

MALLAM DENDO

The Role of Traditional Rulers in Conflict Prevention and Mediation in Nigeria

Interim Report

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ACRONYMS

ADO	Assistant District Officer
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
COCIN	Church of Christ In Nigeria
DFID	[United Kingdom] Department for International Development
DO	District Officer
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
GoN	Government of Nigeria
GPC	General Purpose Committee (of JNI)
HRH	His Royal Highness (always His!)
HRM	His Royal Majesty
IG	Inspector General of Police
JEWEL	Jigawa Wetland Livelihood Project
JIWNAJ	Jigawa Women's Network for Access to Justice
JNI	Jama'atul Nasril Islam
LG(C)	Local Government (Council)
LGA	Local Government Area
MACBAN	Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria
NA	Native Authority
NEPU	Northern Elements Progressive Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	Nigerian People's Congress
NSCIA	Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs
PFN	Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
PRP	Peoples' Redemption Party
SG	State Government
SSS	State Security Services
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	The World Bank

1. Introduction: background to the study

1.1 Background

Nigeria is a large and populous West African nation with a complex history of pre-colonial polities, a system of multiple administrative strategies during the colonial era and a post-independence history marked by the alternation of military and civilian rule. Since the 1970s, much of the particular colour of events has been shaded by the impact of income from oil, principally exported from the Niger Delta and offshore rigs. The size and population of Nigeria drove a specific process during the colonial era, the use of indirect rule to manage the northern two-thirds of the country. This led to the formalisation of the position of traditional rulers, quite unique in the region and perhaps in Africa. Rulers were assigned a particular status with notified privileges and used as an arm of government.

Many such systems were created in colonial Africa, but they have tended to wither away, especially when not rooted in the long-term social structures of the peoples over whom they were set to rule. But in Nigeria, the institution of traditional rulership has developed and flourished. There are more 'traditional' rulers today than at Independence in 1960. Politicians try to win votes by promising to upgrade chieftaincies or create new ones. Clearly, such rulers continue to strike a chord in the twenty-first century, when power is diffuse and chaotic. One reason for this is that traditional rulers are often more trusted than local and state government officials during post-conflict situations, which are becoming extremely common.

During the long years of military government, traditional rulers largely preserved their status, except for a major change in 1967-68 when their powers over judicial affairs were significantly reduced. But with the introduction of democracy in 1999, and the need to establish a more perdurable constitutional framework, the issue of traditional rulers has again come to the fore. Especially in the south, where chiefs never have had the sort of prestige they enjoyed in the North, many activists and lawyers are questioning the need for such archaic institutions. The rise in civil conflict throughout the country suggests that traditional rulers have no major role in damping down community violence and some suspect they may be exacerbating it.

For these reasons it seems an appropriate time to review the status and role of traditional rulers. Most of the well-regarded monographs on chiefship institutions in Nigeria date from the 1960s and frankly present a rosy view coloured by the stability of the immediate post-colonial era. More recent literature, locally published, is either pseudo-historical or has an immediate political agenda. To make use of this material requires considerable care. Recent concerns about the role of Islam in worldwide political instability need to be considered for their relevance to Nigeria. Traditional rulers have traditionally had an important role in conflict resolution; is this worth preserving?

1.2 Literature review

The traditional states of northern Nigeria formed the backbone of the British system of Indirect Rule. From the early colonial period onwards these states and their peoples have been the subject of a number of studies, most of which have been descriptive and historical. Important early overviews include Burdon's *Northern Nigeria, Historical Notes on Certain Emirates and Tribes* (1909), Temple's *The Native Races and their Rulers* (1918) and *Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria* (1919), Meek's *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria* (1925) and *Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria* (1931), and Hogben's *The Muhammadan Emirates of Nigeria* (1930), revised and updated by Hogben and Kirk-Greene in *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria* (1966). Basic anthropological information is collected in the volumes produced for the *Ethnographic Survey of Africa* (e.g. Forde 1950; Gunn 1953; 1956; Gunn & Conant 1960).

These various works draw upon local histories and chronicles and in turn have spawned more detailed histories of individual polities. The most widely known of these have been published by outside scholars and include Last's *The Sokoto Caliphate* (1967) and M.G. Smith's trilogy *Government in Zazzau* (1950), *The Affairs of Daura* (1978), and *Government in Kano* (1997). But the most rapidly expanding and vibrant category of historical literature is that of locally published histories and hagiographies written by Nigerians

themselves. Examples are recent works on the Berom chiefship (Nyam & Jacobs 2004; Dung 2005) and on past and present Emirs of Zazzau (Dalhatu & Hassan 2000; Dalhatu 2002). Many more examples are cited in this report. Studies such as these are important both as sources of information and as active contributions to debate about the contemporary significance of traditional rulers and related institutions.

The analytic literature on traditional rulers and institutions is much more patchy in coverage and its emphases have changed over time in response to changing political circumstances and the academic fashions related to these. The primary agenda for anthropological analysis during the late colonial period was set by a classic text of the British structural-functionalist school, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's *African Political Systems* (1940). This edited collection helped to shift the focus of attention to the problem of political order in the absence of powerful rulers, and the role of lineages in both acephalous and centralised polities. This directly mirrored the problems that the British were having in establishing structures of Indirect Rule in Central Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. Its ethnographic fruits included detailed studies of segmentary lineage organisation among the Tiv of Central Nigeria (e.g. L. & P. Bohannon 1953; P. Bohannon 1957).

