of the press plates. They would then take the plates and required paper to the printer and pay the latter for printing services. Afterwards, they would take the printed pages for cutting and trimming to another workshop.[333] They would then handle the binding by themselves with the support of young people from their neighbourhoods whom they trained on collation and bookbinding.[334] This new arrangement became dominant in the book market. Although it is tedious, it afforded the booksellers the opportunity of making more profits. It also allowed the *nāshirs* to have their books ready for sale within a short period.

Soon some of the booksellers began to purchase guillotine machines for cutting and trimming the printed pages. Some of them went a step ahead by establishing their printing presses while maintaining their bookstalls in the market (Table 9).

Table 9: Printing Presses Founded by Kano Booksellers

S/N	Name of Proprietor	Printing Press	Year of Establishment
1	Ayuba Sani Magoga	-	1965
3	Habibu Ayuba Sani	Habibullah Printing Press[335]	1991
4	Munzali Bala Gabari	Mahir Sharif Bala Printing and Publishing Company[336]	1999
5	Barhama Ayuba	-	2001[337]
6	Alkali Bala Gabari	Mahir Sharif Bala Printing and Publishing Company[338]	2013
7	Abdussalam Danladi Sani	Gwani Printing Press	2016[339]

[333] In some cases, the printer would handle the cutting and trimming of pages.
[334] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil Sani Adamu, Gyaranya Quarters Kano, conducted by author, January 23, 2020; Interview with Ahmad Bashir Sakali, Kurmi Market, Kano, conducted by author, March 28, 2019; Interview with Alhaji Anwaru, Kurmi Market, Kano, conducted by author, March 20, 2019; Interview with Barhama Ayuba, February 14, 2020. To date this method is used by the new generation of booksellers-turned-printers, such as Ahmad Sakali.
[335] Ibid, 58
[336] Abdullahi Uba Jibril, "Biography of Mahir Sharif Bala Gabari (1930 – 2016)" (BA Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 2018) 55
[337] Interview with Barhama Ayuba, February 14, 2020
[338] Jibrin, "Biography of Mahir Sharif Bala Gabari" 55
[339] Interview with Abdussalam Sani Adamu, Gworon Dutse, Kano, conducted by author, January 3, 2019

Conclusion

The printing industry transitioned from its colonial creation to its transformation into a predominant private venture. From the technological perspective, the change from letterpress to offset lithographic technique had enabled manuscript books to be reproduced mechanically while simultaneously allowing typographically produced texts to be printed using the technique. The versatility and cost-effectiveness of offset lithographic printing made it dominate the printing industry in the post-colonial period.

In the KBM, the positions occupied by the key actors in the "communications circuit" are never stable. To maintain livelihood, the agents move freely, changing posts and positions; playing simultaneous roles at once within the circuit. The case of booksellers-turned-printers of the KBM revealed that agents could perform the printing and bookselling role at the same time. The chapter has demonstrated that some KBM booksellers were also printers. They maintained both bookshops and printshops at the same time. This dynamics further indicates that the Darntonian "communications circuit" is defective in its account of the book cycle.

Chapter Seven

The External Communications Circuit of the Kano Islamic Book Market

Introduction

The external circuit of the Islamic Book Market is distinguished from the internal circuit by its transnational nature. The books were manufactured primarily in Egypt and Lebanon, from where they were shipped to Kano, which served as a conduit for both internal distribution within Nigeria and further external diffusion among the neighbouring West and Central African countries. An account of this trade requires an understanding of book production in the Middle East. Currently, only modest literature tackles the subject.[340] The goal of this introduction is not to reproduce such contributions but to provide the necessary background to the international Islamic book trade.

The substantive part of the chapter focuses on the area where there is a wide gap in the extant literature: the impact of such massive production of Islamic texts in the Middle East on sub-Saharan Africa with particular reference to Kano as a conduit for distribution. To what extent has the production of books in the Arab world impacted the Islamic Book Market of sub-Saharan Africa? What idea do we have on the quantity and volume of such trade during the period of its climax? Can we see the sub-Saharan African markets as a mere extension of their primary centres of production and consumption in the Arab world? With these questions in mind, the chapter sets out to unpack and reconstruct the history of the transnational book trade with particular reference to Kano.

[340] For the historiography of Islamic book printing in the Middle East and its role in animating Arab Awakening, see Geoffrey Roper, "The Printing Press and Change in the Arab World," in Geoffrey Roper (ed.), *The History of the Book in the Middle East*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013) 389 – 406

The Arabs employed the block printing technique to produce amulets as early as the tenth century, 500 years before Gutenberg. Book production, however, remained in the hands of the scribes for centuries.[341] It would take 300 to 400 years after the invention of printing machines in Europe before the Muslims took up Gutenberg's invention. In the meantime, many Islamic books were printed in Europe. The Qurʾān was printed in Venice as early as 1530, and other Islamic texts were published in several cities of Europe in the following years.[342] Several reasons have been proposed to account for the delay in adopting printing technology by the Muslims. Some of the factors include a distrustful attitude towards European inventions, the fear of desecrating the holy texts, resistance of the scribes, Muslim preference for oral over written communication and the recurrent misprints of the early Qurʾān published in European presses.[343]

Moreover, the Ottoman Empire had contributed to the late adoption of printing technology in the Muslim world. Sultan Bayazid proclaimed a ban on the possession of printed materials as early as 1485. Similarly, Salim I reiterated the proclamation in 1515.[344] When the prohibition was lifted eventually based on the Edict of Sultan Ahmad III of July 5, 1727, it only allowed for the printing of non-religious texts.[345] Consequently, Ibrahim Muteferrika (d. 1747) established a press that

[341] Reinhard Schulze, "The Birth of Tradition and Modernity in 18th and 19th century Islamic Culture — The Case of Printing," in Geoffray Roper (ed.), *The History of the Book*, 345 – 388
[342] For the account of these early printings in Europe, see Johannes Pederson, *The Arabic Book*. Translated by Geoffrey French. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)
[343] Muhsin Mahdi, "From Manuscript Age to the Age of Printed Book," in George N. Atiyeh (ed.), *The Book in the Islamic World*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) 1 – 2; Also, see Ami Ayalon, "Arab Booksellers and Bookshops in the Age of Printing, 1850–1914," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no. 1, (2010), 74
[344] Pederson, *The Arabic Book*, 133;
[345] Schulze, "The Birth of Tradition and Modernity" 357 – 358

operated between 1726 and 1747. By the end of the nineteenth century, at least 77 printing presses publishing in Ottoman Turkish were in operation.[346]

In the 1820s, Muslim-owned printing presses were founded by states in Egypt, India and Iran, marking the actual beginning and the first phase of printing in the Islamic world as the previous projects noted above were "isolated and unsustained ventures."[347] The second phase was marked by the proliferation of private presses and bookshops.[348] Privately owned bookshops first appeared in Beirut at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The appellation *maktaba* became the dominant term for a bookshop or a book vending depot in the Arab world. By the 1880s, it replaced all the previous appellations. Sometimes the *maktaba* owners operated a kind of publishing house-cum-bookshop.

Although Beirut played a pioneering role in the private book trade, its position as a centre of book production and diffusion was overtaken by Egypt by the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The massive emigration of educated Syrians/Lebanese to Cairo and Alexandria was perhaps responsible for this development which "turned Egypt into the permanent capital of Arabic bookmaking."[349] An analysis of newspapers by Ami Ayalon indicates that between the mid-nineteenth century and 1914, about 45 bookshops existed in Cairo alone, 15 in other Egyptian towns, 33 in Beirut and 16 in other Lebanese towns.[350]

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[346] Orlin Sabev. "Rich Men, Poor Men: Ottoman Printers and Booksellers Making Fortune or Seeking Survival (Eighteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)" in Geoffrey Roper (ed.), *The History of the Book*.. 322 – 323

[347] Nile Green, "Journeymen, Middlemen: Travel, Trans-culture, and Technology in the Origins of Muslim Printing," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 2 (2009), 201. Before then Arabic printing press was brought by Napoleon (1798 – 1801) to publish proclamation during the period of his invasion of Egypt.

[348] Rachida Chih, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Rüdiger Seesemann, "The Nineteenth century: A Sufi Century?" in Rachida Chih, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Rüdiger Seesemann (eds.) *Sufism, Literary Production and Printing in the Nineteenth Century*, (Wüzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2015), 11

[349] Ami Ayalon, "Arab Booksellers and Bookshops.." 87 – 88

[350] *Ibid.*, 85

Among the nineteenth-century-founded Cairene *maktabas*, the one that played a significant role in the sub-Saharan African market in the second half of the twentieth century was Moustafa El-Baby El-Halaby and Sons (MBH). According to one of their invoices, the company was established in 1859.[351] However, this statement needs a little elaboration. The company began as *Maṭbaʿa al-Maymaniyya*, co-founded by Ahmad Halabi (d. 1898), a Syrian immigrant and an unknown partner, in 1856. From 1858 it was headed by Ahmad Halabi.[352]

According to El-Halabi family sources, Ahmad Halabi had no children; therefore, he invited his two nephews (Isah El-Babi El-Halabi and Moustafa El-Baby El-Halaby) from the al-Bab village, Aleppo, to help him run his book business in Egypt. He eventually handed over the *Maṭbaʿa al-Maymaniyya* to the two nephews before he died. After his death, the company's name was changed to *Dar Kutub al-Arabiyya al-Kubra* by Isah and Moustafa.[353]

Isah and Moustafa later established two separate publishing houses as successors to *Dar Kutub al-Arabiyya*. Isah founded *Dar Ihya'u al-Kutub al-Arabiyya*, while Moustafa founded Moustafa El-Baby El-Halaby and Sons for himself and his children. It is not clear when these two companies were established.[354] The date indicated on the MBH invoice, noted above, presumably refers to when the company was still under Ahmad El-Halabi. Companies such as that of the El-Halabi family produced a vast number of books. Between 1900 and 1949, for example, the MBH had published about 440 titles.[355]

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[351] Moustafa El-Baby El-Halaby and Sons (MBH). "Pro Forma Invoice," February 21, 1984, Personal Collection of Danladi Sani Adamu.

[352] Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, "Sufism and Printing in Nineteenth Century Egypt" in Rachida Chih, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Rüdiger Seesemann (eds.) *Sufism, Literary Production and Printing*, 47

[353] Karima Hassan, "Babi .. 130 Years Halaby In Spreading The Science Of Religion" *Egypt Independent*, September 3, 2009, https://to.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=224645

[354] *Ibid*.

[355] *Ibid*.

In the twentieth century, Arab printers had expanded their influence to the rest of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa. However, the account of such expansion is hardly given attention in the extant literature. Therefore, the following section explores the transnational book trade linking the Middle East with West and Central Africa while spotlighting the KBM as an international conduit for further distribution of Islamic texts.

The Beginning

The origin of the modern transnational Islamic book trade in Kano can be traced back to the colonial period when two principal actors existed in the Market. Firstly, the self-published authors of Sufi fraternities and importers constituted the first category. Secondly, towards the end of the colonial period, a book trade partnership began between a Sudanese, Osman El-Tayeb and an Egyptian, Ahmed El-Sa'ud, whose prime target was the emerging modern community of readers: the Arabists of northern Nigeria.

Perhaps, local Tijani scholars had already established a link with publishers in Egypt since the 1920s. However, we do not have any concrete evidence to support this conjecture except the letter of the Inspector General of Police to the Lieutenant Governor of Northern Province dated July 8, 1929. Its content was a complaint on a religious tract allegedly authored by Muhammad Salga that was putatively thought to be capable of instigating an uprising.[356] The letter referred to the discussion on the possibility of sending the manuscript to Cairo for publication:

> "With reference to the book written by Mallam Salga… when it was finished, it was taken to the Waziri, so that a title should be chosen… the party then went to the Emir to discuss the possibilities of sending this book to be printed in Cairo. In the talk that followed, it was pointed out that the more educated people of Egypt might pour scorn on the

[356] For a full account on the controversy of the publication of this book, see chapter two

> possible grammatical errors of the author and apart from time taken in sending the script to Cairo, would it not be better to try and get it done locally?"[357]

Although the KNAP published the book eventually, the quotation above mentions discussions on "the possibilities of sending this book to Cairo." This statement indicates that the local Islamic scholars seemed to have connections with printing presses in Egypt around that time. This is a mere conjecture. However, it is evident that from the 1940s, a few Islamic scholars had established a link with Cairene publishers. Shaykh Atiku, for example, had printed his works in Egypt since the 1940s.[358] The MBH was his leading foreign publisher. The *Arabic Literature in Africa, Volume II* (*ALA II*), indicates that out of his 16 titles published outside Nigeria, ten were printed by the MBH.[359] The other Egyptian presses he patronised were *Maṭbaʿa al-Muniriyya* and *Maṭbaʿa al-Zāwiya al-Tijāniyya*.[360]

One of his primary Egyptian contacts was Muhammad Hafiz al-Tijani, a renowned Tijani scholar based in Egypt. The latter helped to connect Atiku with Egyptian printers. This is apparent from the correspondence of al-Tijani with Atiku. Al-Tijani, in one of his letters to Atiku, responded to the complaint that a book written by Atiku titled *Qaṭf al-Thimār al-Yāniʿa* did not have diacritical marks.[361] According to al-Tijani, he was not informed, in advance, on how the book would appear after print. "Had it been you told us that you wanted *Qadf al-Thimar*, to be printed with vowel

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[357] The Inspector General of Police, (Northern Provinces), Confidential Letter to the Private Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor, (Northern Province), July 8, 1929, KSHCB/Confidential File No PIB/226/Kaduna. 1 – 2.

[358] For example the work of Shaykh Atiku, *Qatf al-thimar al-yani'a* was published in 1946 by *Maṭbaʿa al-Zawiya al-Tijaniyya*. It was reprinted by the MBH in 1971, See John Owen Hunwick and Rex Seán O'Fahey, *Arabic Literature in Africa Vol. II: The Writings of Central Sūdānīc Africa*, (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 287 ff. Henceforth *ALA II*

[359] *ALA II*

[360] *Ibid.*, 387 ff.

[361] Abubakar Atiku, *Qaṭf al-thimār al-yāniʿa bi-naẓm manthūr al-wasāyā li-shaykhinā al-Tijānī al-jāmiʿa*, (Cairo: Maṭabaʿa al-Zāwiya al-Tijāaniyya, 1946). The same book was also published by the MBH in 1971.

marks; definitely, we would have printed it with vowel marks."[362] In the same letter, he informed Atiku that: "We are about to complete the publication on the biography of Sayyid Umar Futi. We will send it to you by the grace of God after the completion of its publication." Here he was referring to his book, *al-Haj Umar al-Fūtī: Sulṭān Daula al-Tijjāniyya*.[363] In its introduction, he acknowledged the contribution he received from scholars of West Africa, including those of Shaykh Atiku.[364] This letter illustrates that some Sufi scholars of northern Nigeria communicated with their colleagues of North Africa on matters of authorship and book printing in the 1960s. Shaykh Atiku's students that were residents of Egypt also helped to follow up on his publications. One of such disciples was Musa Sulaiman Al-Qahira.[365]

Perhaps, the most extensive book trade from the late colonial period was that of a partnership between Osman El-Tayeb (b. 1919 – d. 2011) and an Egyptian bookseller in Kano, Ahmed El-Sa'ud, leading to the establishment of a book vending business which became one of the biggest in West and Central Africa. El-Sa'ud had established a book store in Kano in 1927, but another source indicates that the shop opened in the early 1930s.[366] On the other hand, Osman came to Kano from Sudan in 1939 at the invitation of his uncle, Bashir El-Rayyah, the head of the Sudanese teachers who founded the Northern Provinces Law School (NPLS). Osman's business career began when he started operating a shop on the premises of the NPLS. He later went into partnership with

[362] Muhammad Hafiz al-Tijani, Letter to Abubakar Atiku, Personal Collection of Sanusi Abubakar Atiku. Based on circumstantial evidence, the letter was written in the early 1960s since a reference was made to the fact that the book of Muhammad Hafiz, published in 1964, was about to come out from press.
[363] Muhammad Hafiz al-Tijani, *al-Haj Umar al-Fūtī: Sulṭān daulat al-Tijjāniyya*, (Cairo: *Maṭbaʿat zāwiyat al-Tijāniyya,* 1963)
[364] See *Ibid.*, 2
[365] Interview with Sanusi Abubakar Atiku, Sanka Quarters, Kano, conducted by author, December 27, 2018
[366] This is the view of Muhammad Osman El-Tayed, the oldest son of Usman El-Tayeb (interview, June 20, 2019). While Salah M. Hassan maintained that tha shop was opened in 1927. See Salah M. Hassan, *Art and Islamic Literacy among the Hausa of Northern Nigeria*, (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 37

El-Sa'ud, most likely in 1943. Although the family sources indicate that the partnership began in 1941; that does not seem plausible. Two letters of petition against Osman's uncle, Bashir El-Rayyah, insinuated that the partnership began in 1943. One such letter, dated November 14, 1943, quoted below, was written by a student of the NPLS, Mahmudu Azare, who mentioned that El-Sa'ud travelled back to Egypt and Osman (that year) began to do business in the former's shop. He complained that El-Rayyah forced students to buy books from his nephew's shop.

> "*Bayan gaisuwa, ina son in shaida maka halin da Sheihu Bashir yake yi… yana da kantin dan wansa Usman yana yimar chiniki sa'an nan yana sa yan makaranta suyi bashi karfi da yaji. Su sayi turame da tsada kwarai hakanan littatafai. Don haka ma yake kokari ya samu izini ya sayi littatafai masu yawa, domin a chan Misira akwai wani mutum wanda ake che masa Ahmed Sa'ud, da shi a nan Kano yake to bana ya koma chan yanzu Usman a kantinsa yake. To da shine ya ke son su hada wannan kurdi na littafi su dinga siyarwa. Don haka ne ma ya bidi Karin shekara don abin ya tabbata… Saboda haka yayi kokarin tafiyar Sheihu Abdulhamid, wannan abu ya* dame mu."[367]
>
> "After greetings, I want to inform you about the behaviour of Sheihu Bashir… His nephew has a shop; he buys (from the shop), and he forces students to make purchases on credit (from the shop); to buy fabrics and books at an exorbitant price. For that reason, he sought permission to buy books wholesale because an Egyptian called Ahmed Sa'ud used to stay in Kano, but he travelled back (to Egypt) this year. Usman at present does business from his shop. He (Osman) was the one who wanted them (Osman and El-Sa'ud) to have a partnership on the book business and be doing the business (together). For that reason, he (Bashir El-Rayyah) applied for the extension of one year for that (the partnership) to become a reality… Because of that, he struggled to ensure Shaihu Abdulhamid has left. This thing (El-Rayyah's alleged machinations) has disturbed us."

Another petition by a staff member of the institution written in the same 1943 also complained that Bashir El-Rayyah compelled staff and students to buy from the shop of Osman, and ever since El-

[367] Mahmudu Azare, Confidential Letter to J.R. Patterson (Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces), November 14, 1943, KSHCB/Secret File Collection/R755 "School for Arabic Studies Staff." (1943).