The Emirates of Northern Nigeria were less conducive to this approach. Nadel's study of the Nupe kingdom, *A Black Byzantium* (1942), has been described as 'the most compendious monograph on a complex society ever produced by an anthropologist', anticipating a focus on historical political economy that did not become prominent until the 1970s and 1980s (Hart 1985: 246-247). It was not, however, particularly influential at the time, and Nadel's own contribution to *African Political Systems* (1940) attracted little attention. By contrast, M.G. Smith's (1956) research in Zaria did feed into the debate on segmentary lineage systems, and his historical study of Zazzau Emirate (1960) is judged to have led 'directly to the postcolonial flood of interest in the history of African states' (Hart 1985: 247). But its turgid theoretical approach exemplified the difficulty that structural-functionalists had in converting the twists and turns of history into comparative sociology.

As it happens, the contingencies of history were already reframing academic interest in traditional rulers and institutions. The politics of the post-war years and the new paradigm of international development ('modernisation') had far reaching effects on policy and practice in the British colonies as they hurtled towards independence. In the early 1950s the principle of Indirect Rule was widely challenged and indigenous structures were increasingly sidelined and/or modified to meet the requirements of impending decolonisation and self-government. In Nigeria the Native Authorities were developed as agencies of democratic local government to be integrated into a parliamentary system of government. This new system was designed to meet the aspirations of emerging regional elites and the new political parties that they were joining. In the process the authority of traditional rulers was seriously undermined.

The wider literature on traditional rulers and institutions reflected the same set of political processes:

"Post-war analyses of chieftaincy structures were initially dominated by the now largely discredited mid-century modernization paradigm. Premised on positivist and evolutionary assumptions, these earlier studies of the nation state project predicted the imminent demise of chieftaincy structures in African politics. Analysed in the context of third world decolonization, the cold war and global capitalism, modernization theorists emphasized the erosion of chiefly power in the postcolonial African state. [...] These dominant post-war social science perspectives drew heavily from Max Weber's notion that power is legitimate only when the political expresses voluntary consent. This conceptualization is based on the assumption that rational human behavior is best mediated by the agencies of the modern state and civil society. Thus, since indigenous African structures were widely held to be dysfunctional in this post-war political context, modernization theorists contend that their marginalization is an essential precondition for the socio-political and economic development of African states." (Vaughan 2000: 3)

Political scientists were the most active proselytisers of the modernisation paradigm, which was at its most influential in the 1960s and still lingers in the literature today, especially in the grey pages of development reports and local academic publications. Debate about the pros and cons of political modernisation in Nigeria continued into the 1970s and beyond. Whereas Sklar (1963) and Dudley (1968), for example, had contended that traditional political authorities were unresponsive to change, Whitaker (1970), Yahya (1980)

and others used evidence from case studies to argue that these traditional structures remained resilient and in many respects compatible with the modern state. Similar arguments were made by scholars working elsewhere in Africa, and called into question the relevance of the modernisation approach in this context (Vaughan 2000: 4; cf. the essays in Crowder & Ikime 1970).

Modernisation as the paradigm of international economic development received something of a battering from neo-Marxist dependency theorists in the 1970s and 1980s. Here is Vaughan again:

“The dependency paradigm, which gained currency as a radical alternative to modernization theory, was equally short-sighted. Preoccupied with the advance of global capitalism, the marginality of third world economies, and the role of “comprador” classes in the economies of new states, dependency theorists underestimated the critical role that indigenous structures - most notably chieftaincy institutions - might play in the transformation of African states. In short, while modernization analyses dismissed indigenous structures as dysfunctional to a Western-style developmental process, the dependency paradigm reduced these institutions to mere reflections of social class. Thus, the dependency paradigm’s instrumentalist Marxist preoccupations ignored the continuing relevance of indigenous structures as modern expressions of communal and class interests.” (Vaughan 2000: 4-5)

In some respects dependency theorists and their intellectual descendants, world systems theorists and the analysts of globalisation, merely picked up where the political modernisers left off. The effect of this was to drive serious discussion about the role of traditional rulers and institutions into an academic backwater from which it struggled to recover for the best part of two decades. When analysts turned to interrogate the legitimacy of failing African states in the 1980s and 1990s, most of them continued to employ notions of governance and civil society that were based on Western models and paid little attention to the possible relevance of traditional political institutions (Vaughan 2000: 5). This was simply modernisation in new clothing.

Nonetheless, the ongoing political significance of traditional structures did attract the attention of some political scientists working in Nigeria. Miles (1987), for example, picked up on earlier studies and argued that Hausa chieftaincies in both Nigeria and Niger had been co-opted by the nation state and owed their survival and continuing legitimacy to this source rather than to traditional loyalties. Much more wide-ranging and influential, though, has been the work of Sklar (e.g. 1993; 1999a; 1999b; 1999/2000; 2003) and in particular his concept of ‘mixed government’, used to describe the dualism and symbiotic relationship between traditional and state-derived institutions that characterises government in Nigeria and many other African countries. Like Miles, Sklar argues that ‘The durability of traditional authority in Africa cannot be explained away as a relic of colonial rule’ (2003: 4). Instead he emphasises the role of local initiative: ‘African agency in the construction of colonial institutions was largely responsible for the adaptation of traditional authorities to modern systems of government and the legitimacy they continue to enjoy among ordinary people’ (2003: 4).

Academic debate about the resurgence of traditional political structures in Africa took off in the mid-1990s and has since drawn in historians, anthropologists and others (see, for example, van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal & van Dijk 1999; van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal 2000; Englebert 2002). In Nigeria perhaps the most detailed recent work has been that of Vaughan (2000) on the twentieth-century history of chieftaincy among the Yoruba. Vaughan (2000: 3) argues that ‘Given the resilience of indigenous political structures and the colossal failure of the Nigerian state, it is essential to re-open the discussion on the role of chieftaincy in colonial and postcolonial Nigerian politics’. And he summarises his main thesis as follows:

“The crisis of political legitimacy confronting the Nigerian state is intimately linked to the ambiguous nature of the public sphere and the absence of viable national institutions capable of unifying a deeply fragmented nation state. The narratives of local politics that are the focus of our analysis here will be viewed in the context of a process of state formation that rests on a tenuous interaction between ambiguous “traditional” structures and modern bureaucratic institutions. The main concern of regional political classes has been to protect their interests by seeking refuge behind traditional structures, themes and symbols that are summoned to validate local aspirations. In this context, state structures are hardly

used as effective institutions of administration and governance. Rather, they function largely as mechanisms for allocating patronage and ensuring political domination. Thus, chieftaincy structures - as communal and ethnic-based institutions - partly reinforce a rentier state dominated by ethno-regional commercial and bureaucratic classes.” (2000: 12-13)

Vaughan’s (2003, 2005) edited collections have also been important contributions to the wider debate. In Nigeria itself there has been growing interest in these issues, linked to discussion about the future of the constitution and the role of both traditional structures and related concepts of citizenship, in particular ‘indigeneship’ (e.g. Awe 1999; Agbese 2004; Sklar 2004; Rinyom n.d.). To date, however, there have been no studies of these issues in Northern Nigeria that match Vaughan’s detailed historical work on Yoruba chieftaincies.

Growing pressure at international level for the promotion of democratisation and participatory processes of governance has also seen the increasing involvement of development agencies and NGOs in programmes designed to build upon the political strengths of traditional structures. As Englebert (2002: 13) has noted:

“It comes as no surprise, therefore, that fostering the role of traditional authorities has been a common theme among recent donor-sponsored conferences on development and conflict resolution. In March 1995, for example, conference on “Civil Society and National Reconciliation in Mali and Niger,” in the wake of Tuareg unrest, proposed a program of reinforcement of traditional chiefs “towards the enhancement of their capacities in the prevention and management of sub-regional conflict.” A further “Workshop on Increasing the Capacities of Traditional Structures in the Prevention and Management of National and Sub-regional Conflict in West Africa” took place in November 1995 in Niger. In 1997, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum held a conference in Gaborone on traditional leadership and local government [...]. The World Bank has also sponsored research on the possible development benefits of indigenous structures.”

Similar initiatives are now beginning in Nigeria. A recent conference on *Peace-building and Conflict Resolution in Northern Nigeria* included a special session on ‘The Role of Traditional Rulers in Peace-building and Conflict Resolution’ (Bobboyi & Yakubu 2005: 133-155). The current study is conceived as a further contribution to this work.

1.3 Other countries in West Africa

A rapid comparison with the situation in other West African countries reveals that the situation in Nigeria is unique. Although there were comparable chiefdoms and emirates, especially in the Sahelian countries, the French colonial system treated them very differently, effectively downgrading their power to that of entirely ceremonial rulers. The underlying logic of this was simply the cost and logistical difficulties of directly governing a vast area with so few officials. Further east, the situation is somewhat different, as in Northern Cameroun and Chad, the problems of governance in the early colonial period mean the colonial authorities reached a similar solution to allow rulers to maintain power, as long the justice they administered as not too transgressive by colonial standards.

1.4 Historical development of Emirate/traditional councils

Before the arrival of British Rule in Nigeria, particularly in northern Nigeria, traditional rulers had full authority or power over their people and ruled in the interest of their subjects through their councillors, including district heads and village heads. Emirs functioned as both religious and administrative leaders; they were also responsible for judiciary matters in their domains and led their people to war. Despite possessing all of these powers, traditional rulers were not dictators, but typically consulted with their councillors and other officials. Nonetheless traditional rulers in the precolonial period usually had the final say.

When the British captured northern Nigeria, they left most traditional rulers in place and allowed them to continue administering their subjects. The powers of traditional rulers were even reinforced in some respects during the colonial period, and they could veto any decision taken by the members of their councils. The judiciary and the Native Authority police and prisons were under the direct control of traditional rulers; and they had the full support of the colonial authorities in maintaining law and order. However, as increasing numbers of western-educated people became available, things started to change. Such people were appointed to the Emirate councils and had to consent to any decisions taken before they were passed. The appointment of district heads was increasingly based on merit and local acceptability, even in areas where such appointments were reserved for hereditary candidates.

Further changes followed independence. Emirs had to work with another constituted authority known as the council; a system referred to as 'Emir and Council' as opposed to the 'Emir in Council' of the colonial period. Rulers had to abide by the majority decision of their councils, though they still had control of most local government affairs. In each region a House of Chiefs was created and any decision taken by members of the regional House of Assembly had to be referred there for endorsement before it was passed as a law. In 1967-68, the judiciary, prisons and Native Authority police were removed from the control of the Emirs and Chiefs. This dramatic change completely removed more than half of their powers; it did not, however, significantly diminish their prestige in the eyes of their subjects.

The 1976 Local Government laws removed traditional rulers completely from the functions of local government and they became only advisers.