Sa'ud left for Egypt, Osman operated from El-Sa'ud's shop together with the latter's clerks.[368] The complaint against El-Rayyah can be seen as a product of competition among the two Sudanese teachers, Abdul Hamed and Bashir Tayeb El-Rayyah. Abdel Hamed and another teacher, Malam Aliyu Jos, wrote two other petitions against El-Rayyah. However, the colonial officers realised that the complaints were orchestrated to tarnish El-Rayyah's image. The Resident of Kano commented on the last petitions thus: "From the addresses on the envelopes and the tone of the letters, it is obvious that Abdel Hamid Abdalla and Malam Aliyu Jos have got together and agreed to write and complain."[369] Presumably, the two letters of students quoted above were also written under the influence of Abdel Hamid. Thus the colonial officers did not take any action against El-Rayyah.

Despite all the allegations, Osman and El-Sa'ud decided to enter into a formal partnership after sensing the increasing demand for Arabic books in northern Nigeria. They, therefore, began to engage in massive importation of Islamic and Arabic books from Egypt, Sudan and Lebanon.[370] They also commissioned Nigerian authors to write texts which they published. According to Muhammad El-Tayeb, Osman had to raise capital from family members in Sudan to invest his share in the partnership. He contributed 600 pounds which represented one-third of the entire capital. Despite his limited contribution, El-Sa'ud allowed Osman to become an equal partner in the business.[371] The partnership had a shop located in the Kwari Market where they kept samples of books for advertisement while the main stock was stored in the warehouse.

[368] Moyi Sokoto and Bello Yola, Confidential Letter to J.R. Patterson, December 7, 1943, KSHCB/Secret File Collection/R755 "School for Arabic Studies Staff." (1943).
[369] Resident, Kano Province, Confidential Letter to J.R. Patterson, October 13, 1943, KSHCB/Secret File Collection/R755 "School for Arabic Studies Staff." (1943).
[370] Kano State Merit Award Committee, "Citation on Alhaji Usman El-Tayeb," April 9, 1995
[371] Interview with Muhammad Osman El-Tayeb, Sharada Kano, conducted by author, June 20, 2019

The next stage of the partnership was when they ventured into the publication of school textbooks, which later became the main specialisation of the bookshop. The business reached its apex in the 1960s when the Northern Regional Government placed orders for textbooks from the partnership. El-Rayyah's and Osman's closeness to the Premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello (b. 1910 – d. 1966), afforded Osman the leverage to dominate the northern Nigerian book trade of the 1950s and the 1960s.[372] According to Muhammad El-Tayeb, at the peak of the business, the company was dealing in more than 2000 titles ranging from simple Arabic texts to reference works and textbooks for schools in Nigeria, Niger Republic and Ghana. About 20 containers of the Qurʾān were shipped into Nigeria from Beirut every three months and more than 100 annually.[373]

The business declined in the 1970s and 1980s when other publishing companies such as the Longman became dominant in textbook publishing.[374] Perhaps more importantly, Osman El-Tayeb had established other companies that were presumably more profitable than the book business. For example, in partnership with his brother Ibrahim El-Tayeb, they founded Nigeria Sweet and Confectionery Company Limited, "employing well over 2000 workers" with a network of more than 500 distributors spread across West Africa.[375] Osman seemed to pursue the more profitable ventures of his business.

Moreover, in the 1960s and the 1970s, the *nāshirs* in Kano established a link with Egyptian and Lebanese publishing companies, where they printed and purchased Arabic books in large quantities shipped into Nigeria. The Hausa booksellers further challenged the monopoly of the company. The book business of El-Tayeb was finally brought to an end in the 1990s, with the

[372] Interview with Umaru Matazu, Kurmi Market, Kano, conducted by author, May 5, 2016
[373] Interview with Muhammad Osman El-Tayeb, June 20, 2019
[374] Interview with Muhammad Osman El-Tayeb, June 20, 2019
[375] Gaddafi Abubakar, "An Assessment of the Role of Shaykh Osman El-Tayeb (1919 – 2011) in the Consolidation of Nigeria – Sudan Relations" *Dirasat Ifriqiyya* 58, no. 33, (2017), 46

proprietor donating the remaining stock to the libraries of Ahmadu Bello Zaria and the University in Sokoto.[376]

Book Trade and Social Network: The Transnational Business of the Hausa Importers

Two main phases in the evolution of the international Islamic book trade of the Kano publishers can be identified. The main feature of the first phase was that the international book trade was an oligopoly with a few dealers controlling its affairs. Their trade partners in Egypt and Lebanon were also few companies. The available evidence suggests some collaboration among the booksellers. However, it was on a small scale. During the second phase, collaboration among the booksellers became a prominent and defining feature of the trade. The booksellers called this collaboration a "merger". This section highlights the trajectory of the first phase.

Many factors can be attributed to the development of the transnational Islamic book trade, the most significant of which was the availability of infrastructural facilities in Kano since the early colonial period. Already the rail line had linked Kano to Lagos since 1911. In 1936 an airport was opened in Kano. The city also had efficient postal services. Virtually all the publishers could not read and write in English, but that did not deter them from using the services of the available modern facilities. Indeed, this had created an opportunity for some literates in English to play the role of letter writers. Attached to most postal offices were these letter writers who wrote correspondences with foreign publishers on their client's behalf. There are several archival files with application letters for the post of a letter writer. In one such letter dated January 23, 1943, one Jimoh Aigoro

[376] Interview with Muhammad Osman El-Tayeb, June 20, 2019. The informant did not mention the name of the university. Presumably, he was referring to the Usman Danfodio University (formerly University of Sokoto) since in the 1990s that was the only university in Sokoto.

applied "for the post of a public letter writer."[377] In his reply dated January 28, 1943, the Resident of Kano mentioned that "no permit is necessary to become a letter writer."[378] By 1961, Kano had five departmental post offices and 23 postal agencies.[379]

On the other hand, Kano's airport has kept on expanding since its establishment. Consequently, it played a vital role in the transnational book trade of the following decades. The Kano airport since 1940 handled even more passengers and cargo traffic, as indicated in the table below:

Table 10: Monthly Average of International Aircraft Arrival and Cargo Carried on Kano Air Route[380]

S/N	Year	Aircraft Arrival	Inward Cargo (in metric tonnes)	Outward Cargo (in metric tonnes)
1	1941	2	-	-
2	1946	30	0.2	1.2
3	1966	49	-	-
4	1967	91	13.5	13.4
5	1968	71	18.9	22.9
6	1969	77	21.4	29.6
7	1970	77	39.0	15.7
8	1971	99	40.3	15.2
9	1972	151	40.5	15.1
10	1973	97	31.1	14.5
11	1974	113	42.2	24.2

Table 10 indicates the gradual growth of the Kano airport in terms of the passengers' arrival and inward and outward tonnage handled. Although the upward trend diminished in some years, by

[377] Jimoh Aigoro, Letter to the Resident of Kano Province, January 23, 1943, NAK/5175/Letter Writers' Application
[378] The Resident, Kano Province, Letter to Mr. Jimoh Aigoro, January 28, 1943, NAK/5175/Letter Writers' Application
[379] Kano State, *Kano State Statistical Year Book*, (Kano: Economic Planning Division, 1970), 75
[380] FGN, *Digest of Statistics*, vol. 25, (Lagos: Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics, 1976), 63 – 64

and large, the statistics show the airport's expansion in all the variables. The highest monthly average of aircraft arrival was in 1972. In contrast, the lowest was in 1941. Similarly, comparing the inward and outward cargo figures of 1946 and 1974 shows a tremendous increase in the tonnage handled in the airport.

The infrastructure had enabled publishers to engage in the international book trade. At least since the 1950s, the Kano-based booksellers began to venture into the modern international Islamic book trade. It is difficult to establish the exact year when this happened since there is contradictory information from the oral sources.[381] However, as noted elsewhere, it is evident that by 1954 booksellers such as Muhammad Ngibrima were importing printed books from Cairo. The trade in the first phase reached its peak in the 1970s.[382]

The Islamic books published in the Middle East by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century revealed a marked standardisation of text by the increasing use of typography and the general conventions of the modern book, such as the table of contents, title page, among others. However, when the Kano booksellers began to import books in the twentieth century, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, they opted for lithographs, in the form of "printed manuscripts," instead of typographically typeset books. In this case, they would take handwritten samples to a printer in Egypt for reproduction through an offset lithographic process. However, they also purchased Middle Eastern Arabic texts produced typographically. This indicates that the Middle Eastern printers were flexible in their business as they accommodated the local needs of

[381] According to Danladi Sani, import from Egypt began in 1963 (interview December 23, 2019). While Muhammad Abubakar Wasiri, a subordinate of Shaykh Ngibrima, said his master was importing books from Egypt ever since the period of Sarki Sanusi I (1954 – 1963). It is not clear, however, whether he was referring to the early period of his reign or not. (Interview, May 18, 2016). Naziru Abdullahi Yasari maintained that the book trade with Egyptians is traced back to 1960s (interview, June 20, 2019)

[382] For the account of Ngibrima's book business, see chapter four.

their international customers. Secondly, this also underscores the Nigerian Islamic Book Market's agency as being oriented to serve the local demands rather than being an extension of the Arab book Industry.

Those who dominated the Kano book trade on the international scene since the 1960s were Zakari Salga (d. 1997), Malam Baban Kabu (d. 1998), Muhammadu Danjinjiri (d. 1993), Abdullahi Yasari (b. 1919 – d. 1991), Sharif Bala Gabari (d. 2016), Ayuba Sani Magoga (d. 1983) and Sani Adamu (b. 1924 – d. 1996).[383] Except for Sharif Bala, the rest were Tijaniyya brotherhood followers affiliated to Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse. These importers were all based in the Kurmi Market. While on the other hand, Shaykh Muhammad Atamma Fagge (b. 1904 - d. 1977) and Shaykh Muhammad Ngibrima (b. 1902 – d. 1975) were based in Fagge and Lalloki Quarters, respectively.[384] Fagge got his supplies through postal orders from Egyptian publishers. One of the letter writers, Isa Rice, processed his parcels when they reached Kano.[385]

One marked feature of the first phase was the palpable state control and monitoring of the book trade at each level of the book import, especially in the 1960s and the 1970s. The process of import during this period could be summarised as follows:

The prospective importer had to secure a pro forma invoice from their overseas sellers, and they had to complete Form M — issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) — which contained questions on the nature of the goods to be imported.[386] The two documents (Form M and pro forma invoice) must be submitted to the CBN through the importer's bank. After clearance by the CBN,

[383] For the career of Sharif Bala Gabari as a calligrapher, see Andrea Brigaglia, "Central *Sūdānī*c Arabic Script (Part I): The Popularization of the *Kanawī* Script," *Islamic Africa* 2, no. 2, (2011), 51 – 85

[384] See chapter four for a brief account of their business ventures.

[385] Interview with Professor M. T. Sayyid, Bayero University, Kano, conducted by author, February 3, 2020.

[386] Up to the end of the 1970s, Form M served as an application for foreign exchange.

the importer's bank would submit the two documents (now approved by the CBN) together with the Insurance Certificate and the Letter of Credit to the seller's bank in Egypt or Lebanon. These documents would enable the seller to ship the consignment to Lagos. Then the Bill of Landing and Packing List would be sent to the importer's bank. The importer would then collect these documents from his bank (upon settlement of his account) and submit them to his clearing agent. The agent would present the documents to the port officials to process the release and transportation of the consignment from Lagos to Kano.[387]

The payment to the seller's bank was made through the CBN after the buyer received the consignment. Before the CBN transferred the money, it would request from the importer's bank the following documents: original copy of Form M, supported by "clean report of finding," where the consignment was subjected to pre-shipment inspections, Bill of Landing, Customs Bill of Entry, Certificate of Insurance and relevant import licence.[388]

Throughout the 1960s, the two main centres of importation of Islamic books were Egypt and Tunisia. In Egypt, the leading companies were El-Mashhad El-Husseini Library and Printing Press (MH) and the MBH. However, the publisher that supplied the bulk of the orders for the Kano importers was the MH which Mohamed Abdulhamid Hanafi and Abdul-Wahab Hanafi ran. The latter came to Kano in 1970.[389] The authors-cum-booksellers, such as Muhammad Ngibrima seemed to have ordered and printed their books with MBH.[390]

[387] Interviews with several Islamic booksellers all in Kano: Tijani Zakari Salga, (December 11, 2019), Danladi Sani Adamu (December 23, 2019), Ibrahim Khalil Sani, (April 4, 2020)
[388] Instructions at the back page of Form M, Personal collection of Danladi Sani Adamu
[389] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil Sani Adamu, April 4, 2020
[390] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil Sani Adamu, April 4, 2020; interview with Sanusi Abubakar Atiku, December 27, 2018

The period between 1973 and 1981 represented the apex of Nigeria's international Islamic book trade during the first phase. Several factors could be suggested as being responsible for this development. After the Nigerian Civil War (1967 – 1970), the government relaxed requirements for imports to support the reconstruction effort. Thus the 1970s was a period of massive importation into Nigeria. By 1974, the Nigerian ports experienced ship bunching whereby about 105 ships were waiting to berth. The congestion continued to the extent that by August 1975, there were 455 vessels awaiting berthing at the port.[391] Although services in the port kept on improving, the problem of congestion remained. A considerable amount of money was invested in addressing the problem resulting in the increase in the Nigerian Port Authority's handling of dry cargo by two and a half times towards the end of the 1970s.[392] Tables 11 and 12 have indicated the upward trend in the inward cargo handled at the Nigerian Ports:

Table 11: Tonnage Handled at Nigerian Ports 1974 – 75 and 1975 – 76[393]

Year	Inward	Outward	Total
1974 – 1975	5,943,090	730,249	6,673,339
1975 – 1976	8,476,948	719,898	9,196,846

Table 12: Cargo Throughput Handled at Nigerian Ports 1979 and 1980[394]

Year	Inward	Outward	Total
1979	11,388,442	1,687,043	13,075,485
1980	14,401,270	2,085,415	16,486,685

[391] FGN, *NPA Annual Report, 1976.* (Lagos: NPA, 1976), 6
[392] FGN. *National Transport Policy*. (Abuja: Federal Ministry of Transport, 1993), 11
[393] FGN. NPA *Annual Report, 1976*, 31
[394] FGN. *NPA Annual Report, 1980* (Lagos: NPA, 1980), 11

The two tables represent the reality of cargo throughput in the late 1970s. The insatiable demand for foreign goods resulted in the annual increase in the import and perpetual export decline. The two tables reveal that incoming traffic, 5,943,090 tons in 1974-75, increased to 11,388,442 tons by 1979, representing more than 100 percent increase. Therefore, the growth of the import of Islamic books in the late 1970s was not an anomaly. It suited the pattern of the inward flow of traffic in Nigeria in the late 1970s. Moreover, the 1970s was a period of the oil boom in Nigeria, which enhanced people's purchasing power, resulting in the upward trend of imports.

Perhaps more critical to the Kano publishers, in 1970, a Beirut based publisher known as Safwan Jabri, the owner of the Dar El-Fikr Printers, Publishers and Distributors, came to Kano searching for partners.[395] His company provided services such as printing, publishing and book sale.[396] Jabri got wind of the enormous potentials of the KBM from the MH. The printing presses of the MH could not handle the quantum of work from Nigerian publishers. Therefore, they took some of such printing works to Dar El-Fikr. Sensing the promise of the market, Jabri travelled to Kano with samples of the works he printed for Kano booksellers through MH.[397] His first contact was Abdullahi Yasari, through whom he established trade relations with other publishers. In 1973, Abdullahi Yasari travelled to Beirut to further strengthen relations with Dar El-Fikr.[398]

[395] The company was established in 1967. See Date of Establishment of Dar El-Fikr, "About Dar El-Fikr," tradeindia.com, accessed August 25, 2020. https://www.tradeindia.com/Seller-2553258-dar-el-fikr/
[396] Presumably, the books the company sold to its customers comprised those it published and others it purchased wholesale and sold to the customers.
[397] I obtained this information from several informants in Kano, (Ibrahim Khalil Sani Adamu, April 4, 2020), Umaru Matazu, (June 13, 2016) and Tijani Shu'aibu, (May 7, 2016)
[398] Interview with Munji Abdullahi Yasari, Kano, conducted by author, February 9, 2020

Before the end of the decade, Jabri had established himself as the KBM's primary supplier; he dominated the market in the 1980s and the early 1990s. One of the reasons for his dominance was the luminous books he printed compared to the Egyptian products and his offer to grant the stocks on credit to the Kano Booksellers until after six months.[399] Safwan promoted unsold books in his stock by including them in the consignment even though they were not part of the books the Kano booksellers ordered. In this way, such books became part of the literature read by the established scholars, and thus they joined the list of books the readers asked booksellers to supply. A few such works were *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qurʾān* and *Lisān al-ʿArab*.[400]

Two importers, Abdullahi Yasari and Sani Adamu distinguished themselves in their respective specialisations. While Abdullahi Yasari had the most significant number of published works under his name, which he printed in Egypt and Beirut, Sani Adamu distinguished himself in importing Arabic and Islamic books authored and published in the Middle East. Like most of his colleagues, Adamu's two children, Danladi Sani Adamu and Ibrahim Khalil Sani Adamu joined their father's book trade, with each establishing his independent business eventually.

Analysis of the Dar El-Fikr pro forma invoices of the late 1970s and early 1980s from the collection of Danladi Sani Adamu indicates that the books ordered from the company were mainly for advanced students and accomplished Islamic scholars. It is not surprising that no titles seemed to be ordered for the beginners since most of them were published locally. Table 13 provides a selection of such texts:

[399] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil, March 4, 2020.
[400] *Ibid*.

Table 13: A Sample of Titles Purchased from Dar El-Fikr 1979 – 1981

S/N	**Title of the Book**	**Price per copy in (USD)**	**Date of the Invoice**
1	*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*	12	September 27, 1979
2	*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*	16	September 28, 1979
3	*Lisān al-ʿArab*	65	January 29, 1980
4	*Sharḥ Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*	60	January 21, 1980
5	*Fī Ẓilāl al-Qurʾān*	28	July 26, 1980
6	*Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*	15	June 26, 1980
7	*Tafsīr al-Manār*	30	June 26, 1980
8	Awjaz al-Masālik	70	March 5, 1981
9	*Tafsīr* al-Ṣāwī	12	June 11, 1981

The books in Table 13 were read mainly by established scholars and advanced students. The titles are in a shortened form. For example, *Tafsīr* al-Ṣāwī is an abbreviation of *Ḥāshiyat al-Ṣāwī 'al*ā *tafsīr al-Jalālain*. It is not clear which among the list was not part of the original order of Sani Adamu family apart from *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qurʾān* and *Lisān al-ʿArab*. The fact that these two titles appeared in the subsequent invoices indicates that they gained acceptance among the readers. The most expensive item in the list is *Awjaz al-masālik il*ā *muwaṭṭā mālik* in eighteen volumes (70 USD), shortened above as *Awjaz al-Masālik*, which is a commentary of *Muwaṭṭā Mālik*, authored by Mālik Ibn ʾAnas, the founder of Maliki School of Jurisprudence which enjoys large followership in West and Central Africa. It is not surprising at all if such text enjoyed high patronage despite its cost.

A careful study of the invoices also reveals changes in the cost of transportation from Beirut to Lagos. The following table, culled from Dar El-Fikr pro forma invoices dated between January

1980 and January 1982, indicates a steady increase in the freight charges with occasional intermittent fluctuations:

Table 14: Changing Pattern of the Freight Charges, 1980 – 1982[401]

S/N	Date	Weight in Kilogram	Sea Freight Charges in USD	Freight Rate per Kilogram in USD
1	January 29, 1980	4,585	1,753	2.6
2	January 29, 1980	4,515	1736	2.6
3	January 29, 1980	4,620	1,764	2.6
4	January 29, 1980	4550	1,749	2.6
5	July 26, 1980	4200	1,752	2.4
6	July 26, 1980	4025	1,707	2.4
7	March 5, 1981	4025	1,555	2.6
8	March 5, 1981	4,375	1557	2.8
9	November 6, 1981	3150	850	3.7
10	November 6, 1981	2800	890	3.1
11	November 6, 1981	2100	560	3.8
12	November 6, 1981	3,850	1057	3.6
13	January 29, 1982	2625	870	3

The table indicates that the freight rates fluctuated from January 1980 to March the same year. It revolved around two dollars per kilogram while from November 1981 it increased to three dollars. All the invoices indicate FOB (Free on Board) Beirut, a shipping term implying that the buyers were responsible for paying the freight charges. It was, however, the clearance agents in Nigeria that made the payment on behalf of their clientele.

After the commencement of importation from Lebanon, the Kano publishers did not end their Egyptian market patronage. In some cases, the same titles printed in Beirut were also purchased from Egypt. This is especially the case in Hadith books. Similarly, Kano publishers printed short

[401] Dar El-Fikr, "Pro Forma Invoices", January 1980 – January 1982, Personal Collection of Danladi Sani Adamu.

texts from Cairo. This perhaps can be explained by the fact that the items from Beirut were of higher quality and more expensive. If short texts were to be published in Beirut, they could not compete favourably with the books produced locally. Close examination of several completed Form M by Alhaji Danladi Sani Adamu reveals that he ordered books from three main destinations between 1979 and 1980. The following table illustrates how frequent Adamu ordered from the three destinations. Presumably, this is representative of the trend in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Table 15: The Import of Danladi Sani Adamu 1979 – 1982 based on Analysis of Completed Form M

S/N	Country of Supply	Company (Publisher)	Date of Transport	Means of Despatch	Quantity	Cost and Freight
1	Lebanon	Dar El-Fikr	June 1979	Sea	12,260 books	$ 27,526.00
2	Lebanon	Dar El-Fikr	February 1980	Sea	129 Cartons	$ 16,206.00
3	Lebanon	Dar El-Firk	February 1980	Sea	130 Cartons	$ 16,329.00
4	Lebanon	Dar El-Fikr	March 1980	Sea	131 cartons	$ 16,363.00
5	Egypt	El-Mashhad El-Hussain	May 1980	Sea	--	£ 6,724.20[402]
6	Lebanon	Dar El-Fikr	May, 1980	Sea	132 Cartons	$ 16,464.00
7	Egypt	Moustafa El-Baby	January 1981	Sea	--	£ 2,100.00
8	Tunisia	Imprimerie Librairie-Almanar	March, 1982	Air	3000 copies of Qurʾān in 70 Packages	£ 4,730
9	Egypt	El-Mashhad El-Hussain	April 1982	Air	--	£ 5,968.00
10	Tunisia	Imprimerie Librairie-Almanar	December 13, 1982	Air	5000 copies of Qurʾān (selected chapters)	£ 3100

[402] Here the indent was in the name of his son Abdul Samadu Sani.

The table shows that the bulk of the imports were from Dar El-Fikr in Lebanon. This data confirmed the information obtained from several oral sources emphasising that in the 1970s and 1980s, the leading supplier of the international book trade was Safwan Jabri. It also shows that the imports from Egypt and Tunisia were only supplementary. The transport means from Beirut in all the cases identified were by sea. This fact further vindicates the argument that Dar El-Fikr was the primary supplier since sea transport is preferable in cargo with high tonnage. The above data has been further corroborated by the value of book imports from the three countries in 1982 as documented by the Nigerian Office of Statistics:

Table 16: The Value of Book Importations from Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon in 1982[403]

S/N	Country	Value of Import in Naira
1	Tunisia	104,275
2	Egypt	211,993
3	Lebanon	991,847

Although the figures presented above are for books generally irrespective of the subject they cover, also, the figures represented imports for the whole of Nigeria. However, most of the books were presumably religious and in Arabic, considering the popularity of especially Egypt and Lebanon as global centres for such kinds of books. Moreover, the Nigerian Book Market primarily obtained secular literature from Britain around that time. This point is buttressed by the fact that in the same year, the value of book import from Britain was N 41,001,440.[404] This reality prompts the argument that the Kano Islamic Book Market was the driving force for Nigeria's import of Islamic

[403] FGN. *Trade Summary,* (Lagos: Federal Office of Statistics, 1982), 221
[404] *Ibid.*, 221

books since the pattern of the book inflow in Kano had reflected the bigger picture of the entire country.

An integral part of the transnational trade was the local transport of the consignment from the Lagos Seaport to Kano. Those responsible for clearance and transportation were the clearing agents. After collecting all documents related to the consignment, they would process the release of the cartons from the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) officials. This process entailed paying several fees on behalf of the importer, such as shipping company charges, custom examination fees, wharf expenses and agency fees.[405] The agents also subscribed to insurance services for their clientele.

Moreover, the clearing agents kept their clientele abreast of the development in the port. One example which illustrates this role is contained in a letter dated May 4, 1981. In the letter, Milestone Shipping Agencies Limited (henceforth Milestone) notified Sani Adamu that the consignment loaded on Vessel "Christian Wesh" was in Lagos.[406] Therefore, Adamu should forward the relevant documents for clearance.

Before the late 1970s, the leading agent of the Kano booksellers was one Alhaji 'Dan Garbati, a Kano transporter based in Lagos. 'Dan Garbati, however, did not have a clearance licence. Neither did he have trucks for haulage. He had to rely on other companies to clear his clientele's cargo. Then the goods would be transported by the railway rolling stocks to Kano. Until the end of the 1970s, the books were transported by rail lines.[407]

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[405] Milestone Shipping Agencies Limited, "Invoice for Clearing Charges," December 3, 1979, Personal Collection of Danladi Sani; Milestone Shipping Agencies Limited, "Invoice for Clearing Charges," November 18, 1980, Personal Collection of Danladi Sani.
[406] Milestone Shipping Agencies Limited, Letter to Danladi Sani, May 4, 1981, Personal Collection of Danladi Sani.
[407] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil, March 4, 2020

The perpetual problems associated with the railway system in Nigeria reduced its role as a transport means for books and dry cargo in general. The decline in the performance of the Nigerian railway system began right from a few years after independence. Rolling stocks for evacuating cargo from the Nigerian ports had fallen considerably in the 1970s while road transport increased. For example, between 1974 and 1975, tonnage evacuation of imports by road increased by 7.5 percent and 43 percent from Apapa and Port Harcourt, respectively. Conversely, the tonnage evacuation by rail lines from Apapa and Port Harcourt fell considerably by 51.8 percent and 26.5 percent, respectively.

Once the consignments of books reached Kano, the booksellers had some agents in the railway station monitoring the cargo movements. The agents would contact the cargo owner to arrange local transport to the bookseller's stores from the station. The books would be carried on two-wheeled or four-wheeled hand trucks pushed by energetic young men.[408] As a result of the nuisance they constituted, causing accidents and traffic jams, the Kano State Government banned the operation of the hand trucks in 1977. They were gradually replaced by pickup trucks which since the 1980s have become the dominant means of intra-city freight transport within Kano.[409]

By the 1980s, Milestone was the central clearing agency patronised by Kano book importers, and the company also provided haulage services. Milestone had container trucks that hauled cargo from Lagos to Kano. Upon reaching Kano, the trucks would park at Gyadi-Gyadi in the outskirts of the city. The drivers would then go to the market to meet the importers and give them all the

[408] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil, April 4, 2020.
[409] Yusuf Umar Madugu, "Transportation and the Economy of Kano Metropolis, 1967-2014: A Historical Study of Intra-City Commercial Transport Services" (PhD Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, 2015), 169 – 170.

necessary documents. The company manager, Mr Adeyemi, would have arrived in Kano by air the previous day and would meet his client and get paid for the clearance and transport.[410]

Right from the early 1980s, Milestone began to have problems with the booksellers. The Kano importers sensed that the charges of the company were becoming exorbitant. They, therefore, complained to Safwan Jabri, who, in turn, connected them with a Kano based Clearing Agency, Alraine.[411] The company began to do clearance in Lagos on behalf of the booksellers and transported the books to Kano. It became easy for the booksellers to get their orders since they would only submit the shipping documents in Kano and get their stocks without travelling to Lagos. The company became dominant in the Islamic Book Market of the 1980s.

Nigeria's military rule that lasted for over a decade came to an end in 1979. From 1982, the new civilian administration was becoming increasingly concerned about the mounting increase in the inflow of cargo into the country and the decline in export. The import liberalisation policy was over. The government had to impose new restrictions on imports. The restrictions had negatively impacted the transnational Islamic Book Market. As of 1982, the transnational book trade in Islamic books began to decline. The statistics of cargo throughput reveal a perpetual decline of import in the 1980s:

[410] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil, April 4, 2020

[411] Based on the Kano State Government Document, the company was founded in 1972. See Kano State, *Directory of Industrial and Commercial Establishments*. (Kano: Budget and Economic Development Directorate, 1985). 81

Table 17: Inward Cargo and Vessels Discharged by the NPA 1980 – 1989[412]

S/N	Year	Number of Inward Vessels	The tonnage of Cargo Traffic
1	1981	6,569	20,728,974
2	1982	5,639	20,073,797
3	1983	4,449	16,394,509
4	1984	3,263	1,237,415
5	1985	3,439	13,453,939
6	1986	3003	9,851,059
7	1987	2,824	9,288,006
8	1988	3009	777,358
9	1989	3244	8,759,961

The above figures indicate a continuous decrease in vessels and the cargo tonnage in the Nigerian ports from 1982. This development had reversed the trend of the 1970s when the inflow of goods continued to increase. The highest decrease in vessels and tonnage was in 1987 and 1988 respectively. In 1984, the new military administration of Major-General Muhammadu Buhari further imposed a limitation on import by mandating the importers to have a security deposit of 100 percent of the import cost.

As a result of these restrictions, the KBM shrank, and many importers were pushed out of business. The two sons of Sani Adamu, Ibrahim Khalil and Danladi Sani, were a case in point. Also, from 1982, the system of import through the CBN began to face severe crises. The importers had made payments for the books they ordered. However, due to bureaucratic bottlenecks, the CBN had not credited the suppliers in Egypt and Lebanon.

[412] FGN, *Digest of Transport Statistics*. (Lagos: Nigerian Federal Ministry of Transport, 1990). 49 – 51

Consequently, Jabri came to Nigeria, and he was helped by one of the Kano booksellers, Sani Ali Dankoli, to process the payments. Jabri and Dankoli had to travel to Lagos to follow up on the issue. For the rest of the 1980s, Dankoli became a representative of Jabri in Kano. He collected money from the booksellers on behalf of Mr Jabri. For example, in a letter dated November 20, 1985, Dankoli wrote to Jabri that he had received N 27,349.69 to settle three bills belonging to Danladi Sani Adamu.[413] Presumably, the settlement was for previous purchases since the latter had stopped importation from 1984.[414]

Other letters belonging to Danladi Sani indicate the increasing difficulty the booksellers had in getting approval for import in the 1980s. For example, a letter by the First Bank dated February 27, 1984, notified Sani that the CBN rejected their application to transfer USD 17,254.00 to purchase 135 cartons of Arabic books. Furthermore, the applicant had to submit a new Form M, current tax clearance certificate, reasons for late payment, and demand notes to put in a new application.[415]

However, despite these challenges, the leading importers, such as Abdullahi Yasari and Sani Adamu, continued to import books from Dar El-Fikr until the early 1990s. In February 1991, before Yasari passed away in that same year, he ordered 18,800 books from Dar El-Fikr. Part of the stock were books whose copyright he owned and which he took to the publisher for printing; others were items he purchased directly from the company. The order was worth 49,975 USD with 46,975 USD as the actual cost, while 3000 USD was the freight shipping charges.[416]

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[413] Sani Ali Dankoli. A Letter to Safwan Jabri, November 20, 1985. Personal Collection of Danladi Sani Adamu.
[414] Interview with Danladi Sani Adamu, December 23, 2019.
[415] First Bank of Nigeria, Letter to Danladi Sani Adamu, February 27, 1984, Personal Collection of Danladi Sani Adamu.
[416] Dar El-Fikr, "Pro Forma Invoice," February 24, 1991, Personal Collection of Naziru Abdullahi Yasari.

While Islamic books were imported in large quantities, Kano had become a conduit for book distribution to the West and Central African countries. Since the late 1970s, it emerged as a West African regional market of religious tracts.[417] There have been two primary channels of regional diffusion. The first one was at a small scale level. Roving Kano retailers would take a few cartons of religious tracts and travelled to neighbouring West African countries such as Niger, Chad, Cameroun, Côte d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic for sale. They would often spend a few months before they came back to get new supplies. They would often carry between two and five cartons of books on each trip.[418] Conversely, well-known international dealers from these countries frequented Kano to buy many texts and took them to their countries for sale.

Perhaps the family of Muhammad Buba from Chad was the most popular among the international dealers. Since the 1970s, Buba would come with his two children, Abdullahi and Muhammad, to purchase Islamic books wholesale. In the 1980s, according to the account of one bookseller, he would buy up to twenty cartons or more from the Kano importers, and his primary host was Alhaji Umaru.[419] He would travel back to Chad via Maiduguri in north-eastern Nigeria. With old age, his two children took over the family business.[420] Although they had established a direct link with Egyptian and Lebanese publishers, they still patronised the KBM.[421]

From Cameroon, the most prominent dealers in the 1980s were two brothers, Ali Danfulani and Malam Usman. The two had taken up temporary residences in Kano, where they stayed for a few

[417] For the international character of the Kurmi Market, see chapter four.
[418] One of the roving retailers was Tijani Shu'aibu. In the 1970s, he took books to Cameroun, Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire. Interview with Tijani Shuaibu, Kurmi Market, Kano, conducted by author, May 7, 2016
[419] Alhaji Umaru was one of the old booksellers. He never imported books from Middle East, but relied on the importers. His son, Dandauda, is now the Chairman of Kurmi booksellers.
[420] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil, May 4, 2020.
[421] To date they are one of the most valuable dealers. They still frequent Kano Market and whenever they were around, they would buy a large quantity of books.

days whenever they were in the city. Ali had a truck which he used to transport the consignments. In contrast, his brother relied on commercial transport. The Kano importers would sometimes undertake business trips to the neighbouring countries. Ibrahim Khalil Sani travelled by air to Cameroon in 1984 to get paid for the stock supplied to Malam Usman mentioned above.[422] Around the same time, dealers such as Alhaji Jibo and Malam Garba came from the Niger Republic to buy books from Kano.

The predominance of the KBM raises the critical question of why has Kano become dominant in West and Central Africa as a centre of the Islamic book trade despite the direct connection international dealers, such as Muhammad Buba, had with the primary sources of books in the Middle East? Perhaps, the answer lies in the sheer volume of the book trade. Apart from the large number of books imported, the copyright of many locally produced titles belonged to the Kano booksellers. The international dealers had to obtain such books from Kano as the Arab publishers did not have the right to print or sell them.[423]

Secondly, Kano had a comparatively more substantial number of importers compared to the other countries. The capital of international dealers could not allow them to buy all the books they wanted wholesale, even from Cairo and Lebanon. After buying the essential items, they would have to rely on Kano to get more titles to address the complex demand of sub-dealers, retailers and readers in their regions.

[422] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil Sani, April 4, 2020. During that journey, Khalil was surprised when he accidentally met a Kano-based-roving-small-scale retailer in Cameroun known as Malam Hassan who sold the few cartons he took from Kano in Cameroun and Gabon markets.

[423] However, this is not always the case, fairly recently, the family of Abdullahi Yasari had suspected that their book *Fath al-Jawād* was printed by an international importer, possibly a member of the Buba Family. Interview with Hassan Abdullahi Yassar, Kano, conducted by author, May 22, 2016

The Era of 'Merger' in the Transnational Book Trade

By 1994, almost all the major importers of the previous decades — Ayuba Sani Magoga (d. 1983), Abdullahi Yasari (d. 1991), Muhammad Danjinjiri (d. 1993) and Sani Adamu (d. 1996) — had passed away. Up to the twenty-first century's first decade, those active were Hassan Inuwa (d. 2013) and Sharif Bala Gabari (d. 2016). However, even the latter two had to substantially apportion enormous responsibilities of the book business to their children. Already, in the late 1980s, these successors were emerging as the primary entrepreneurs in the Islamic Book Market. A few others that did not inherit the business from their families came into the scene. The most successful were Ibrahim Idris, popularly known as Dan Nijar (b. 1970), Alhaji Anwaru (b. 1962) and Alhaji Bashir. Anwaru began as an errand boy for the Kurmi booksellers. He later became a sales clerk of Sani Adamu and Danladi Sani Adamu.[424] Bashir was supported by an Islamic scholar and a Kano bibliophile, Ibrahim Khalil, to start a book vending company in 1985, which became Darul Hadith Al-Salafiyya.[425] Khalil had supported several other booksellers in the Market, such as Muntari Abdullahi.[426]

Perhaps the most successful among those who inherited their family were Barhama Ayuba, Usman Ayuba (both sons of Ayuba Sani Magoga), Hadi Zakari (son of Zakari Salga), Muhyiddin Abdullahi Yasari (son of Abdullahi Yasari), Alkali Sharif Bala (son of Sharif Bala) and Abbas Sani Adamu (son of Sani Adamu).

[424] Interview with Anwaru Abdullahi Muhammad, Kurmi Market Kano, conducted by author, March 20, 2019. For a short note on the life and career of Dan Nijar, see Aliyu Garba Shirawa, "*al-kitāb al-Islamī: Aswāquhu wa atharuhā fī nashri al-thaqāfat al-Islāmiyya fī madīnati Kano (sūq Kurmi anmūdhajan)*," (MA Dissertation, Bayero University Kano, 2013), 102

[425] Interview with Ibrahim Khalil, his office, Kano, conducted by author, May 2, 2019.

[426] Interview with Muntari Abdullahi, Kurmi Market, Kano, conducted by author, May 7, 2019

Picture 6: Darul Ummah Islamic Bookshop owned by Ibrahim Idris (Dan Nijar)[427]

The nature of the second phase took after the intellectual currents of the period. The Nigeria of the 1980s was no longer a preserve of the Sufi fraternities. Salafism and Shiism had made in-roads into Nigerian Islamic space. The scholarship granted by the Islamic University of Madinah had

[427] Darul Ummah Islamic Bookshop, "Darul Ummah Publication Company – Book Store Kano" Accessed August 20, 2021, https://www.google.com/search?q=Darul+Umma+Books+kano&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjbyuDG1b_yAhVFzYUKHc3DBv8Q_AUoAnoECAEQBA&biw=1366&bih=657#imgrc=99y7IZw4wFIRlM

helped to entrench Salafism further. Most of the Nigerians had access to the scholarship through the global outreach programme of the Islamic University of Madinah, known as *daurāt* (tours). The staff of the University offered intensive courses at the end of which participants were examined, and the most successful among them were given scholarships. Between 1982 and 1997, the university had conducted 296 *daurāt* in 18 countries involving 1,362 teachers and 29,725 students, with Nigeria having the highest participation: 245 teachers and 8,146 students.[428] The Salafi scholars advocated for the study of Hadith texts and other Salafi literature. This corresponded with the period when such kind of literature was massively produced in Egypt.