Functions of Emirate Council. Under the Nigerian Constitution, the functions of the councils are purely advisory and include but are not limited to the following:

- (a) formulation of general proposals and advice to local government;
- (b) provision of advice on religious matters;
- (c) support for arts and culture;
- (d) chieftaincy matters and control of traditional titles and offices;
- (e) mobilisation of people for self-help projects;
- (f) assistance in the collection of levies and local revenue;
- (g) making representations to government on matters referred to council by government.

The role of district and village heads. District heads were part of the precolonial state systems in northern Nigeria and their role was modified after Nigeria became a British colony in 1900. A district head is the most senior administrator and community leader in his area, responsible for the maintenance of law and order, and collection of taxes and other revenue. District heads are expected to initiate development at local level and to mobilise people to undertake communal works to this end. They are also charged with educating people on government policy. Heads derive their authority from the councils and local government, and are appointed, disciplined and paid by the former.

Village heads work under the district heads and are expected to tour frequently and acquaint themselves with the feelings of the people. They must keep their councils and local government informed of local developments, submitting regular reports on a range of matters. District and village heads perform the role of traditional rulers in their respective communities, and command wide respect for this.

The Emirate system is the only one of its kind in the country that is aimed, in true federal spirit, at uniting people irrespective of ethnicity or religious belief. District heads, for example, are often appointed to districts different from their places of origin. At the council level, various interest groups from within the emirate meet periodically to discuss not only local issues but national issues as well. Traditional rulers act as advisers to all local government councils within their domain. Local government chairmen become ex-officio members of the councils; they have no vote but are free to take part in council debates and express their opinions.

1.5 The nature of the ruler in Islamic conceptions

Islam, with its different schools of law and internal groupings, allows for a wide variety of conceptions of authority. It is used to legitimate very different forms of government, and these are sometimes bitterly contested, as current events in the Arabian peninsula and wider Middle East region make abundantly clear. We need hardly be reminded that there is a lot of political space between the House of Saud and the aspirations of radical Islamists seeking to overthrow the rule of this and other dynasties.

To an outsider the relation between Islam and traditional rulers in northern Nigeria might at first appear to be rather simpler. The British colonial authorities certainly tried to keep it that way, despite their claims to religious impartiality:

“[...] while the British sought to legitimize their rule by maintaining a public image of neutrality towards the various Islamic groups found in Nigeria, their investment in the system of Indirect Rule required them to be supportive of those in power and to repress those who were perceived to threaten the status quo.” (Reynolds 2001: 601)

In practice this meant supporting the indigenous system of government in the north and a regional ruling class who ‘were generally descendants of the founders of the Sokoto Caliphate, and like them, were Sufi Muslims who belonged to the Qadirriya brotherhood. Thus the system of Indirect Rule obliged British colonial administrators to show a certain degree of respect for and deference to this particular state-centered form of Islam’ (Reynolds 2001: 601).

Conversely it meant suppressing the interests of other Muslim groups that had expanded considerably following the imposition of colonial rule: in particular the Mahdists, and the Tijaniyya and Sanusiyya brotherhoods. These different groups and the scholars within them have their own conceptions of political authority:

“Islam provides the grammar for political thought and a set of ideals for political conduct; those skilled in Qu’ranic studies, the mallams, are best placed to formulate political innovations and manipulate definitions of legitimacy.” (Foltz 1976: 495)

These conceptions have evolved in response to changing political circumstances and since independence have played an increasingly important role in northern Nigerian politics. Paden’s *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (1973) provides a particularly detailed account of the concepts of leadership and legitimacy espoused by different brotherhoods and how these impacted on political culture and conflicts in Kano Emirate.

Conflicts of the kind described by Paden have continued to occur throughout northern Nigeria, reflecting regional schisms within Islam as well as collective responses to interventions by different postcolonial governments (e.g. the military government’s interference in the succession to the Sokoto caliphate in 1988; cf. Last 1999: 147). And with the growth of radical Islamist organisations like Yan Izala (the Society for the Removal of Innovation and the Reinstatement of Tradition), these conflicts have increasingly come to reflect those occurring in the wider Islamic world.

1.6 Methods

The methods employed in this study are based on those outlined in the Terms of Reference:

“The study should;

1. Conduct a literature review on the origins, distribution and current legal and political status of traditional rulers in North-Central Nigeria;
2. Review the origin and evolution of the power of traditional rulers, both within a framework of Islamic law and the Nigerian legal system;
3. Design and carry out a survey of traditional rulers in areas where their power is still functional but largely undocumented. For the reasons given above, the main focus of the work will be the North Central zone of the country. The survey should interview a wide range of stakeholders, including the rulers themselves, palace officials, local politicians, security officials, and subjects of the rulers. The survey should concentrate on the following questions:
 - Where are the traditional rulers who still have recognised authority? What is the basis of that authority, and how do they exercise it? Are there case studies, with a particular focus on their role in prevention or mediation of conflict?
 - How do the affected populations rate their exercise of that power?
 - How do those rulers acquire and maintain their power?
 - How are they funded?
 - What are the constraints on that power?
 - What advice can be given to government concerning the constitutional position of traditional rulers, to enhance their role in conflict mediation and prevention?

Should donors be involved in assisting such rulers, or other engagement with them, and if so in what way?”

Materials for literature review have been drawn from libraries and archives in Nigeria and the U.K., academic and other resources available on the internet, and local publications purchased and borrowed in the course of the study. Survey work in Nigeria has been conducted by two Nigerian researchers, with training and other technical inputs provided by U.K.-based researchers. The survey is based on a sample of emirates and chiefdoms in all of the states in the study area. We have sampled as many of the large and nationally important emirates and chiefdoms as possible together with a selection of the smaller ones. Within each of these traditional units semi-structured interviews have been conducted with office holders and other key informants at different levels of the hierarchy, from the emir or paramount chief down to village and ward heads and including ordinary men and women. Certain topics - e.g. the role of radical or reformist Islamist organisations - have also been singled out for special attention.