The new era began around 1997. Determined to revive the old relations with Egypt, three young booksellers travelled to Cairo and purchased books in 1997. Barhama Ayuba and Abdulshakur Abdullahi Yasari were sons of the pioneering Hausa importers, while the third one, Alhaji Anwaru, was a sales clerk under Sani Adamu, as noted above. Since this historical trip, more young booksellers learned about the Egyptian market and thus followed suit.

Realising the growing demand for Salafi titles, the new crop of importers began to order such books on a large scale. Those who placed their order with Dar El-Fikr also had the benefit of selecting from an extensive collection of the company's titles by the beginning of the twenty-first century. The company had, over the years, expanded and established more presence in the Middle East. The only family that maintained robust relations with the company was that of Zakari Salga.[429] Based on an indent dated August 29, 2000, Tijani Zakari Salga, a member of the family, ordered 25,630 books comprising 32 different titles from Dar El-Fikr. The consignment was worth

[428] Alexander Thurston, *Salafism in Nigeria: Islam Preaching and Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 89

[429] At present (in 2020), the biggest partner of Dar El-Fikr is Hadi Zakari Salga. All my efforts to have an interview with him proved abortive.

18,000 USD, including the freight charges.[430] This is contrary to the book orders of the 1980s that would barely exceed 15 titles in a single import but with a higher quantity.

Several factors are presumably responsible for the debasement of Dar El-Fikr's dominance and the preponderance of the Egyptian publishers. Almost all the previous faithful partners to the Dar El-Fikr connection had died by the late 1990s. Jabri himself had relinquished the responsibility of running the company to his children due to old age. The erstwhile importers agreed to channel all their orders through the firm to show their appreciation for its benevolence.[431] Moreover, the former partners were contented with a moderate number of titles constituting the local curriculum supplied by the company. The new importers — pressurised by multiple demands — were not satisfied with a single partner. Therefore, they could not agree to the terms of the company to order exclusively from its stock.[432]

Secondly, the books from Lebanon were of higher quality and therefore more expensive.[433] With the pathetic devaluation of the West and Central African currencies, particularly the Nigerian Naira, the purchasing power of people had reduced gradually. The weakness had created more preference for cheaper books; Egypt provided the answer. Table 18 shows the annual average of naira depreciation against the US Dollar between 1980 and 2005:

[430] Dar El-Fikr, "Pro Forma Invoice," August 29, 2000, Personal Collection of Tijani Zakari Salga.
[431] The old booksellers spoke about the benevolence of Jabri. In one of such good display of kindness, an importer, Ibrahim Khalil and his colleagues had their consignment stolen in a very mysterious circumstance in 1981. They were about to initiate a legal case against the clearing agents when Jabri intervened by compensating their loss. Interview with Ibrahim Khalil, March 4, 2020.
[432] Interview with Hassan Abdullahi Yasari, Kurmi Market, Kano, conducted by author, May 22, 2016. According to Hassan Yasari, when he told the Manager of Dar El-Fikr in charge of African market that he would order stocks from Dar El-Fikr and other Lebanese publishing companies, the Manager told him that he was not welcomed.
[433] According to Aliyu Bashir, one of the agents of the Egyptian companies, as of 2019, a container from Beirut would cost 70,000 USD but the one from Egypt would only be worth 50,000 or 48,000 dollars. Interview with Aliyu Bashir, Kurmi Market, Kano, conducted by author, March 26, 2019.

Table 18: Annual Average Naira/US Dollar Depreciation Rate at the Parallel Market, 1980 – 2005[434]

S/N	Year	Depreciation Rate
1	1980	0.0
2	1980 – 1986	50
3	1987 – 1993	114
4	1994 – 1996	22.2
5	1997 – 1998	24.4
6	1999 – 2005	40.7

The table shows a progressive decrease in the value of the Naira against the US dollar. In the early part of the first phase, the naira had more value than the US dollar, but since the 1980s, its value has kept on plummeting to date. In March 1980, a Kano importer needed to deposit N9, 395 in his local bank account to import books worth $ 16,464.00; the government would provide the foreign exchange.[435] By March 2000, however, he would require N 1,672,740 to order books of the same amount in dollars.[436]

Moreover, the Egyptians came up with various strategies to woo customers in Kano. One of the most potent ways of getting partners was by facilitating a "merger," which the Kano booksellers coined to signify a collaboration in raising enough money to import a container of books by several or many booksellers. One of the main consequences of the pioneer importers' death was the division of the capital they left behind to their children. The heirs, in most cases, could not continue as a family business.[437] Those who were lucky to generate a reasonable amount of money would often set up their independent business with limited capital. This factor made most new

[434] FGN. *The Nigerian Statistical Fact Sheets on Economic and Social Development*, (Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics, 2006), 26
[435] Completed Form M, March 22, 1980, Personal Collection of Danladi Sani Adamu.
[436] Based on the exchange rate calculated by Oanda Website: https://www1.oanda.com/currency/converter/
[437] I do not know a single family which continued as a single business after the death of the founder. All the book businesses began as sole proprietorship. In some cases the business would die with the founder.

entrepreneurs have limited capital that could not be enough to import book containers individually. Although collaboration among the importers began during the first phase, it reached such a substantial and unprecedented scale during the second phase.

The Egyptians began to arrange for supplying a container or containers of books to several or many buyers. It reached a point that a single container could have up to 10 or 20 importers.[438] Someone who wanted to buy only five or ten cartons could participate in the import. This has created room for having more agents to serve as middlemen between the importers in Nigeria and suppliers in Egypt.

The Egyptians frequented the Kurmi Market and often made arrangements for "merger" in Nigeria. The prospective importers would meet the Egyptian suppliers while they were in Kano either in their hotel or in the Kurmi Market, where they would come to take records of the order of each bookseller. Once they returned to Egypt, they would arrange for the shipment of the consignment.

The booksellers, in other cases, would arrange for the "merger" on their own. They have contacts in Egypt, mostly former or current Nigerian students that are presently based there.[439] The importers would assign their agents to buy titles based on a prepared list from many *maktabas*. Each *maktaba* would take the cartons bought to the address of the shipping company provided by the agent. One of the importers would have booked for a container already. If his cartons could not fill the entire container, he would allow other booksellers to bring in their cartons until the

[438] Most containers contain 250 cartons. The transportation cost is shared based on the number of cartons each bookseller had. Each bookseller would have to pay for the transportation of his number of cartons.
[439] The most prominent agent at present is one Alhaji Barhama who is from Bauchi State. He is based in Egypt but came to Kano occasionally.

container was full. The importers would then share the transport cost based on the tonnage of each bookseller's consignment.[440]

Unlike the first phase, when the booksellers relied on two to three companies in Egypt, in the modern KBM, a single importer could purchase books from as many as 20 different *maktabas*.[441] During the second phase, some of Egypt's most famous book vending shops have been Sharikatu Quds, Dar Ibn Rushd, Dar al-Sabuni, Maktabat al-Rihad, Dar al-Fajr *Darul Hadith*, *Dar Ibn Haytham*, *Dar Salaf al-Salih*, and so on.[442] The demand for books had expanded tremendously. Kano, which had a population of 5,810,470 in 1991, was in 2006 estimated to be home to 9,401,288 people, the majority of whom were Muslims.[443] Kano itself provides a huge market for books in addition to the demand from the outside.

One of the significant Egyptian companies that became dominant in the second phase was *Dar al-Sabuni* which established a partnership with a Kano bookseller, Hassan Abdullahi Yasari, resulting in the opening of a bookshop acquired by the proprietor of the company as a payment in kind from a debtor in the Kurmi Market. From 2015, books were supplied to his partner in Kano for sale. Moreover, his partner also facilitated connections with other booksellers.[444]

[440] Interview with Aliyu Bashir, March 26, 2019.
[441] Based on the several invoices I saw with the booksellers. Unfortunately, I don't have a copy of any in my possession. The current young booksellers are hesitant to share documents of their business, presumably to hide the "secrets of the market."
[442] *Ibid*.
[443] FGN, *Federal Republic of Nigeria Population and Housing Census, Priority Table*, vol. IX (Abuja: Nigerian National Population Commission, 2010), 174; FGN, *Annual Abstract of* Statistics. (Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics, 2009), 14.
[444] Interview with Hassan Abdullahi Yasari, May 22, 2016.

Conclusion

While the "communications circuit" of Robert Darnton is a valuable tool for providing coherence in the study of the book, it is, however, too linear to account for the complex network of relationships that undergird the production and distribution of books. In this regard, Rukavina's social network is more helpful in accounting partly for such complexity.[445] The KBM external circuit demonstrated how agents — driven by shared interests — are interconnected. The social network integrates actors and institutions that the Darntonian model does not cover. For example, the central and commercial banks play a critical role in the international book trade by providing services such as foreign exchange, issuing letters of credit, custody and submission of shipment records and many other roles. The banks played a critical role in the transnational book trade of the first phase. Likewise, the public letter writers. During the second phase, when the role of the banks was minimal, the dealers in the foreign exchange market began to play a critical role in the trade. Several Nigerian brokers based in Egypt provide services of currency conversion from Naira to the Egyptian Pound.

Indeed, banks, letter writers, and forex dealers are not directly connected to the enterprise of book production. However, they provide general or auxiliary services that are crucial or even indispensable in the trade. Despite their utility, they operate outside the cycle. In this regard, one would question the rationale behind the inclusion of shippers among the agents in the Darntonian model since they also provide general services like the banks, letter writers and forex dealers. On this point, the model has been reviled.[446]

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[445] See Alison Rukavina, *The Development of the International Book Trade, 1870–1895*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

[446] See Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker, "A New Model for the Study of the Book," in David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (eds.), *The Book History Reader*, (London: Routledge, 2006). 47 – 65

The communications circuits cannot adequately capture the complexity of the Kano Book Market (KBM). It is, however, useful in providing a coherent approach to the study of the book market in particular and book history in general. Using frameworks requires flexibility to account for the complexity of the phenomenon under study. As Darnton himself argues, "models have a way of freezing human beings out of history."[447]

As the chapter indicates, outside the circuit are political, economic and social circumstances that affect book production and its movement. For example, the transport system provided by the colonial government had played a central role in the transnational book trade. The Kano postal services facilitated communication between the publishing companies in the Middle East and their Nigerian partners. A branch of the colonial post office was established right from the first decade of the British rule in Kano, and it grew tremendously in the following years.

Similarly, the establishment of Kano Airport further improved communication channels as it provided a platform for book importation from Tunisia and Egypt. Furthermore, the post-colonial policies of successive Nigerian administrations had affected the external circuit in many ways. The liberal or restrictive policies on import have impacted either positively or negatively on the Islamic Book Market. The broader implication is the indispensability of certain variables outside the circuit but central to its operation. The next chapter departs from the discussion of the Islamic book trade by spotlighting another segment of the KBM that is also central to its history: the trade of the Hausa popular fiction.

[447] Robert Darnton, 1982. "What is the History of Books?" *Daedalus 111, 3* (1982), 69

Chapter Eight

The Transformation of the Hausa Book Trade in the Colonial and Post-Colonial Kano

Introduction

The economy of the printed Hausa Roman-script books changed from its modest inception in colonial northern Nigeria to its rapid expansion in the post-colonial period. In a way, the history of the trade is inseparable from the colonial educational project of creating a new community of readers. The members of the new community had to be trained how to read and write Hausa in the Roman script instead of Arabic characters that were in usage for centuries before the British colonial conquest. The new literates could also read and write in English. To sustain the new reading public, the colonial government created vernacular literature and channels for its distribution. Therefore, the whole idea of the colonial Hausa Book Market arose from the desire of the state to sustain the newly created community of readers by cultivating a reading culture among its members. The goal was not purely geared towards market capitalism but to inculcate in readers the culture of buying subsidised Hausa books.

From 1933 until the end of the 1970s, the state controlled the production and marketing of Hausa literature. The government decided which texts to publish and circulate among the reading public. This period, termed the first phase of the Hausa Book Market, is divided into three main stages or periods of transition. In the second phase, starting in the 1980s, when the Nigerian economy was in crisis, and therefore government-owned companies and mainstream publishers could not satisfy the diverse demands of the Hausa readers, a new literary movement of Hausa popular fiction emerged with its pulp fiction and market structure for distribution. This chapter unpacks the role played by the Kano Book Market (KBM) as a centre for the diffusion of Hausa literature.

The Era of State Control and the Making of the Hausa Book Market

The history of the state-controlled marketing of the Hausa literature went through three main stages. The first stage was when the market was under the Literature Bureau (previously the Translation Bureau). The second stage was when the short-lived NORLA was created in the early 1950s due to the realisation that the successor organisation to Literature Bureau, namely the Gaskiya Corporation, paid more attention to the circulation of the Hausa newspaper, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, to the detriment of vernacular literature.

When finally NORLA became economically unviable, it was disbanded on the eve of Nigeria's independence. In the first decade of independence, the Northern Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC) was created, thus ushering in the last stage of state control of Hausa fiction. Before an account on the trade is given, a word on the origin of Hausa in Roman script.

The writing of Hausa in Roman characters can be traced back to the nineteenth century. However, most of the works written in the century were mainly on Hausa grammar and translations targeting European audiences. The central figure in the authorship of such works was a German Missionary, J.F. Schön, who had never visited any part of Hausaland proper.[448] He undertook the study of Hausa in Sierra Leone in 1843 while on an expedition sponsored by the Christian Missionary Society. He relied on two Hausa lads, who accompanied a German explorer, Heinrich Barth (b. 1821 – d. 1865), to London in 1856 to refine his knowledge of the language. This effort resulted

[448] See the introduction of Charles Henry Robinson, *Specimens of Hausa Literature,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896), xviii

in the publication of works such as *Grammar of the Hausa language* in 1862 and *Magána Hausa, Native Literature in the Hausa Language* in 1885.[449]

In the same vein, an organisation known as Hausa Association was established in memory of John Alfred Robinson, a late scholar of Christ's College, Cambridge, who was one of the first Englishmen to realise the importance of studying the Hausa language. The society's main goal was to carry out a "scientific study of the Hausa language."[450] To actualise its objective, the Association sponsored Charles Henry Robinson to undertake exploration to study the language. He left England on April 30, 1893.[451] His effort resulted in the publication of *Specimens of Hausa Literature* and other works on the language.[452]

The substantial growth of Hausa literature in Roman script occurred during the colonial period in northern Nigeria (1903 – 1960). This period also saw the emergence of the first Hausa novels. The central figure that facilitated this development was Rupert East, who, in 1933, organised a competition for writing Hausa fiction.[453] The competition was put together under the auspices of the Translation Bureau established in 1930 by the colonial government to promote vernacular literature. The successful works after the competition were: Abubakar Imam's *Ruwan Bagaja*, Tafawa Balewa's *Shehu Umar*, Bello Kagara's *Gandoki* and two other titles: *Jiki Magayi* by Rupert East and John Tafida as well as *Idon Matambayi* by Muhammadu Gwarzo.

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[449] James Fredrick Schön, *Grammar of the Hausa language,* (London: Church Missionary House, 1862); James Fredrick Schön, *Magána Hausa, Native Literature in the Hausa language*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1885-86)

[450] Charles Henry Robinson, *Hausaland or Fifteen Hundred Miles through the Central Soudan,* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1896), 12

[451] *Ibid.*, 14

[452] For example, Dictionary of the Hausa language published in Cambridge in 1899 – 1900

[453] For account of this competition, see Rupert Moultrie East, "A First Essay in Imaginative African Literature" *Journal of the International African Institute* 9, no. 3 (1936), 350 – 358

The colonial government had set up a structure for the marketing of the 1933 winners even before their publication. This initiative began in the centre of the northern Nigerian colonial administration in Kaduna. The Assistant Director of Education in the Northern Region, in his letter to the Secretary, Northern Provinces dated October 16, 1933, suggested that the native administrations of the provinces should open credits of ten or 20 pounds each so that stock of books might be on sale to former students and other interested readers. Also, the "boys of local schools" should be used as advertising agents who would go-round with the books for sale.[454] This letter was copied to the Resident of the Kano Province, which was the wealthiest in colonial northern Nigeria.

It was decided that Kano would establish a central bookstore to obtain, store and circulate books produced by the Translation Bureau and other agencies. The idea was to integrate the book distribution with the educational organisation of the Kano Native Administration by financing the project through specified votes in the Native Authority estimates.[455]

However, it is worth noting that profit-making was not the driving force for the vernacular literature project. The main goal was "to induce a taste of reading" among the graduates of the colonial school system. "We have taught them to ride but have given them no horses," said Rupert East.[456] The scheme, therefore, represented the colonial government's effort to provide horses for the newly trained riders.

[454] H.H. Annett (Assistant Director of Education, Northern Provinces), Letter to the Secretary, Northern Provinces, October 16, 1933, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration.
[455] NAK/1607/"School Committees: Constitution of"
[456] East, "A First Essay in Imaginative African Literature," 351

By December 1934, the Translation Bureau under Rupert East was already expecting the first consignment of the newly published Hausa novels "on the next Mail Boat."[457] To set the ball rolling, East wrote to the Kano Province on December 11, 1935, noting that the scheme of circulating vernacular literature could not be implemented earlier for lack of availability of such literature. Nevertheless, the Translation Bureau had been engaged in work during the past fifteen months and would shortly have a series of Hausa books. However, he emphasised that: "These books are not intended for us. The object of the scheme is to develop a taste among the general native public."[458]

An indication that the idea was not driven by profit-making was the statement of East that: "I believe moreover that the project is more likely to succeed by having a wide area of distribution with a small sale in each district than by trusting to selling a large number of copies in a few big towns… I suggest, therefore, that the books should be on sale in every District Head's town which has an elementary school."[459]

By 1935, the Kano Province had put in place machinery for the marketing of the books. The Province first received a consignment of four titles. Adopting the suggestion of Rupert East, each copy was to be sold for sixpence. The books were distributed to two private shops and the 26 districts under Kano Province, indicating that the overwhelming majority of the stock circulated through state distribution channels.

[457] Rupert East, Confidential Letter to the Provincial Superintendent of Education, Kano Province, December 11, 1934, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration.
[458] *Ibid*.
[459] *Ibid*.

Table 19: Distribution of Hausa Books on Sale in the Kano Province, 1935[460]

S/N	**Selling Point**	**Number of Copies Supplied**
1	Kano City Arab Canteen	16 dozen copies
2	Syrian Bookshop	16 dozen copies
3	Districts[461]	52 dozen copies
4	Reserve in Store	18 dozen copies
5	Hadeja, Gumel and Kazaure[462]	12 dozen copies

From the above table, it is evident that the Kano Province had adhered to the proposal of Mr East. Instead of concentrating in the city, the distribution was widespread into the districts. A sum of 52 dozens was taken to the districts, with each having two dozen copies. The minuscule number of the books is not surprising, considering the size of the new community of readers still at the infancy stage. Each copy was to be sold for sixpence, with the agent receiving halfpenny as commission per copy.[463]

The Province decided that the unsold copies be returned to Kano Native Administration. If, after a reasonable trial, the books proved to be unsalable, they could be issued to the elementary schools as readers. This arrangement is an indication that the Kano Province was also committed to the altruistic goal of the scheme. The comment of the Kano Provincial Superintendent of Education is also indicative of the non-profit dimension of the scheme: "I would point out that while the Native

[460] Provincial Superintendent of Education, Kano Province, Memo to the District Officer, Kano Emirate, April 2, 1935, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration.
[461] Two dozens for each of the twenty-six Districts.
[462] Four dozens for each of the three areas.
[463] Provincial Superintendent of Education, Kano Province, Letter to the District Officer, Kano Emirate, April 2, 1935, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration.