Two pilot case studies were undertaken at the beginning of the fieldwork in Nigeria and detailed training notes and guidance prepared on this basis. These are available in a separate report, *The Role of Traditional Rulers in Conflict Prevention and Mediation in Nigeria: Notes on Research Methodology* (November 2005), accompanied by powerpoint presentations on photographic and other techniques (included on the CD-ROM *Resources for Understanding Conflict in Nigeria: Studies conducted 2003-06*, produced for DFID by Mallam Dendo Ltd. in March 2006).

2. Traditional leadership institutions in north and central Nigeria

2.1 Introduction

The geography of the domains of traditional rulers in north and central Nigeria is the outcome of a combination of factors affecting the attainment of statehood in precolonial times through to the present

dispensation of democratic rule set up in 1999. Such factors include the motives of founders of the institutions in prehistoric times, modifications during the colonial period, impact of government policies during the first republic of 1960-66, usurpation of power between 1966-75, the local government reforms of 1976, the proliferation of new domains, and the current national debate on the review and amendment of the 1999 constitution. Table 1 list the principal traditional domains in northern Nigeria.

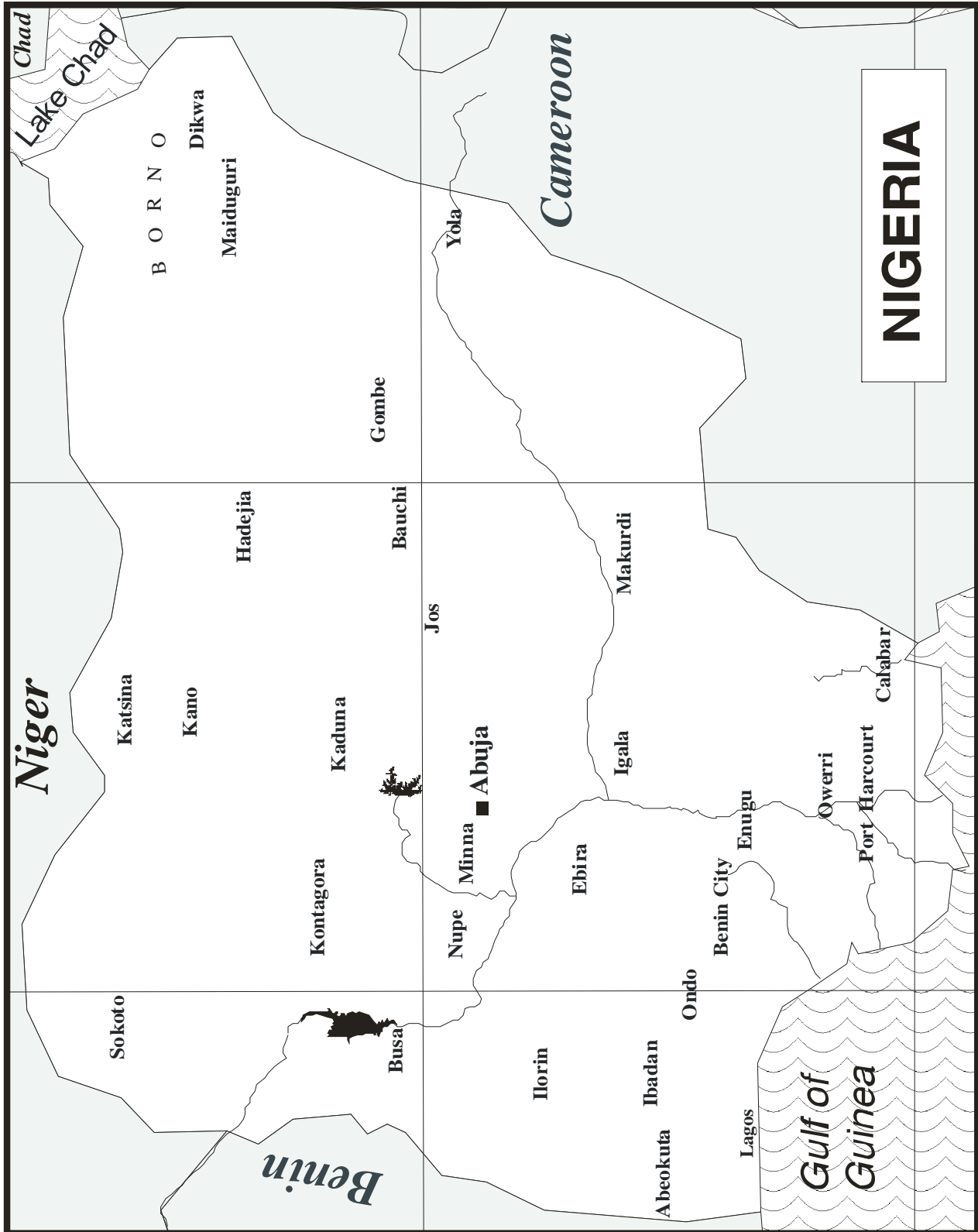
Table 1. Emirates and Chiefdoms in Northern Nigeria

State	Traditional Islamic Emirates	Non-Islamic Chiefdom
Adamawa		
Bauchi	Bauchi, Dass, Katagum, Misau and Ningi	-
Benue	-	Tiv and Idoma
Borno		
Gombe	Gombe, Nafada, Dukku, Pindiga	Tangale, Kaltungo, Shongom, Balanga
Jigawa	Dutse, Hadejia, Gumel and Kazaure	-
Kaduna	Zazzau, Birnin Gwari	
Kano	Kano	-
Katsina	Katsina and Daura	-
Kebbi	Gwandu and Zuru	-
Kogi	-	Igala, Ebira, Lokoja, Kabba
Kwara	Ilorin	
Nasarawa	Lafia, Keffi, Nasarawa	Eggon, Doma, Awe, Kokona, Toto, Mada, Migili, Wamba
Niger	Minna, Bida, Kontagora, Suleja, Borgu	-
Plateau	Wase and Kanam	Berom, Ngas, Izere, Tarok, Goemai, Mushere, Pan, Mwaghavul, Ron-Kulere, Kwo, Tel and others ¹
Sokoto	Sultanate	-
Taraba	Muri, Gashaka	Jukun
Yobe	Fika, Bedde, Damaturu, Potiskum	-
Zamfara		
Federal Capital Territory		

Some states have a mixture of both Islamic and non-Islamic systems. Figure 1 shows the main towns and locations of traditional chiefdoms featured in the text;

¹ There are over 300 chiefdoms in the state and only 1st Class ones are listed here.

Figure 1. Main towns and locations of traditional chiefdoms featured in the text



2.2 Hausa/Fulbe

2.2.1 Introduction

The Sultan of Sokoto functions primarily as the paramount leader of the traditional institution in Sokoto state. However, his supreme authority transcends territorial boundaries as the overall leader of all Muslims in Nigeria. In the latter role he is assisted by the Shehu of Borno in recognition of the long history of Islam in Kanem-Borno predating the arrival of the religion in Hausaland and the Fulbe states. The hierarchical structure of traditional rulership in the core Hausa and Fulani states is as follows:

Emir/Lamido (Paramount Ruler in-charge of one or more LGAs)
District Head (= Hakimi, a traditional ruler in charge of one or more village areas)
Village Area Head (= Dakaci)
Ward Head (= Mai Ungwar)

These rulers function basically as government appointees and are subject to the rules and regulations of the civil service. However, they have the liberty to appoint functional officials and honorary titleholders who automatically become advisors to the ruler.

2.2.2 Sokoto Sultanate, Sokoto state

Amongst the emirates of Northern Nigeria, Sokoto is one of the most prestigious. This is as a result of the Jihad under Uthman Dan Fodio and the consequent establishment of the Fulbe Empire of Sokoto. It is from this history that the Sultan of Sokoto derives both his title of Sarkin Musulmi, the Commander of the Faithful, and his status as the most senior of the first class chiefs in Northern Nigeria.

During the field visit to Sokoto, the current Sultan of Sokoto (Alh. Muhammed Maccido) met with us before directing the senior councillor of the Sultanate to continue. Interviews were conducted in Wamako, Kuane, Goronyo, Rabbah and Isah districts. Some village ward heads were interviewed too. Discussions were also held with subjects of the rulers at different levels in order to capture their feelings towards the traditional rulers. Different regalia were observed and photographed; the paraphernalia displayed in the Sultan's palace and on ceremonial occasions are still important symbols of power in the Sultanate.

The Sokoto caliphate which disseminated and spread Islam to all of the northern states and parts of southern Nigeria has today been reduced to the smallest administrative unit. Nonetheless, the Sultan is still recognised as the voice of the Muslim community in Northern Nigeria, and he is the president of Jama'atul Nasral Islam (JNI), the officially recognized body that oversees Islam in Nigeria. The Sultan announces the sighting of the moon to mark the month of Ramadan and the beginning and end of the annual fast. He is also consulted on other Islamic matters that affect the nation.

The role of the Sultan is recognised at national level, as well as in the Sultanate itself. This has important implications for the success of traditional rulers elsewhere in the country. He has appealed to Muslims nationwide to be calm during periods of national crisis. For instance, when the impending Miss World Beauty pageant led to severe crisis in Kaduna, the Sultan appealed for calm and met with Muslim leaders to contain the situation. The Sultan has likewise mediated in other crises by meeting with different groups and government functionaries; e.g. during the Tafawa-Balewa, Jos, Kafanchan and Zangon-Kataf crises in Bauchi, Plateau and Kaduna states.

Before the fragmentation of Sokoto state into the present Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states in 1991 and 1996, the Sultan still had a fairly large domain, but today his image is enhanced by his national role. When conflict erupted between two Islamic sects (the Shiites and Izala) in 2005 the Sultan had to act and supported his councillors and district heads in ending the crisis.

The interference of government in deciding who should be appointed the Sultan after the reign of Sultan Abubakar III resulted in a decline in respect and authority. When Alh. Ibrahim Dasuki was installed as the Sultan by a military junta it was like a slap in the face for the institution of the sultanate. However, another military administration deposed Alhaji Dasuki and installed the present Sultan of Sokoto Alh. Muhammadu Maccido. This led to division among the sultanate subjects, some of whom today have no respect for a Sultan they do not support. Deposition of traditional rulers is becoming a common phenomenon across the country. For instance the Emir of Kano, (Sanusi) was deposed in 1964, the Emirs of Muri, Bida and Agai were deposed in 1980s and Chief of Numan (Adamawa State) and Gwandu (Kebbi state) were deposed in the 2000s. Government tried to justify each of these acts.