Administration does not derive any direct profit from helping the scheme, it will do so indirectly by promoting a desire and so increasing the ability to read through the populace."[464]

The documents in the colonial files dating late 1936 and 1937 indicate that the scheme worked well with the various districts either acknowledging receipt or despatching cheques to the Province in payment for the stock received.[465] However, by 1938, the market became stagnant. The distribution pattern through the districts and the local retailers was not entirely successful in all the provinces.[466] Consequently, the Northern Regional Government suggested a change in marketing strategy by using elementary school teachers as sales agents. This proposal was made in recognition of the "considerable success that followed the sale of vernacular literature through the village schoolmaster(s) in the Federated Malay States."[467]

By 1938, a few other titles were in circulation alongside the five winners of the 1933 competition (Table 20). In a circular from the headquarters of the Northern Regional Government dated March 25, 1938, to the Kano Province, eight books were recommended for the Province as general readers, including the five books that won the competition:

[464] *Ibid*.
[465] See for example, Assistant District Officer (ADO) in charge of Northern Division (Hadeja), Letter to the Resident, Kano Province, January 10, 1936, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration. The ADO, here, notified the Resident that he had forwarded two cheques for Hadeja and Gumel, worth £4.16 each.
[466] Assistant Director of Education, Northern Province, Kaduna, Departmental Circular addressed to the Provincial Superintendent of Education, Kano, March 25, 1938, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration.
[467] *Ibid*.

Table 20: The Hausa Literature available in the Book Market by 1938[468]

S/N	Title	Obtainable at	Wholesale Price
1	*Gandoki*	West Africa Publicity Ltd, Lagos	5½ Pence
2	*Idon Matambayi*	West Africa Publicity Ltd, Lagos	5½ Pence
3	*Jiki Magayi*	West Africa Publicity Ltd, Lagos	5½ Pence
4	*Shehu Umar*	West Africa Publicity Ltd, Lagos	5½ Pence
5	*Ruwan Bagaja*	West Africa Publicity Ltd, Lagos	5½ Pence
6	*Six Hausa Plays*	West Africa Publicity Ltd, Lagos	9 Pence
7	*Taimakon Masu Chiwo*	West Africa Publicity Ltd, Lagos	8 Pence
8	*Labarun Hausawa da Makwabtansu Vol II*	CMS Bookshop Lagos	1/6d[469]

The first five titles, in Table 20, were the winners of the 1933 competition. Apparently, by March 1938, they could be obtained directly from their publisher (West Africa Publicity Limited). Native Authorities purchased a copy for five and a halfpenny and sold it for sixpence. The wholesale and retail price was, therefore, consistent since 1935. The halfpenny difference was the seller's commission, implying that the Native Administrations were running the business at a loss since they would have to pay freight charges for the consignment.

The Kano Province adopted the new suggestion by using school teachers as sales agents.[470] The new method improved sales in the Kano Province. The overall picture in the whole of northern Nigeria, however, was that of stagnation. The print run of the five novels published in 1935 was

[468] *Ibid*.
[469] One shilling and six pence.
[470] See Senior Education Officer (Kano Province), Letter to the District Officer Kano Province, September 21, 1938, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration.

4000 copies for each title, making 20,000 copies of all the five titles. By September 1938, about half of that amount (10,000 copies) were sold to the public.[471]

However, several reasons forced the Bureau to devise a means of getting rid of the remaining number of copies. By 1938, there was a slight prospect of selling the outstanding stock at the current price (sixpence) except in small quantities, coupled with the fact that the Bureau was planning to have a new set of Hausa books in 1939. Moreover, the publishers of the five books, Messrs West Africa Publicity, were anxious to be relieved of the business of handling the books.[472]

Consequently, the Bureau decided to donate the books to the Native Administrations provided they would pay for the freight charges from Lagos. They could then decide to sell the books at whatever price to cover the transportation cost, handling charges and retailers' commission. After the native administrations had got their copies, the remainder would be donated to the bookshops for sale to the public at whatever price they deemed fit. The idea was not to profit but to ensure that the books were not given out for free. So that "the natives" could learn that books were worth buying.[473]

The Kano Province, under the above proposal, agreed to request 500 copies for each of the five books, making a total of 2,500 copies.[474] By April 1940, the copies collected sold out, indicating that the new distribution method was successful. In the same year, there was an improvement in *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, a Hausa newspaper the Literature Bureau began to publish in 1939. The

[471] Rupert East (Senior Education Officer, Literature Bureau, Zaria) Literature Bureau Circular to Senior Education Officer, Kano Province, September 5, 1938, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration.
[472] *Ibid*.
[473] *Ibid*.
[474] Senior Education Officer, Kano Province, Memo to the District Officer, Kano Division, November 1, 1938, NAK/1343/Central Book Store, Kano Native Administration.

above efforts of the Literature Bureau underscore the determination of the colonial government to push the circulation of Hausa literature despite the challenges encountered.

Starting from January 1939, the Hausa newspaper, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, was printed and circulated by the Literature Bureau. Each Native Administration was asked to state the number of copies it would take for distribution and appoint an agent who would arrange for sales directly or through the District Heads. The Province would pay the revenue to the Native Treasuries then to be forwarded to the Editor in quarterly cheques.[475] In 1945, East had the grant to found Gaskiya Corporation as a successor organisation to the Literature Bureau. The Corporation, therefore, took over the vernacular literature project.

The popularity of the Gaskiya newspaper seemed to have stalled the progress of the Hausa literature in the 1940s. To be sure, there was a tremendous increase in the patronage of the Hausa books. In the first three years of the Hausa literature, only 10,000 copies of five titles sold out at the market price of sixpence per copy, representing a total sales of 250 pounds in monetary value. This figure can be compared with the revenue realised from the Hausa book sales in 1958 – 1959, which was 3,074 pounds.[476] The wide disparity could be attributed to the expansion of the new community, as every year, a set of new students graduated from the colonial schools. Despite this progress, the Hausa newspaper, by far, enjoyed higher patronage. For example, the 1949 – 1950 estimates of Gaskiya Corporation was £2000 for Hausa books and £12,178 for the newspaper.[477]

By 1950, the ideology upon which the Translation Bureau and its successor organisations (Literature Bureau and Gaskiya Corporation) were built was radically challenged by some

[475] NAK/ZARPROF/GP/Kaduna 726/748/500, "Gaskiya Corporation Distribution and Circulation" (1950).
[476] *Ibid*.
[477] *Ibid*.

members of the Gaskiya Corporation Board. The business background of the latter led them to have very different priorities from those of Rupert East.[478] This ideological difference resulted in the downfall of Mr East. In a Gaskiya Corporation Board Meeting dated October 4, 1950, while Mr East was in London, Mr Cable (the Zaria Branch Manager of the Bank of British West Africa and a member of the Gaskiya Board) proposed a motion, seconded by Mr Dobson, which called for the resignation of the Chairman (Rupert East). However, the person who engineered the plot against Mr East was Peter Stallard (later Sir Peter Stallard, the private secretary to the first Prime Minister of Nigeria, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa).[479] Although their plot against the Chairman was successful, the legacy of East continued to linger on the Agency and the later publishing wings of the Gaskiya Corporation, making it very difficult for such organisations to make any profit.

The colonial government realised that so much attention was given to the newspapers produced in Gaskiya Corporation at the expense of the book production. For that reason, coupled with the pressing demand for the expansion of literacy, the Northern Regional Literature Agency (NORLA) was established in 1953. The Agency inherited the book production wing of the Gaskiya Corporation. NORLA had appointed Gaskiya as its vernacular printer, although the Agency could print elsewhere. Soon, NORLA began to have problems with Gaskiya resulting from poor quality of work on full-bound editions, the exorbitant price of Gaskiya printing and delays in delivering the printed books.[480] For that reason, NORLA patronised other printers.

The Agency set up a structure for book distribution in northern Nigeria. The superintendent of the Vernacular Literature section made many tours to various areas to advertise and sell books and

[478] See, Graham Furniss, "On Engendering Liberal Values in the Nigerian Colonial State: The Idea behind the Gaskiya Corporation," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39, 1, (2011), 114
[479] *Ibid*, 114 – 115
[480] KNSHCB/NAF/225 "Minutes of a Meeting held at 10 am on Friday, the 6th December, 1957, at Gaskiya Corporation Offices"

find authors who would produce manuscripts that could be published.[481] NORLA had established book depots in Sokoto, Maiduguri, Bauchi, Lokoja, Makurdi, Gusau, Minna, Kano, Yola, Katsina, Jos and Zonkwa, all in northern Nigeria to ensure wide distribution.[482] Apart from works of Hausa fiction, the Agency published books on other subjects such as religion and moral instruction, poetry, history and biography, textbooks, a guide to learning English, Arabic books, adult education primers and ten Hausa newspapers.[483]

There was a remarkable rise in sales of Hausa books and adult education publications under NORLA. The Agency was running a deficit, especially in its first four years. Sales to the public remained steady at about £3000 per month with almost the same amount of deficit mainly due to the production of expensive magazines sold below production cost, substantial overhead expenses and high cost of running the Land-Rovers that transported books to different areas of northern Nigeria. The deficit made Northern Regional Government closed down NORLA in 1958; the decision, however, became effective in 1959.[484] Once again, the book publication was transferred back to Gaskiya Corporation.

The last stage in the history of the state-controlled Hausa literature began in the first decade of the post-colonial period when in the 1960s, a partnership was established between the Gaskiya Corporation and the Macmillan Publishers, leading to the establishment of a subsidiary company known as Northern Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC). Initially, Gaskiya owned 51 percent of the NNPC, while Macmillan held 49 percent shares. With the Nigerian Government's

[481] See Neil Skinner, "NORLA: An Experiment in the Production of Vernacular Literature, 1954 – 1959" in Husaini Hayatu (ed.) *Fifty Years of Truth: The Story of Gaskiya Corporation,* (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1991), 61
[482] Northern Literature Agency (NORLA), *Tsarin Littatafan NORLA* (NORLA Hausa Catalogue). (Zaria: NORLA, 1959), 1
[483] Ibid., 1 – 15
[484] See Skinner, "NORLA: An Experiment in the Production of Vernacular Literature," 62

Indigenization Decree, Macmillan was forced to sell nine out of its 49 percent shareholding in 1977.[485] Gaskiya transferred the rights of its 253 titles while Macmillan gave over the rights of only two titles.[486] For the next decade, the NNPC virtually became the sole publisher of Hausa literature in Nigeria.

In addition to the titles it inherited and its subsequent publications, the company published three works that won the 1979 competition it organised, namely *Mallakin Zuciya* by Sulaiman Ibrahim Katsina, *So Aljannar Duniya* by Hafsatu Ahmad Abdulwahid and *Amadi Na Malam Amah* by Magaji Dambatta. The competition had far-reaching consequences on the emergence of the Hausa popular fiction from the 1980s onwards. *So Aljannar Duniya* and the two other novels were seen as pioneering works that prepared the ground for the explosion of Hausa popular literature. These novels were a catalytic factor in the emergence of Hausa prose fiction. Their plots revolved around romantic relationships, a theme that became a hallmark of the popular fiction of the 1980s and 1990s. However, until 1984, the influence of the three novels remained peripheral. The actual birth of Modern Hausa prose-fiction had to wait until 1984.

The Emergence of the Hausa Popular Literature

Scholars have written on the Hausa popular literature, which was given various appellations such as Modern Hausa Literature, Soyayya Books, Kano Market Literature (KML), and Hausa Pamphleteering. The Hausa popular literature or *littatafan soyayya* (books of love) is a genre of romantic pulp fiction that emerged in the 1980s and enjoyed a large readership throughout Hausa speaking areas of Nigeria and neighbouring Central and West African Countries. A section of the

[485] Husaini Hayatu, "Future Development of Gaskiya Corporation," in Hayatu (ed.) *Fifty Years of Truth*, 189

[486] *The Democrat Weekly*, March 25, 1984, cited in Hayatu (ed.) *Fifty Years of Truth*, 84

Hausa public had reviled them for morally corrupting the young people and the poor quality of their publications. Some Hausa academics and writers defended *littatafan soyayya* in a debate that lasted for more than a decade in some Hausa and English newspapers of northern Nigeria.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the most popular authors were male writers. However, from the late 1990s, female writers began to dominate the industry. By the early 2000s, it was taken over almost entirely by female authors. Thus, from then, the main themes of the novels revolved around the romantic relationship of young people before marriage, the life of women in their matrimonial homes, relations among co-wives, among others. Women constituted and still constitute the overwhelming majority of the readers of popular fiction. Only a few of the novels were/are written in a single volume. Most of them run into two or more volumes.

Several reasons have been advanced as responsible for the new Hausa literary movement of the 1980s. A central factor that is recognised by virtually all the scholarship in the field is the spread of literacy in the post-colonial period, primarily through the 1976 Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme. Other factors are the increasing availability of computer technology which made printing more accessible, the emergence of dealers and distributors of the fiction, the collapse of the NNPC, the influence of mass media, especially the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Kaduna and, as a corollary to this, the role of the melodramas broadcast by the various state televisions.[487] Scholars similarly suggest other reasons. It is, however, outside the scope of this chapter to engage extensively with such factors.

[487] See Abdallah Ubah Adamu, "Hausa Literature and Information Technology in the decade of the 1990s," *New Nigerian Weekly, July 3,* (1999) 14 – 15; Yusuf Muhammad Adamu, "Between the Word and the Screen: A Historical Perspective on the Hausa Literary Movement and the Home Video Invasion," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 15, no. 2 (2002), 204; Yusuf Muhammad Adamu, "Modern Hausa Prose-Fiction in the 21st Century" a paper presented at the International Conference on African Languages and Literatures in the 21st Century, 6th – 8th August, 2014, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya, 6. I am grateful to the

However, three of these factors mentioned above need further comments: the impact of the UPE programme, the collapse of the NNPC, which stalled the colonial legacy and the centrality of Kano as a market of popular fiction. The rest of the chapter focuses on the last point, including a discussion on one of the successful bookshops which specialised in selling Hausa novels but subsequently ventured into other business ventures, thus reflecting the realities of many other popular fiction shops. Until now, there is no independent study on the Hausa Book Market. To be sure, this intervention is not, in any way, apodictic in the field. Nonetheless, it might be a trigger for research undertakings in the area in the future.

The UPE had provided an opportunity for pupils to acquire literacy, thereby empowering them to read works of fiction which ultimately inspired some of them to become writers themselves. Moreover, the UPE had produced thousands of literates who provided a market for popular fiction. The UPE was only one of the two central schemes that facilitated literacy in the late 1970s. The second was the adult education programme.

Presumably, two important post-colonial educational projects focusing on pupils' and adults' literacy helped Kano emerge as the centre of the Hausa literary movement. This is in addition to the Kano marketing structure and its centrality as a distribution outlet. Adult literacy classes began right from the colonial period.[488] The programme that targeted the pupils' education was the UPE,

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author for sharing the paper with me; Halima Abbas, "New Trends in Hausa Fiction," *New Nigerian Weekly, July 11*, (1998), 14; Abdalla Uba Adamu, "Loud Bubbles from a Silent Brook: Trends and Tendencies in Contemporary Hausa Prose Writing," *Research in African Literatures* 37, no. 3, *Creative Writing in African Languages* (2006), 134

[488] For example, according to the 1953 Kano Provincial Annual Report, the adult literacy class that year had produced 1000 literates, and that justified the expansion of the scheme to 20 classes in each district. See Kano Province, "Annual Report, Kano Province, 1953" KSHCB/SNP/8323/1953. (1953), 13. Similarly, the 1955 Annual Report indicates that adult literacy expanded that year. About 3,241 literacy certificates were issued in that year. See KSHCB/SNP/8801/1955/"Kano Provincial Annual Report 1955," 13

a universal free primary education scheme planned to provide every six-year-old pupil free primary education. The UPE made it a right for every child to have primary education. Using a case study of Kano, the statistics of the primary schools' enrolments give insight into the size of the literates. Over 200,000 pupils were enrolled in primary one in September 1976 in Kano.[489] Table 21 shows the statistics of enrolment in the primary schools in Kano from 1968 to 1976.

Table 21: Primary School Enrolment in Kano, 1968 – 1975/76[490]

S/N	Year	Male	Female	Total
1	1968	36,116	13,464	49,580
2	1969	40,255	13,360	53,615
3	1970	45,864	16,216	62,080
4	1971	59,588	21,866	81,464
5	1972	72,058	25,322	97,380
6	1973	82,151	27,955	110,106
7	1973/74	90,419	29,857	120,276
8	1974/1975	103,273	33,077	136,350
9	1975/1976	121,740	38,600	160,340

The figures above indicate a continuous increase in the enrolment of primary school pupils. The highest number recorded was in the 1975/76 school year, with 160,340 pupils. This figure is in addition to the 200,000 pupils enrolled when the UPE programme proper took up in September 1976. Most of these pupils completed their primary studies in 1982, thirsty for Hausa literature and yearning to tell their own stories.

Moreover, the need to address illiteracy among the adult population also made the Kano State Government, in 1980, set up the Agency for Mass Education, which organised literacy campaigns

[489] Kano State, *Kano State Handbook*. (Kano: Ministry of Home Affairs and Publication, 1977), 61
[490] *Ibid.*, 64

and public enlightenment. In 1985, the Agency was running 132 centres with a total enrolment of 22,213. By 1991. The number had increased to 137 centres with 38,688 enrolments. Between 1980 and 1991, about 703,000 adults became literates through Kano State's several programmes supporting the literacy campaigns of various organisations.[491]

On the other hand, the economic boom of the 1970s made several local publishers and international conglomerates form partnerships to exploit the Nigerian market. The Northern Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC), as a successor company to Gaskiya in book publishing, made a considerable profit. By the late 1970s, however, when the Nigerian economy was plunged into recession, the company began to have problems. Moreover, the party politics of the Second Republic (1979 – 1983) affected the company's performance. The Kaduna State government under the populist and opposition party Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) had virtually turned the NNPC into a propaganda machine for its party.[492]

The economic crisis of the early 1980s had shrunk the output of Nigerian publishing companies as the maintenance of the non-profit-goal of colonial legacy became impossible. The thousands of literates were in urgent need of supplementary reading materials in the form of fiction. The traditional publishers in Nigeria, including the NNPC, focused their attention solely on textbooks. Even the literature they published were for reading in literature classes in secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

Therefore, the colonial patrimony of state-controlled production of literature crumbled. After being turned down by the traditional publishing companies, some new literates blazed the trail by raising

[491] Kano State, *Kano State Hand Book, 1991 and Who is Who*. (Kano: Ministry of Information, 1991), 72 – 74

[492] See Husaini Hayatu, "Future Development of Gaskiya Corporation," 188 – 189

enough funds to self-publish their manuscripts. By 1984, several of these young people had become successful authors and publishers at the same time. Thus, a literary movement of Hausa popular fiction had begun.