However, in spite of the wrangling in the Sultanate palace, district, village and ward heads and councillors still tackle issues affecting their communities. For instance, it was found that marriage disputes are settled by rulers at different levels. Land disputes and inheritance disputes are common within the Sultanate and traditional rulers play an important role in settling these too.

2.2.3 Argungu and Gwandu Emirates, Kebbi state

Kebbi state, which was created from the old Sokoto state in 1991, now has four Emirates. These include the historic Gwandu, Argungu, Zuru and Yanni Emirates. During the fieldwork, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates were sampled and interviews conducted with various groups in different locations. The Emir of Argungu (Alh. Mahammadu Meua) was interviewed; likewise some councillors and district, village and ward heads. Some fisherman, farmers, and leaders of pastoral groups were also interviewed. In Gwandu Emirate, interviews amongst farmers and pastoral groups were conducted at Wandu-Sulei in Daliyam District, Jega in Jega district and Kola in Kebbi district.

Northern Kebbi state has experienced several conflicts between farmer and pastoral groups especially on *fadama* lands. While attempts have been made by the traditional rulers to bring about peace within the Emirates, some district heads were accused of favouring crop farmers against the pastoral groups. The Emir of Argungu frowned at this attitude and suspended some local rulers as a result of their negative attitude to pastoral groups. Peace committees were set up in 2005 to tackle the increasing threat to peace caused by conflict between crop farmers and pastoralists. The district head of Augil has also been active as the chairman of the Niger-Nigeria Border peace-making committee.

The committees have evolved a strategy and drawn up dry season crop residue grazing calendar similar to those used in Hadejia and Katsina Emirates in Jigawa and Katsina states. The traditional ruler peace committees monitor and supervise the implementation of the plans closely. Although occasional problems still occur, the experience has been that there were fewer conflicts between the two groups in 2005 than there were in the whole of the past decade.

The situation was different in Daliyam and Kebbi districts. At the time of research visit tense relations obtained between crop farmers and pastoralists because the Kebbi state authorities had taken over the grazing lands of the pastoral groups for a cassava project. This has created tension and the traditional rulers are losing respect from pastoralists who see them as sympathising with government policy. Apparently many decisions in recent times have been taken without reference to the rulers and this has resulted in chaos and disorder. Similar situations were seen in Hadejia and Dutse Emirate in Jigawa State and Mallam Sidi, Gombe Emirate of Gombe State. Where traditional rulers are ignored in decision-making processes, the result is generally one of crisis.

In Jega district, pastoralists reported extortions by the police in cases of crop damage. The intervention of the district head of Jega reported the matter to the Gwandu Emirate council at Birnin-Kebbi, which in turn reported the case to the Kebbi State Commissioner of Police. This earned the Divisional Police officer immediate redeployment and led to other rank and file being punished. Family matters, disputes between neighbours, disputes about farm plots, marriage disputes, allegations of witchcraft, assaults on women and

girls, market disputes, minor pilfering and the like are cases that are still handled on a daily basis by the traditional institutions at various levels.

2.2.4 Zazzau Emirate, Kaduna state

Kaduna state is noted for a high incidence of ethno-religious conflicts, more than any other state in the country. Over the past two decades the state has experienced the following serious crises: Kafanchan, Zangon–Kataf (twice), Kaduna (five times), Kasuwan-Magarni, Soba, Birin–Gwari, Yar Kasuwa and Saminaka. Of these only Soba and Yar Kasuwa crises were in connection with chieftaincy disputes and the rest were ethno-religious in nature.

In all of these crises, the Emir of Zazzau and the Zazzau Emirate Council have been in the forefront of efforts to prevent and mediate conflict. The Emir has appeared in the media calling for his subjects to end violence. Emergency meetings have been held between the Emir and his council, district heads, religious leaders, government functionaries, elders in the communities and security agents. The non-partisan and active role played by the Emir earned him respect not only among his subjects and in the local and state governments but also at federal level.

At the same time the creation of many separate chiefdoms in southern Kaduna has confined the territory of Zazzau into a small unit. The territorial jurisdiction of the Emir is now reduced to perhaps a quarter of what it used to be. The only consolation for the Emir is the recognition and respect he has already earned at the highest level of government. A major problem for traditional rulers at all levels is the lack of clear definition of their role in the constitution. Agitation for this dominated our discussions at different levels in Zazzau.

Zazzau was one of the original seven Hausa states of northern Nigeria. The Hausa rulers of Zazzau (Zaria) are said to have converted to Islam in the mid-15th or early 16th century. They remained in power until being swept aside in the Fulani jihad of 1804. The new Fulani Emirate of Zazzau became a vassal state of the Sokoto Empire with several vassals of its own. It was brought under British rule in 1903 and later reorganized as a Native Authority (N.A.). The number of districts in the emirate was progressively reduced during the early colonial period: by 1934 it had been cut from 32 to 17 (Hogben & Kirk-Greene 1966: 215-237).

There are good published sources on the history and administrative development of the emirate through to the early decades of independence. M. G. Smith's (1960) monograph on *Government in Zazzau 1800-1950* is a detailed study of changes in political structure before and during British rule. A. D. Yahaya's (1980) *The Native Authority System in Northern Nigeria 1950-70* describes and analyses political developments in Zaria from the final decade of British rule through to the second decade of independence (despite its title it includes discussion of the local government reforms of 1976).