The origin of the movement is often traced back to 1984 when Talatu Wada Ahmed from Kaduna published her novel, *Rabin Raina*.[493] The author did not write this book to pioneer popular fiction. Instead, the manuscript originated from the creative stories she prepared and read out to her colleagues at Women Teachers' College (WTC) Katsina around 1980 while she was a student. She later submitted the manuscript to *Shafa Labari Shuni*, a Radio Nigeria Kaduna programme that anchored fiction reading. When the programme turned down the manuscript, she submitted it to a roadside printer in Kaduna, who initially printed the book in a small quantity. However, when he realised that it was potentially a hit, he continuously produced many copies.[494]

Around the same period, other authors in other cities of northern Nigeria were following the same process of submitting their prepared manuscripts directly to printers. Ibrahim Saleh Gumel, based in Kano, published his work titled *Wasiyyar Baba Kere* in 1983.[495] This novella could have been the real beginning of the Hausa popular fiction if not for its limited circulation and lack of influence on other authors.[496] Therefore, between 1983 and 1989, about 13 novels were published (Table 22).

[493] Talatu Wada Ahmad, *Rabin Raina*, (Kaduna: Ogwu Printers, 1985-1987)
[494] See Bashir Abu Sabe, "*Adabin Kasuwar Kano: Samuwa da Jigogi da Siffofi*" in Ibrahim Malumfashi (ed.), *Labarin Hausa a Rubuce (1927 – 2018)*, (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press and Publishers, 2018), 410 – 411
[495] Also see *ibid*., 413 – 414
[496] Interview with Professor Yusuf Adamu, Kano, conducted by author, May 26, 2020

Table 22: The Hausa Popular Literature Published between 1984 and 1989[497]

S/N	Book Title	Author	Year
1	*Wasiyyar Baba Kere*	Ibrahim Saleh Gumel	1983
2	*In da Rai da Rabo*	Idris S. Imam	1984
3	*Rabin Raina*	Talatu Wada Ahmed	1984
4	*Hannunka Mai Sanda*	Kamaruddeen Imam	1985
5	*Soyayya Gamon Jini*	Ibrahim Hamza Bichi	1986
6	*Daji Bakwai*	Abba Ado Dandago	1987
7	*In da Rai*	Idris S. Imam	1987
8	*Kogin Soyayya*	Ahmed Mahmoud Zahraddeen	1988
9	*Turmi Sha Daka*	Kabiru Ibrahim Yakasai	1988
10	*Budurwar Zuciya*	Balaraba Ramat Yakubu	1989
11	*Soyayya Dankon Zumunci*	Bashir Sanda Gusau	1989
12	*Tsalle Daya*	Idris S. Imam	1989
13	*Idan So Cuta ne*	Yusuf M. Adamu	1989

Among the 13 authors, only two were females, Talatu Wada Ahmed and Balaraba Ramat Yakubu. The latter published her work at Gaskiya Corporation. The novel is included among the pioneers of the Hausa popular fiction because Yakubu simply contracted the company to print the work without following Gaskiya's editorial procedure. Since the establishment of the NNPC, which took over the publishing function of the company, Gaskiya had become a commercial printer. To be sure, *Budurwar Zuciya* and Adamu's *Idan So Cuta Ne* departed, in significant ways, from the dominant features of the popular fiction publications, especially in terms of quality and the number of pages. Adamu had written the novel while he was a level 300 student at the Usmanu Danfodio University Sokoto. It was recommended for his colleagues, in their third year, who were specialising in B.A. Hausa.[498] Out of the 13 new authors, three (Ibrahim Saleh Gumel, Idris S.

[497] Abu Sabe, "Adabin Kasuwar Kano." 415
[498] Interview with Professor Yusuf Adamu, May 26, 2020

Imam and Kamaruddeen Imam) are not considered part of the literary movement. They were rather self-published authors whose works appeared around 1984.

The Vicissitudes of the Hausa Book Market: The Story of Kano as a Diffusion Centre

The book market is indispensable to the circulation of literature. One of the central factors responsible for the emergence of popular fiction was the market structure that supported the distribution of the books. With the possible exception of an article written by Adamu, there is hardly any extant literature that acknowledges the book market's pivotal role in the emergence of popular fiction.[499] At first, the authors of popular literature could not find dedicated distributors for their works. They had to rely on the standard bookshops, such as Femi and Zamani Bookshops in Kano and Kola Bookshop in Zaria. The authors would supply ten or twenty copies on consignment to these bookshops.[500]

Those who eventually emerged as the leading dealers of the new literature in Kano were the former Gaskiya/NNPC agents who were then selling stationery and the NNPC books. The key figure who pioneered the distribution of the Hausa popular fiction on a large scale was Muhammad Na Alhaji, the founder of Jakara City Bookshop.[501] His career as a stationer and bookseller perhaps began in the 1960s.[502] He was introduced to the Gaskiya Corporation by his brother, a member of the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), the ruling party in Nigeria's First Republic (1960 – 1966). His

[499] See Adamu, "Between the Word and the Screen.."
[500] Interview with Professor Yusuf Adamu, Bayero University Kano, conducted by author, December 28, 2018
[501] Telephonic interview with Garba Muhammad (the founder of Garba Muhammad Bookshop), Kano, conducted by author, May 2, 2020
[502] Muhammad Na Alhaji was the master of Jibril Muhammad Ibrahim, a bookseller since 1966; an indication that the latter perhaps was a bookseller before 1966. Na Alhaji's oldest surviving son, Shehu Muhammad, born in 1959 told me that his father was selling books even before he was born. It could be possible that he became a book trader in the 1950s.

first stall was located in Plaza but relocated to Jakara in the early 1980s.[503] Garba Muhammad, whose career as an NNPC agent began in 1977, also became a dealer of Hausa popular fiction in the 1980s. The two figures had to take the risk of taking these books for distribution which ultimately enjoyed high patronage to the extent that eventually, they gave up on the NNPC books and turned their attention to the new literature. Presumably, they sensed that the new style of the Hausa fiction could have a vast market judging from the success of the Hafsat Abdulwahid's *So Aljannar Duniya* noted above. When *Wasiyyar Baba Kere* and *Rabin Raina* were self-published by their authors in 1983 and 1984 respectively on the same style of Abdulwahid's novel, the two dealers agreed to promote the books.[504]

By the early 1990s, Kano had emerged as the centre of the new literature. Moreover, three significant bookshops became prominent in the trade: Jakara City Bookshop, Garba Muhammad Bookshop and Sauki Bookshop. The proprietors of the three bookshops — Muhammad Na Alhaji (also known as Baba Na Jakara), Garba Muhammad and Alhaji Musa Danbala — became the primary distributors of the *littatafan soyayya* throughout northern Nigeria. Initially, the self-published authors would print their books and supply them to these dealers for distribution. When some of the writers found themselves in financial crisis, they began to sell their press plates — after the first or second print runs — and eventually the copyright of their works to the booksellers

[503] Interview with Shehu Muhammad, Kano, conducted by author, March 26, 2019
[504] According to Garba Muhammad, He and Muhammad Na Alhaji had promoted both *So Aljannar Duniya*, *Wasiyyar Baba Kere* and *Rabin Raina* in 1980, 1983 and 1984 respectively. Telephonic interview with Garba Muhammad, May 2, 2020

who soon became publishers.[505] The primary dealers/bookshop owners began to commission authors to produce manuscripts on a hire-for-pay basis.[506]

A feature of the early 1990s Hausa book trade was the predominance of several Hausa writers' clubs established principally in the 1990s for the welfare of their members. The prominent among them were: Kungiyar Matasa Marubuta, (Association of Young Writers), Kukan Kurciya (the Cry of a Dove) and Raina Kama (Appearance can be Deceptive). Raina Kama became the most prominent as it had published over 100 Hausa fiction in less than a decade.[507] The key figures in Raina Kama were: Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, Hajiya Balaraba Ramat and Dan Azumi Baba. The clubs advertised members' works by providing a list of existing and forthcoming titles in their books. They also included the miniaturised black and white versions of the cover pages of their members' previous books.[508]

When the main dealers became publishers, they also began to use the preliminary pages of books under their copyright for advertising their bookshops. At times such advertisements appeared on the back cover. Moreover, using Raina Kama's style, the dealers displayed the miniaturised versions of the cover pages of the titles under their bookshops. The need to advertise the shops of distributors from other states warranted a list of significant bookshops of other areas of northern

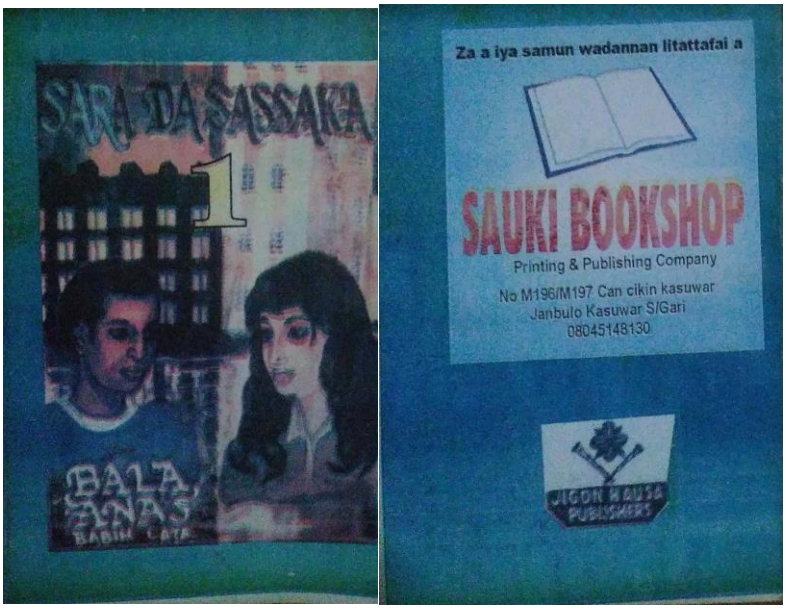
[505] Interview with Professor Yusuf Adamu, December 28, 2018

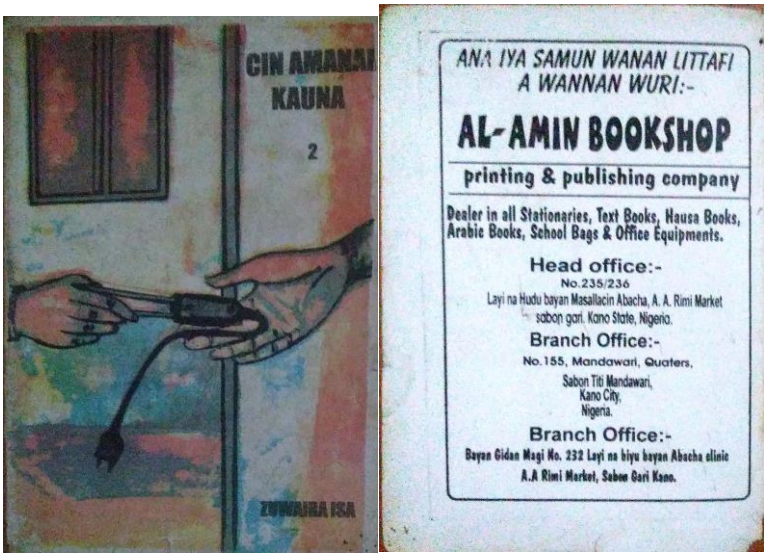
[506] According to Garba Muhammad, he had about a hundred manuscripts produced by authors which were yet to be published. It is not clear whether the authors were paid for their services or not. Telephonic Interview with Garba Muhammad, May 2, 2020

[507] This estimate was made by Danjuma Katsina. The period within which the books were published was between 1990 and 1998. See Danjuma Katsina, "Death of Soyayya Novel," *The New Nigerian Newspaper*, September 5, (1998), 15

[508] See Graham Furniss and Abdallah Uba Adamu, "Go by Appearance at your Peril": The Raina Kama Writers' Association in Kano, Nigeria, Carving out a Place for the Popular in the Hausa Literary Landscape," *Research in African Literatures* 43, no. 4, (2012), 98 – 99

Nigeria.[509] These were innovative ways of advertising books to potential readers, making the Kano dealers' bookshops household names among the readers of the popular fiction.





Picture 7: Hausa Popular Fiction Cover Pages and Advertisement of Sauki and al-Amin Bookshops. Image courtesy of author

[509] Interview with Shehu Muhammad Na Alhaji, March 26, 2019.

In terms of size, the fiction market expanded in the early through the mid-1990s. The economy of an author typically revolved around the production of 1000 or 2000 copies by going through the various stages of book production by himself. This responsibility required the writer to make many decisions on the cost of production vis-à-vis the anticipated revenue from direct sales to the dealers. The success of the book and the agreement an author had with the dealers would determine how many copies would be printed subsequently. A successful author could produce up to 5000 copies of a title in a year. A case in point was *In da So da Kauna* by Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, arguably the most successful title in Hausa popular fiction.[510] Its first 1000 copies sold out within a short period at the unit price of eight naira. The author made a profit of N3000. By 1994, over 25,000 copies were printed, making it the biggest-selling title among the Hausa popular fiction between 1990 and 1995.[511] Based on the records of Gidan Dabino, more than 300,000 copies of the book were sold to date.[512] Although it is difficult to verify this claim, it is evident from the invoices issued by Gidan Dabino Bookshop that the book enjoyed high sales.[513]

It is difficult to estimate the number of copies of the Hausa popular fiction sold out at any period of its history since the dealers and authors hardly preserved records of transactions. Some booksellers kept no records at all. A possible exception is Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, an author and bookseller. From the bibliography compiled by Yusuf Adamu, Ado Ahmad and Ibrahim Malumfashi, as of 1998, between 600 and 700 titles was produced.[514] If we consider that the

[510] Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, *In da So da Kauna*, (Kano: Gidan Dabino Publishers, 1990)
[511] Adamu, "Loud Bubbles from a Silent Brook" 144
[512] Interview with Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, Kano, conducted by author, June 12, 2019
[513] I am grateful to Ado Ahmad for giving me access to the records of his bookshop.
[514] Yusuf Muhammad Adamu, "Hausa Novels: Beyond the Great Debate," *New Nigerian Newspaper,* 18 July, 1998

minimum number of copies authors often produced per title was 1000, one could conservatively estimate that by 1998 a figure of about 600,000 and 800,000 copies was sold out.

Because successful authors produced more than 1000 copies as the first and subsequent print runs and a successful title could be continuously printed for several years, one could speculate that the actual number more than doubled the above estimate.[515] In fact, in exceptional cases, more than 10,000 copies of a book could be produced at once. A case in point is Idris Imam's *Tsalle Daya*.[516] The Jakara City Bookshop had sponsored a single print run of 20,000 copies of the book.[517]

Perhaps by the end of the 1990s, about two million or more copies of these books were sold out. Sabon Gari Market became the centre of the book trade. The bookshops of two out of the three pioneering dealers, Sauki and Garba Muhammad Bookshops, were located at Sabon Gari. A trade that a few dealers pioneered snowballed in the 1990s when many other bookshops and dealers joined its distribution network. Some of the prominent ones in Kano were: Habibullah and Mashi Bookshops.

The 1990s was also a period of intense debate on the pros and cons of Hausa popular fiction. On the one hand, academics such as Ibrahim Malumfashi condemned and dismissed the books as pamphlets, chapbooks or Kano Market Literature — deriving the latter term from Onitsha Market Literature.[518] On the other hand, veteran authors such as Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino and academics like Abdallah Ubah Adamu and Yusuf M. Adamu, both affiliated with Bayero University Kano,

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[515] For example, since its publication in 1990, a comedy novel titled, *Suda*, was re-printed seven times between 1990 and 2001. See Kabiru Ibrahim Yakasai, *Suda*, (Kano: Ibkar Printing and Production Kano, 2001)

[516] Idris S. Imam, *Tsalle Daya*: *Shi ke Jefa Mutum Rijiya*, (Kano: Imam Publishers, 1994)

[517] The information about the production of 20,000 copies was confirmed to me by two sons of Muhammad Na Alhaji in separate interviews (Nayarwa Muhammad Na Alhaji, interview, June 20, 2019 and Shehu Muhammad na Alhaji, interview, March 26, 2019)

[518] See Ibrahim Malumfashi, "Market Criticism," *New Nigerian Newspaper*, May 15, 1999

defended the new genre emphasising the role it played in the promotion of reading culture and revival of Hausa literature which was dying by the beginning of the 1980s.

Most of the criticisms were centred on the main structure of the books. They were mainly small, consisting of a few pages (an average of forty to sixty pages per volume), and the stories were divided into two or more volumes. A number of them did not conform to the rules of Hausa orthography as they did not follow the editorial procedure of the traditional publishers. They were made of poor quality paper, often newsprint.[519] Of even more significant concern was the putative claim that they corrupted the Hausa moral values, an allegation dismissed by the defendants of the new literature. However, the quality had improved over time. Some authors opted out of the genre and ventured into academic writing. A case in point is Kamilu Dahiru Gwammaja.[520]

In the late 1990s, the market suffered from several challenges. A number of the veteran authors had given up writing and joined the Hausa Home Video (Kannywood) industry which was more lucrative.[521] Secondly, the primary dealers — or more appropriately — the booksellers-turned-publishers had purchased enough copyright from authors to the extent that they felt self-sufficient and had stopped commissioning the authors to produce new works. They purportedly refused to promote authors' novels in their shops. Instead, they supplied their customers with their newly published books.[522]

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[519] See Halima Abbas, "New Trends in Hausa Fiction" *New Nigerian Newspaper*, August 1998, 15

[520] Interview with Kamilu Dahiru Gwammaja, Kano, conducted by author, July 10, 2019. The author of *Rabi'atu* and *Azabar So*, Gwammaja is now a lecturer with the Department of Nigerian Languages, Bayero University Kano and an author of the *Tsanin Hausa* series — several Hausa text books for primary schools all with the preamble of in their titles. For example, *Tsanin Hausa Don Kananan Makarantun Sakandare* and *Tsanin Hausa Colouring*.

[521] See Adamu, "Between the Word and Screen" 209

[522] Interview with Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, June 12, 2019

Thirdly, the primary dealers had supplied the books they bought on credit from authors to the regional distributors while the latter defaulted on their stock payments. The authors mounted a lot of pressure on the primary dealers to settle their debt.[523] From the perspective of the primary dealers, the measure to promote their published titles was not intended to sabotage the authors. Instead, they avoided putting authors at unnecessary risk by distributing their (authors') works on credit to the distributors, the payments of which could be delayed or defaulted as in the case mentioned above. Instead, they preferred taking the risk themselves by distributing their published works.[524] Whatever was the intention of the primary dealers, the authors have interpreted their action as sabotage. This had created distrust between the two parties.

From the beginning of the new millennium, the market restored the momentum it lost in the late 1990s. Around this time, booksellers like Aminu Mustapha (Al-Amin), the founder of Al-Amin Bookshop, came into the scene. To win the confidence of the authors, he restricted giving out stocks on credit to trusted distributors. He took it upon himself to pay authors for their supplies even if he did not receive any payments from distributors. He gradually won the trust of authors. By the 2000s, he emerged as one of the leading dealers in Kano.

From the 2000s, female writers were gradually dominating the industry. The ascendancy of the female authors was a gradual process prompted by many factors. First of all, most of the readers were females. Although no statistical data shows the readership size among the two sexes, all the booksellers interviewed were unanimous that female customers outweighed the male buyers.

Secondly, most female readers preferred novels that addressed themes on marriage, courtship, the relations among co-wives and other social issues. However, fantasy novels primarily by male

[523] Interview with Aminu Mustapha Al-Amin, Kano, conducted by author, July 4, 2019
[524] Interview with Yahaya Garba So, Kano, conducted by author, January 20, 2019

writers had made in-road into the market since the early 1990s with titles such as *Kyan Alkawari* by Dan'Azumi Baba, whose plot was not a favourite of female readers.[525] Then in 1996, Nazir Adam Salih published a thriller novella, *Kibiyar Ajali*, which instantly became a hit, especially among male readers.[526] The situation came to a head when a previously unknown author, Maje El-Hajeej, published a scary, mysterious thriller in 1999 titled *Sirrinsu*. The commercial success of this title prompted other writers to venture into a thriller storyline. These new authors include Habib Ibn Hud Ahmad with *Makauniyar Sharia'ah* (1996), Bala Anas Babinlata with *An Yanka ta Tashi* (1997) and Abubakar Ishaq with *Da Kyar Na Sha* (1996).[527] Others, such as Aminu Umar Muktar with *Baqin Dare* (2001), followed Hajeej's footsteps.[528]

Sensing that they could hardly get their favourite storylines from the male authors, the female readers presumably stopped patronising the latter and focused on the works of the females whose favourite themes were social issues, such that some male authors began to use female pen names to woo the patronage of women readers.[529]

Moreover, by the beginning of the 2000s, a new crop of publishers had begun to invest in women authors.[530] Al-Amin Bookshop became one of such outfits. The Bookshop "supported" upcoming female writers. Table 22 shows a sample of four famous female authors and the number of their

[525] Dan'Azumi Baba, *Kyan Alkawari, Chikawa*, (Kano: Bamas Printing, 1992)
[526] Nazir Adam *Salih*, *Kibiyar Ajali*, (Kano: Kamnas Publishers, 1996)
[527] Maje El Hajeej, *Sirrinsu*, (Kano: Mazari Publications, 1999)
[528] Aminu Umar Mukhtar, *Bakin Dare* (Kano: Al-Amin publishers, 2001)
[529] Interview with Professor Yusuf Adamu, December 28, 2018
[530] It is important to note that even in the 1990s, the major bookshops such as Sauki and Garba Muhammad Bookshops had published a number of female authors' novels. For example, Garba Muhammad was the publisher of *Igiyar Zumunci* by Sa'adatu Saminu Kankia. Sa'adatu Saminu Kankia, *Igiyar Zumunci* (Kano: Garba Muhammad Bookshop, 1999)

titles published by Al-Amin and other publishers between 1999 and 2016 based on the information from the WorldCat database:

Table 23: Publications of Female Authors' Works by Al-Amin and other Bookshops 1999 – 2016

S/N	Name of Author	Period of Publications	Author's Publications by Al-Amin	Other Publishers	Total
1	Hadiza Salisu Sharif (Mrs Muhd Yusuf Yalo)[531]	2003 – 2014	15	1	16
2	Zahra'u Baba Abdullahi Yakasai[532]	2005 – 2015	29	-	29
3	Amina Abdullahi Sharada[533]	2014 – 2016	10	-	10
4	Sa'adatu Saminu Kankia[534]	1999 – 2012	26	2	28

Before the above data is analysed, a word of caution about its limitation. The table is prepared based on the data from the WorldCat entries for the above authors. The data may not necessarily reflect the actual number of their publications. They might have other works not captured by the

[531] The Titles of Hadiza Sharif's Novels, "hadiza salisu sharif mrs muhd yusuf yalo" WorldCat, accessed August 25, 2020. https://www.worldcat.org/search?qt=worldcat_org_all&q=hadiza+salisu+sharif+mrs+muhd+yusuf+yalo

[532] The Titles of Zahra'u Yakasai's Novels, "yakasai zahrau baba abdullahi" WorldCat, accessed August 25, 2020, https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=yakasai+zahrau+baba+abdullahi&fq=&dblist=638&start=21&qt=next_page

[533] In the case of this author, all her ten books were published by a collaboration between Al-Amin and Jakara City Bookshop. See The Titles of Amina Sharada's Novels, "au:Sharada, Amina Abdullahi'" WorldCat, accessed August 25, 2020 https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3ASharada%2C+Amina+Abdullahi%2C&qt=hot_author

[534] The Titles of Sa'adatu Kankia's Novels, "au:Kankia, Sa'adatu Saminu" WorldCat, accessed August 25, 2020 https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3AKankia%2C+Sa%27adatu+Saminu.&qt=hot_author

database. The data, however, had corroborated the information obtained from Al-Amin that his company had "supported" these female writers by publishing most of their works.[535]

It is evident also from table 23 that most of the works for the above authors were published by Al-Amin Bookshop. In the case of Sharif and Kankia, the Bookshop published 93 percent of their books and all of Sharada's and Yakasai's novels. According to Al-Amin's subordinate, his boss had published more than 50 percent of female authors' works in Kano.[536] This assertion seems to be an exaggeration since many female writers sponsored their publications. Also, in addition to Al-Amin, the female authors have other benefactors in the industry. However, it is beyond doubt that the Bookshop had a fair share of female authors' publications, considering that its team of protégés is constituted by the most popular female writers of popular fiction. For example, Sa'adatu Saminu Kankiya noted above had the highest number of Hausa fiction works between 2002 and 2008; she had published 14 popular novels within this period.[537]

According to Al-Amin, his Bookshop entered into varying relationships with authors depending on the circumstance. It could be an outright purchase of the copyright when the Bookshop commissioned the authors to produce a script. Also, when the author got stuck for financial constraints, in most cases, after press plates were made, the arrangement could either be partnership publishing, or the author might decide to forfeit her initial investments and ask the Bookshop to complete the production process. In this latter arrangement, the Bookshop might decide to partly compensate the author for her initial investment outlay out of magnanimity if the

[535] Interview with Aminu Mustapha Al-Amin, July 4, 2019
[536] Interview with Abubakar Ahmad Sa'id, Kano, conducted by author, July 2, 2019
[537] See Abu Sabe, "Adabin Kasuawar Kano." 417

novel turned out to be a hit in the market. There were also cases where the author would self-publish her work and use the Bookshop as the primary distributor.[538]

The patronage of female authors by newcomers such as Al-Amin had polarised the market into two camps. On the one hand, new book outfits such as Al-Amin, Salama and Harafi Bookshops became the principal female authors' benefactors.[539] In contrast, old outfits such as Garba Muhammad Bookshop continued to maintain their positions as the predominant publishers of male writers. The situation had resulted in fierce competition between the two sides. While the male publishers attributed most of the problems encountered by the market to their opponents, the female patrons stressed the role they played in "supporting" their protégés (who often had manuscripts at hand but were bedevilled by lack of enough capital to publish them) by underwriting their productions.

The purported "support" is interpreted as exploitation by many male authors and booksellers since most female writers sold their manuscripts for a low price.[540] In reality, the value of a manuscript depended on the author's popularity, irrespective of gender. The copyright could be purchased for as low as N 5000 in the 2000s, especially for new authors.[541] The value could be more than that amount depending on the agreement between the author and the publisher. For example, the Jakara City Bookshop had once paid N 100,000 to "buy a manuscript" of a three-volume novel written

[538] Interview with Aminu Mustapha Al-Amin, July 4, 2019
[539] Salama Bookshop was opened in 2009 by two erstwhile subordinates of Al-Amin who worked previous in Al-Amin bookshop while Harafi Bookshop and Harafi Publishers were founded by Shehu Usman Harafi. He is a popular author who had "supported" many female writers to publish their works.
[540] This concern has been raised by booksellers such as Nasir Garba Muhammad (The current Manager of Garba Muhammad Bookshop) and Kamilu Gwammaja and authors such as Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino.
[541] Interview with Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, June 12, 2019; interview with Kamilu Dahiru Gwammaja, July 10, 2019

by Hafsat C. Sodangi in the 2000s.[542] In the Hausa Book Market parlance, manuscript purchase presupposes the transfer of the copyright from the author to the buyer in exchange for money. Some authors would give out the copyright of their works to the book dealers for free. This usually happened in the case of previously unpublished authors who were craving popularity and prestige. The publisher would have to take the risk of publishing and promoting the novice's work among his network of wholesalers with the chances of either success or failure.[543]

In the mid-1990s, famous fiction authors had joined the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA). This had provided a platform for the authors to discuss their shared concerns, especially their relations with the primary dealers. It also provided a platform where the more experienced members mentored the novices. Authors such as Yusuf Adamu, who was the Secretary of the Kano branch in the late 1990s, had to sensitise writers on the implication of selling their plates to the booksellers.[544] Previously, the term was understood to mean a transfer of copyright to the purchaser. The broader implication of the term was teased out. A writer could still sell their plates and claim the other subsidiary rights, such as that of adaptation into a film.

Moreover, selling plates could be a vague term as it could mean allowing the buyer to print the book continuously until the plates faded. It could also signify making a single print run from the

[542] Interview with Nayarwa Muhammad Na Alhaji, conducted by author, June 20, 2019. It is not clear which of the Sodangi's titles the bookshop bought for that amount. Based on the WorldCat entry for the author only one work was published by the Jakara City Book shop, namely, Uwar Miji in two volumes. See The Titles of Hafsat Sodangi's Novels, "au:Hafsat C. Sodangi (Mrs Yunus Abdullahi Dabai)" WorldCat, accessed August 25, 2020 https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3AHafsat+C.+Sodangi+%28Mrs+Yunus+Abdullahi+Dabai%29&qt=hot_author

[543] Interview with Aminu Mustapha Al-Amin, July 4, 2019

[544] Adamu emerged as the pioneering secretary of Kano Branch of ANA in 1995. The branch was formed largely through his effort and several other Hausa writers.

plates and returning them to the author. The Association encouraged the authors to spell out the agreement terms when ceding an aspect of their copyright.[545]

However, despite the support provided by the Association, the thorny topic of relations with the primary dealers created a division among members. On May 25, 2002, 90 authors broke away from ANA and formed the Hausa Writers Association of Nigeria (HAWAN) under Ibrahim Ahmed Daurawa. These writers were unhappy with the exploitation of the booksellers, and they felt that ANA was too close to them.[546] Despite the split, the Association continued to support writers on how to improve their writings.

Authors' Rebellion: The Case of Gidan Dabino Bookshop

The tension between the authors and the booksellers-turned-publishers resulted in various authors coming up with various initiatives to assert their independence in the market by taking several measures. One of such steps was by establishing their independent distribution networks and publishing outfits.[547] However, very few of them eventually thrived in the business. They established new networks by engaging in direct supply to the distributors in various areas of northern Nigeria. This effort had created an anomaly in the market since the traditional dissemination chain began from the author went through the primary dealers, then unto the regional distributors and finally to small scale wholesalers and retailers.

[545] Interview with Professor Yusuf Adamu, May 26, 2020
[546] Adamu, "Loud Bubbles from Silent Brooke…" 145
[547] Authors such as Kamilu Dahiru Gwammaja, Bilkisu S. Ahmed Funtua, Rahama Abdulmajid had established their own bookshops in Sabon Gari Market. Interview with Kamilu Dahiru Gwammaja, July 10, 2019. Also publishing companies such as Gidan Dabino Publishers (by Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino), Adamu Joji Publishers by (Yusuf Muhammad Adamu) and Jigon Hausa Publishers (by Bala Anas Babinlata and other authors) were established by authors. Interview with Professor Yusuf Muhammad Adamu, December 28, 2018

Some authors began to supply their stocks directly to the distributors at a lower price than the rate they would give to the primary dealers in Kano.[548] This measure had created two main unintended consequences. One, the regional distributors were empowered such that the peripheral position of the units began to transform into significant distribution centres in their own right. Secondly, the regional distributors that used to get stock of a moderate quantity from the main dealers were now inundated with huge supplies from authors and Kano main dealers on credit. Their failure to manage the increased supply resulted in liquidity crises for some of them, such that they could not pay back their debt to their creditors (authors and dealers). Consequently, the authors could not recoup their investment outlay — the conundrum that plunged many of them into financial crises.

Amidst this atmosphere of uncertainty, Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino (b. 1964), a graduate of Adult Literacy classes (1984 - 1986), not only co-founded the Raina Kama Writers Association with two other fellow graduates of the Adult Literacy programme — Dan'Azumi Baba and Balaraba Ramat — but also became one of the most successful authors of the Hausa popular fiction.[549] His first published work, *In da So da Kauna,* was arguably the most successful Hausa novel of the 1990s. To date, Gidan Dabino had published 15 works. The feedback he received from his reading constituency in the form of letters amounted to 10,000.[550] This section examines the trajectory of Gidan Dabino Bookshop (GDB) and Gidan Dabino Publishers (GDP), founded by Ado Ahmad. The history of the Bookshop is reconstructed partly based on the 163 invoices issued by Gidan

[548] Interview with Kamilu Dahiru Gwammaja, July 10, 2019
[549] Maigari Ahmed Bichi, "Kano Market Literature: the Man Behind it," *New Nigerian Newspaper,* June 20, (1997), 12
[550] Gidan Dabino is meticulous in keeping records. He is still in possession of the letters most of which were presumably written in the 1990s. The letters were photocopied by Malami Buba formerly affiliated with SOAS and now with Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto. Interview with Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, June 12, 2019

Dabino Bookshop between 1993 and 2017, which I obtained from the proprietor and partly from an oral interview conducted with him.

The GDB was opened in 1992. However, the earliest invoice of the Bookshop in my possession is dated 1993. From these invoices, it is evident that in the 1990s, the GDB had three categories of customers: those who were based in Kano (comprising of the primary dealers and standard bookshops), regional distributors and international customers. In this period, the majority of the customers were sellers of Hausa popular fiction. The only standard bookshops that patronised the GDB were Zamani and Femi Bookshops. The books they purchased were very much lower than those of the mainstream Hausa-bookshop owners. By 2000, the company was re-registered with the Nigerian Corporate Affairs Commission as a limited liability company. By this time, the scope of its interest was expanded to include book publishing and video production. The company thus was re-named Gidan Dabino International Nigeria Limited.[551]

The invoices revealed the extent of the geographical spread of the Bookshop's stock. Most of the books marketed were the ones published by the GDP. Within the period covered by the invoices, it is striking that the GDB had a network of customers in five out of the six geographical zones in Nigeria, including non-Hausa speaking areas. This perhaps can be attributed to the fact that Hausa people have founded migrant communities in these areas. These customers include Abdullahi Danfulani Sokoto and Sani Maibiro, Kebbi from North West.[552] Others were: K.B. Bookshop Yola in Adamawa (North East), Mamman Nasiru from Zungeru in Niger State (North Central), Alhaji

[551] Gidan Dabino International Nigeria Limited, "Corporate Profile," 2
[552] Gidan Dabino Bookshop (GDB), "Transaction Invoice," October 17, 1995, Personal Collection of Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino (PCA). According to this invoice, Sani Maibiro had purchased a total of 246 books which was worth N6,660

Bashir Idi Araba from Lagos (South West) and Abdulmumini Adamu from Port Harcourt (South-South).[553]

Most of the above customers specialised in selling Hausa books or general commodities but attached the Hausa novels as items for sale in their shops. Presumably, these regional distributors purchased the bulk of their demand from the leading dealers in Sabon Gari Market and supplemented their stocks by buying from the published works of the GDB since the Bookshop dealt almost exclusively in its publications.

From 2000, the standard and university bookshops became the main habitués of the GDB. The main customers now were: Arewa House Bookshop affiliated to Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (ABU), ABU Bookshop, Kola Bookshop, Zaria and Bayero University Kano (BUK) Bookshop. This transformation is hardly surprising because the GDP to which the Bookshop is a branch had transformed into a standard publishing outfit with more interest in academic publishing.

Furthermore, the GDB had enjoyed international patronage. In the 1990s, its international customers were: Catholic Plission (Niger Republic) and Hogarth Representation, London.[554] In the 2000s, the primary international customer was Editian Gashingo, Niamey Niger Republic.[555]

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[553] GDB, "Transaction Invoice," November 16, 1994, PCA. In this invoice, the KB Bookshop bought 200 copies of twelve titles at the cost of N3070. This bookshop was a customer of GDB in 1994 and 1995; GDB, "Transaction Invoice," July 20, 1995, PCA. In this invoice the customer, Mamman Nasiru, seemed to be a small scale buyer who frequented the Bookshop in 1995; GDB, "Transaction Invoice," November 17, 1998, PCA. In this invoice the buyer, Alhaji Bashir Idi Araba, purchased a total of 88 copies of 12 titles, worth N2020; GDB, "Transaction Invoice," undated, PCA. In this invoice the buyer, Abdulmumini Adamu, had purchased thirty-nine copies of Hausa books.

[554] GDB, "Transaction Invoice," October 4, 1995, PCA. About 144 copies worth N2,911 were purchased by Catholic Plission; GDB, "Transaction Invoice," December 3, 1994, PCA. In this invoice 228 copies of 31 titles, worth N3,850 were bought.

[555] GDB, "Transaction Invoice," October 31, 2009, PCA. In this invoice seventy copies worth N24,500 were purchased.

The Bookshop was inextricably linked to the GDP, which had published/printed well over 300 titles in three decades since its establishment.[556] Most of these publications were in Hausa. However, based on the list of the company's publications, the GDP had published/printed 285 books, seven issues of magazines, three issues of academic journals from BUK and one book of abstract as of 2015.[557] The publishing outfit of GDP uses the network established by the Bookshop for the distribution of the books. This responsibility depended on the agreement entered into between the company and the authors.

The authors who published their works with other companies could supply their books for distribution by offering GDB a discount. The Bookshop would then distribute the works based on the principle of "sale or return." The publishing wing used the editorial procedure typical of many traditional publishers since the collapse of mainstream publishing in Nigeria. This entails taking the manuscript to assessors, primarily academics in the University, for assessment.[558] It is, however, improbable for the company to reject the manuscript that received negative reviews since the author would shoulder all the expenses for the publication.

This publishing arrangement has differed in significant ways from vanity publishing. Firstly, the author would shoulder all the financial burden for the publication. Secondly, the company would not claim the copyright of the book; it belongs to the author. Thirdly, the author can either engage the company for distribution or take away the entire print run and distribute it himself. To be sure, there are cases where the company would enter into a partnership with the author when the latter

[556] Gidan Dabino International Nigeria Limited (GDI), "Corporate Profile,"
[557] Gidan Dabino Publishers (GDP), "List of our Publications from 1991 to September 2015," PCA. Gidan Dabino. This has contradicted the information provided by the profile cited above which mentioned over 300 publications. However, it is possible that the remaining books were published after 2015, terminal period on the list.
[558] Interview with Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, June 12, 2019

does not have enough money to sponsor the entire production process. In that case, the profit would be proportional to the percentage of investment outlay of each partner.[559] The company would undertake to promote the book and use its network for distribution. This is different from vanity publishing arrangement, where the primary goal of the publisher was to make money without committing to the promotion of sales.

Conclusion

The history of the Hausa Book Market reveals the changing pattern of book production and distribution in northern Nigeria, an area that has had a deep-rooted Muslim culture for centuries before the colonial period. This provides an example of how the colonial administration profoundly transformed the book culture of Muslim societies in Africa. After introducing Hausa literature in Roman script, which gradually replaced Ajami writings in Hausa, the colonialists found it necessary to promote it. Therefore, from the 1930s until the 1970s, the Hausa book trade was controlled by colonial and post-colonial states in northern Nigeria. In the 1980s, however, when the post-colonial state governments could no longer satisfy the literary appetite of a growing number of literates, the Market was taken over by self-published authors. These new writers deviated radically from the tradition of traditional publishing, thus attracting criticism for poor quality and for not following the standard editorial procedure of mainstream publishing. The world of popular fiction authors was characterized by stiff competition among the various actors in the industry, including but not limited to authors, bookshop owners and regional dealers. The chapter has accounted for the complex competitiveness that defined the Market throughout its history.

[559] Interview with Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, June 12, 2019

The history of the Hausa popular fiction has demonstrated that the colonial legacy of creating a new reading public was successful. As discussed in chapter three, part of the colonial educational projects in northern Nigeria was to create a new community of readers that could read and write Hausa in Roman characters as opposed to Ajami which was exclusively used for Hausa written communication in the pre-colonial period. The institution of the fiction market in the colonial era and the emergence of popular fiction in the post-colonial period had consolidated the place of Romanised Hausa as the predominant means of written communication in Hausa language. Although the Ajami texts still exist, however, they are very few.

Conclusion

This dissertation is possibly the first to deploy some methodological and theoretical tools of book history to study the colonial and post-colonial Kano Book Market (KBM) while underscoring its position as a centre of the "book world" in a large portion of West Africa. It is a story of a complex market that spanned over a century from the early decades of the twentieth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The only work that deals with the book market in Kano was a Master's thesis (written in Arabic) that examines the post-colonial history of the Islamic book section of Kurmi Market, focusing primarily on the biographies of the booksellers in this space. The scope of that thesis is limited as it does not explore the other segments (Hausa and English) of the KBM. Moreover, the study begins and ends in the Kurmi Market, focusing primarily on book traders. On this last point, this dissertation departs significantly from that approach.

Inspired by Darnton's model, this study considers the book market as an organ or segment of the book cycle in which several actors, comprising but not limited to authors, printers, publishers, bankers and even transporters, play a varying critical role for its operation. Other related literature is mainly scholarly articles on Islamic calligraphy and two essays by Murray Last on the pre-colonial manuscript books in Hausaland and Borno. Although not directly dealing with the colonial and post-colonial book trade, these studies provide some inspiration and valuable empirical data on northern Nigerian book history.

The dissertation relied on primary documents from booksellers' collections, institutions and organisations under Kano State and Federal Governments of Nigeria, and oral testimonies from booksellers, authors, printers, and publishers. It explored the various themes related to the colonial and post-colonial trajectory of the book trade in Kano. The dissertation argues that the actions and inactions of the colonialists accounted for the dynamics of the KBM. For example, the introduction

of colonial infrastructure (rail lines, air transport and postal services) enabled a group of Hausa Muslim scholars to start the international Islamic book trade. In contrast, the Hausa book trade initiated by the colonial administration continued to be managed by the state up to two decades after the British rule in Nigeria. When the state could no longer sustain the publication of enough literature for the ever-growing Western-educated reading public, the control of the market slipped into the hands of private booksellers and publishers. From then on, the market was marked by dog-eat-dog competition principally between authors and publishers.

The foundation of the KBM is traced back to the colonial period in Nigeria when the first printing presses were established. The printing machines began to replace the copying industry. However, I argue that the influence of the new technology was limited in the first few decades of colonial rule for several reasons. As in the other parts of the Muslim world, people in the Muslim dominated areas of northern Nigeria were suspicious of the colonial presses, for the printing equipment was seen as a symbol of Christianity. Moreover, the first colonial press in northern Nigeria, Kano Native Authority Press, was founded mainly to produce administrative documents. Thus private printing was discouraged. More importantly, the colonialists subjected the Islamic scholars and their authorship to surveillance and monitoring. A case in point was the controversy that surrounded the publication of a book titled *Sabīl al-Muḥtadī*. These factors limited the role of colonial presses in making any significant impact in the early colonial period.

Furthermore, the colonial administration was not inclined towards promoting the Islamic book culture of northern Nigeria. They seemed to be much more interested in creating a *new* reading public. Consequently, the colonialists founded two education systems, one with predominant secular subjects while the other — modelled after the colonial Sudanese school system — with most of its courses in Islamic sciences. The graduates for these institutions constituted the new

reading public. I argue that the colonial educational project inspired both the local and transnational Islamic Book Markets. Neglected by the British initiative on book development and taking advantage of colonial infrastructure, some Islamic scholars based in Kano began to connect with book publishers in the Middle East, which expanded tremendously in the post-colonial period. They, therefore, inserted a local and national book culture into an international network. At the same time, they patronised local presses mainly located in Kano and Zaria to print their works.

The colonial press that was to play a decisive role in the emergence of the post-colonial book trade was the Gaskiya Corporation which began as a Literature Bureau. As with other colonial institutions, the Corporation was established under the strong influence of Rupert East, a passionate colonial educationist. Its primary goal was to provide reading materials for the new reading public. The Hausa newspaper, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, was run by the Corporation and circulated throughout northern Nigeria. Although some secondary literature documented the Corporation's history, this study is the first to point out the role of the Corporation as a tool for the sustenance of the new community of readers.

Another paradox of the colonial agenda occurred in the 1950s when the ideals of Rupert East were undermined by a new set of colonial officers who occupied management positions of Gaskiya Corporation. These officers were aggressive in their goal of making the organisation a profit-making body. The Corporation began to venture into private and Arabic printing, thus providing an opportunity for the Kano entrepreneurs, who sensed a reasonable demand for Arabic and Islamic literature, to pioneer the local book trade by publishing their Arabic books. Thus, here lies the paradox — the Corporation founded primarily for the needs of the colonially-created reading public became a vehicle for the publication of Arabic texts consumed by the existing scholarly communities of northern Nigeria.

On the other hand, mapping out the book printing and distribution geography is a tool used initially by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin in their classic monograph, *The Coming of the Book*, one of the pioneering works in the field of book history. As already noted, this dissertation is possibly the first to apply such a tool in studying a sub-Saharan African Book Market. In this regard, the book market is conceptualised as a space that brings together agents with the primary aim of book distribution. The argument maintained in this discussion is that the colonial policy of the dual city project that separated the walled city from the township had impacted the spatial distribution of the Kano-post-colonial book market.

The Kurmi Market, which evolved in the fifteenth century as the main centre of commerce in Kano, emerged as a regional Islamic Book Market of West Africa while providing an impetus for the proliferation of other small-scale book markets around Juma'at mosques within and immediately outside the walled city. Conversely, the township with its CBD, European and Syrian Quarters, and European infrastructure, including the railway station, naturally became the centre of the English and Hausa book trade. These two markets were pioneered by colonial initiatives complemented by the multinational publishers of English books.

Along the same line, the dissertation expanded on the works of Osundina and Furniss on the pattern of book distribution. Osundina had identified four main channels of book distribution in Nigeria (general, academic, government and libraries). Similarly, Furniss has documented four primary levels of distributions centred on publishers in the Middle East, NNPC, stall-holders and peripatetic booksellers. While recognising the two contributions, the dissertation identified three distinct patterns of distributions in the Hausa, Islamic and English book trade. In other words, it sheds light on distinct patterns of book mobility within the geographical space.

While this study began with Robert Darnton's model, it is also a critique of that model with its linear 'communications circuit', which assumes that book history can be studied by examining one of the stages in the life cycle of the text from authorship to reading. As this study indicates, such a model cannot fit the KBM whose complexity defies any linear or closed model. However, the model provides a valuable tool for organising the empirical data I collected more coherently. It also inspires my conceptualisation of a book market as a space where several agents negotiate book production and distribution. For example, in the Kano Islamic Book Market, the role of the bookseller is carried out by almost all the key players in the circuits ranging from authors, printers, and publishers. Therefore, the market has been explored considering the roles played by authors, printers and other stakeholders in addition to booksellers.

On the internal circuit of the book trade, the dissertation points out the predominance of the manuscript culture in northern Nigeria. Even when the printing presses became well entrenched in the literary culture, especially from the 1960s, most Arabic books dominant in the Market were the "printed manuscripts." A period of considerable expansion of the printing industry in Nigeria was the 1980s. This expansion is attributed to the restrictions imposed on the importation of books and other commodities into Nigeria. Consequently, many book importers turned their attention to the local presses for printing of their works. This period coincided with a massive production of "printed manuscripts."

However, from the 1990s, locally-authored and conventional Arabic/Islamic books became increasingly available thanks to three main factors. Graduates of the University of Madina and other institutions in the Middle East who returned to Kano in the early 1990s ventured into authorship. Moreover, the 1990s was also a period when access to computer services became widely available in Kano with the emergence of shops that provided computer services known

locally as the Business Centres. Some of the proprietors of these centres guided and persuaded new authors to follow conventions for authorship. Moreover, in 2004, a branch of the National Library of Nigeria was opened in Kano, which, in addition, to processing ISBN for authors, guides them on improving their manuscripts to meet the book standard.

Another area that the research explored is the external circuit of the KBM. Considerable secondary literature has documented Arab printing. What is left out is the impact of the massive production of Arabic books in the twentieth-century Middle East (particularly Egypt and Lebanon) on sub-Saharan Africa. Using primary records from Kano booksellers and agencies under Kano State and Federal Government of Nigeria, this study documents the history of the transnational Islamic book trade linking the Middle East to sub-Saharan Africa while positioning Kano as a centre of diffusion to the other West and Central African countries. Several factors have been identified as the trigger for the international book trade. The colonial infrastructure is one of them.

The transnational book trade is in two phases. The dissertation argues that in addition to the infrastructure, the main factor responsible for expanding the transnational book trade in the first phase (the 1950s to 1980s) was the partnership between the Kano booksellers and Beirut-based publisher and book vending Company, Dar El-Fikr. The company that established its presence in 1970 dominated the transnational book trade for almost three decades. From the late 1990s, the second phase crept in when a lack of a solid capital base and the perpetual devaluation of Nigerian currency forced the booksellers to form unprecedented temporary partnerships to raise capital for import.

Turning to the extent to which the colonial legacy of entrenching traditional publishing ethos and book market was sustained in the post-colonial period, the dissertation explored the continuities and discontinuities of such patrimony. Since the 1930s, when the colonial officers instituted the

Hausa Book Market until the 1970s, the production and distribution of Hausa literature were controlled mainly by the state with little presence of multinational publishers.

From the 1980s, however, when the Nigerian economy was in crisis, such state patronage became unsustainable, resulting in the emergence of what some scholars call Kano Market literature (KML) — a genre of popular fiction that enjoyed a wide readership in the Hausa speaking areas of West and Central Africa with Kano playing the role of conduit for distribution. From this period onwards, this section of the dissertation argues, the market of Hausa popular fiction became a field of stiff competition among authors and publishers. The competition was multi-layered with, on the one hand, grievances of authors against the major bookshops. While on the other hand, the female author's dominance from the 2000s created a new dimension to the complicated atmosphere of competition. Some publishers became the primary patrons of the female authors with allegations that they exploited their protégés. To assert their independence from the grip of the bookshops, the authors began to find their independent channels of distribution. This initiative, however, mostly failed. One of the few exceptions in this story of failure was Ahmad Gidan Dabino, who was/is an author, actor, publisher and bookseller.

The dissertation has identified certain perennial factors that contributed to the expansion of the book market. One of such factors is the population growth in Nigeria and the expansion of basic education, which accounted for the growth of the reading public with increasing demand for books. The increasing enrolment of students in schools had an impact on the book market. This is particularly the case with the KML. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme of 1976 became one of the pivotal factors for its emergence and expansion.

Perhaps more importantly, the advancement in printing technology had impacted all the bookselling outfits in Kano and northern Nigeria. Previously, books were produced by letterpress

machines whose printing process is arduous. Bookmaking was made more manageable from the 1990s, with the coming of the "Information Age," when computer technology became more readily available in Nigerian geographical space. However, it is still premature to say, with exactitude, the extent of cyberspace's impact on the book industry. If anything, the digital era is less amenable to prediction.

Nonetheless, we can identify some traces of such impact on the book production and distribution processes, especially from the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century. However, the extent of such repercussions in the long term is hard to say. By providing final remarks, the following paragraphs outline some of my thoughts on the future of the KBM in the face of the encroachment of digital architecture. This aspect has not been documented in the dissertation, but it perhaps represents the area book history is heading to in the near future.

From the late 1990s, scepticism grew among book historians on the future of the physical book because of the new media threats. On February 17, 2000, a meeting of leaders of the media industry in the United States was held with the spokesman of Hollywood speaking about "defending creative works against illegitimate intruders on the internet who steal copyrighted works."[560] This concern exposes the increasing helplessness of the media industry in its bid to tame the threat of cyberspace.

Texts are increasingly circulated and read electronically. However, as the case of the KBM indicates, divergent book cultures can complement or overlap with one another. Those who predicted supersession (the idea that the Information Age will vanquish or subsume its

[560] See Mark Poster, "the Digital Subject and Cultural Theory," in David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (eds.) *The Book History Reader*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 487

predecessors.) are missing the point.[561] As the case of West and Central Africa indicates, two book cultures (manuscript and print) could co-exist. A case in point is the pervasiveness of the manuscript culture despite the availability of print technology for a century in the KBM. One would assume that print culture would end the manuscript tradition. Instead, we see a pattern in which offset lithography was/is being mobilised to perpetuate the manuscript tradition through the production and circulation of "printed manuscripts." We have already begun to see the same pattern in the New Media Age. As Geoffrey rightly predicted in the 1990s, "there will be a digital revolution, but the printed book will be an important participant in it."[562] We now see this participation in reality.

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the KBM re-echoes the above assertion, as the subsequent paragraphs illustrate. Although many scholars who occupy teaching positions in sub-Saharan African universities read many texts electronically, the printed book is still available. However, the use of new media has already begun to have adverse effects even on the sub-Saharan African trade for printed books, as the case of Kano indicates. Therefore, it seems that both the old and new media will continue to exist in years to come.

Access to Islamic classics online has negatively impacted the book trade. Many students read electronic copies on their personal computers or other electronic devices. Thousands of Arabic books are available online. The *maktaba shāmila*, a library software installed on the computers of many Nigerian university students taking undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Arabic and Islamic studies, contains well over 5000 e-books. Nonetheless, brick-and-mortar bookstores still

[561] See Paul Duguid, "Material Matters: the Past and Futurology of the Book," in Geoffrey Nunberg, (ed.) *The Future of the Book*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 63 – 102
[562] Geoffrey Nunberg, "Farewell to the Information Age" in Nunberg, (ed.) *The Future of the Book*, 103

exist. In all probability, they will continue to play a critical role in the literary culture of sub-Saharan Africa. This fact can be attributed to several reasons.

Many titles, which constitute the curriculum of traditional and formal educational institutions, are not yet available in electronic copies. Even if they are, the existing pedagogy requires that students have printed copies of recommended texts. Secondly, a large number of beginners and advanced *Ilm* School students are not computer savvy. They heavily rely on physical books for their research and educational nourishment. Even among students and scholars that are computer literate, many of them found the traditional book more convenient to read. They mainly rely on e-books for research purposes. For many, reading texts in a printed copy is more convenient than using a computer screen, e-readers and other devices.

The impact of new media is not only restricted in its undermining of the book trade. Paradoxically, it also promotes the marketing of printed Arabic books. Many booksellers have found it convenient to advertise their books online. One of the Kano based Islamic booksellers/publishers, Darul Ummah Publication Company, has a website for his firm, where photos of a vast collection of the company are displayed, and visitors to the website can get a quotation for their demand.[563] Moreover, a few bloggers advertise and sell books online too. Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, have also become vehicles for advertising Islamic and Arabic books.

The use of social media, particularly WhatsApp, has been an indispensable tool for the twenty-first-century Islamic book trade in Kano. The Kano Islamic booksellers use WhatsApp at almost every stage of their transactions. At the level of the transnational trade, they communicate with publishers in the Middle East on the application. They also send lists of the books on their demand

[563] Website of Darul Umma, "Darul Umma Publication Company" Darul Umma, accessed October 20, 2020, https://darul-ummah-publication-company.business.site/

list to agents in Egypt and Lebanon who buy the items on their behalf. At the local and regional transaction level with customers, they also use the platform to communicate with buyers within and outside Nigeria. Before the beginning of the twenty-first century, the regional dealers of Islamic books frequently travelled to Kano to procure books. However, by the end of the new millennium's first decade, such frequent visits have reduced drastically. The dealers would only send the list of their demand on WhatsApp, while the primary dealers would arrange for the transport of the books to the regions of the dealers. The payment would be made electronically.

Perhaps the most adverse effect of the digital revolution is on the KML. Many digital authors have taken over the market, publishing and circulating their fiction online using social media platforms. Almost all the Hausa booksellers I spoke to expressed how the digital authors undermined their business. Although it is difficult to quantify this impact, however, the experiences of the booksellers cannot be jettisoned. Patronage of the internet among the northern Nigerian youth, who constitute a reasonable percentage of the Hausa reading public, has tremendously increased from the new millennium. The same applies to the patronage of social media. Nigeria had overtaken South Africa, which used to be dominant in Africa, in internet usage from the mid-2000s. From 1995 to 2005, South Africa had the highest number of internet users in Africa. However, from 2006 onward, Nigeria had taken over the top position. For example, in 1999, South Africa had 1,820,000 subscribers to internet services, while Nigeria had only 50,000 subscribers. In 2007, however, Nigeria had 11,040,000 users compared to 7,042,000 users in South Africa.[564] Since then the number has kept on increasing.

[564] Euromonitor International, *International Marketing Data and Statistics 2009,* (London: Euromonitor International Plc, 2009), 652

Presumably, the KML will continue to encounter cyberspace threats as new e-book websites become more popular among the youth. For example, Okada Books, an e-publishing system, was founded by Okechukwu Ofili in 2013. The company's initial goal was to allow authors of English books to upload their books to the platform and sell them online. Eventually, the platform began to have a large number of Hausa users. Veteran authors of KML such as Bala Anas Babinlata have transformed their previously printed works into e-books and uploaded them on Okada Books. Authors can either fix the price for downloading their books or allow the readers to download them for free. Conversely, platforms such as Wattpad, with millions of users worldwide, allow readers to download books for free. The platform also has a significant presence of Hausa e-writers.

Therefore, those interested in reading Hausa popular fiction can now access thousands of e-books online for free. All they need to have is a smartphone and internet connection. Those interested in fiction but do not want to read them by themselves or in case they are illiterate can have access to many audio files on YouTube that contain readings of the Hausa novels. The new trend is for young people to read a Hausa novel (either in electronic form or printed) from the beginning to the end while recording their voices. Afterwards, they upload the audio file on YouTube for those who are interested in downloading and listening. All these new manifestations of the increasing and creative ways of using cyberspace have adverse effects on the KML.

However, just like the case of the Islamic Book Market, cyberspace architecture has been mobilised to promote sales of printed Hausa books. ANA (Association of Nigerian Authors) and Mace Mutum Writers' Forum (a female writers' club) tried to establish online platforms for marketing Hausa popular fiction in the early 2010s but to no avail. However, authors such as Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino advertise works published by his company on his website. It remains to be seen whether the printed book would be completely wiped out in the long run. For the time being,

despite their increasing degeneration, physical books are very much available, likewise their market.

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