The colonial period: the final days of Indirect Rule

The studies by Smith (1960) and Yahaya (1980) provide detailed information on the administration of Zaria in 1950. The principal administrative officer in Zaria Province was its British Resident, who was responsible for maintaining law and order and good government. A Senior District Officer (D.O.) and a number of Assistant District Officers (A.D.Os) who were also concerned with the maintenance of law and order as well as a range of economic duties, including tax assessment and the promotion of agricultural and infrastructural development, assisted him.

The centre of power in the N.A. was the Emir, who was both morally and legally responsible for the well being of the people in his area. The Emir's Advisory Council assisted him, whose members he usually appointed from amongst the top echelon of the N.A. The Emir was the only person in the emirate formally allowed to contribute to policy-making at higher levels, and to this end attended the Annual Conference of Chiefs in northern Nigeria in addition to meeting regularly with the Resident.

Yahaya argues that British support for the Emir was such that they were prepared to turn a blind eye to the real causes of conflict:

“Thus the Provincial Administration consistently supported the N.A. during a wave of political crises in the southern districts of the Emirate in the 1940s. The official explanation for these crises was to attribute them partly to inadequate supervision, or inadequate touring by administrative officers, and partly to the laxity of control of the N.A., but never to the genuine demands by the people for improved social and political conditions.” (Yahaya 1980: 8)

This example suggests that the maintenance of the political status quo, including the authority of the Emir and the N.A., took precedence over the solution of conflicts that questioned it.

The Emir’s political influence was further enhanced by his economic status: he was a large landowner and perhaps the richest individual in the emirate. He also collected a large salary and allowance from the administration and controlled appointments to the N.A. and therefore access to the social and economic benefits that this could bring.

A typical N.A. would be organized into the following departments: central administration, treasury, district administration, village administration, police, prisons, education, medicine and health, welfare services, and miscellaneous services. The N.A. was divided into districts under appointed district heads. Technical departments – principally agriculture, veterinary medicine, forestry, medicine and health - were duplicated at district level.

The N.A. enjoyed a monopoly over the instruments of coercion – the police, courts and prisons. Most cases were heard in the courts of the *Alkali* (indigenous judges) or, in non-Muslim areas, in tribal courts. The N.A. with the approval of the Resident appointed all Alkali, and they could be readily dismissed by the N.A. This compromised the independence of the local judiciary and further reinforced the local political dominance of the N.A.

Within the N.A. social status was closely linked to title holding and rank in the political hierarchy: royal officials enjoyed the highest status and members of the occupational guilds the lowest. All officers of state possessed symbols of their status in society, for example a corps of clients, a retinue of eulogists, or a team of drummers. The Emir had certain exclusive status symbols for he alone is to be accompanied by a *kakaki* (long trumpet) player, and the state *tambura* (drums) was kept inside his palace.

A system of clientele penetrated every level of Hausa society and this enhanced the political domination of authority. The Emir was the chief patron and all other members of society were in effect his clients. This at least was the case in the Hausa-Fulani dominated districts of northern Zaria. The southern districts were ethnically diverse and less directly under central control. They were also less prosperous economically and this generated a sense of deprivation that led to increasing resistance to the N.A. system.

‘Democratization’ before independence

The principle of Indirect Rule under the British created a political coalition between the N.A. and the Provincial Administration, and this remained unchallenged for much of the period before World War II. In the early 1950s this situation began to change, following wider developments in British colonial policy that were influenced by the socialist politics of the post-war period and the changing international context. Although some British commentators argued that the existing N.A. system could become the primary basis for Nigerian self-government, the prevailing view was that the N.As should be developed as agencies of democratic local government and integrated into a parliamentary system of government. This approach questioned the authority of traditional rulers but came some way towards meeting the aspirations of the emerging regional elites and the new political parties that they were joining.

The Native Authority Law of 1954 established the new system of local government which succeeded Indirect Rule, although some reforms preceded its enactment. The new law was a compromise which both

recognized the importance of chiefs and provided for popular participation in local government. Participatory local government was to be achieved through the democratization of councils at village, district and central levels. In practice most N.A. council members – only some of whom were elected - remained loyal to their chiefs and traditional authority.

Zaria was no exception to this rule. Zaria N.A. had revived the post of *Waziri* in 1951, giving it to the Chief *Alkali*, a non-royalist. Five new educated members of council were appointed in 1953, but this had little impact on the balance of power and general allegiance to the Emir. By 1960 only three of 18 council members came from outside the N.A. organization and the Emir's control was such that council decisions were always unanimous and never went to a vote. And although Zaria had led the way in creating subordinate councils, most of these were deliberative bodies with no power to authorize expenditure. The N.A. remained dominant in both urban and rural areas despite the establishment of participatory local government.

The problem of southern Zaria, however, required government intervention. In 1953 representatives of the districts petitioned the Minister for Local Government and demanded a role in their own administration. In 1957 three districts (Kwoi, Moroa, and Kagoro) were detached from the Zaria N.A. to form a new administrative division with Jema'a. Following this four predominantly non-Muslim districts (Zangon Katab, Kagarko, Kacia, and Kajuru) benefited from a change of N.A. policy encouraging qualified locals to enter N.A. service, and political resistance to the emirate weakened there after 1960.

The post-colonial period

Increasing government control under the First Republic, 1960-66

Following independence the government moved to establish greater political control at local level. In 1961 the N.A. law was amended to require that government approve key N.A. appointments. The Provincial Administration Law of 1962 provided for the replacement of the Residents by Provincial Commissioners who were appointed by the Regional Premiers. In the same year the Nigerian People's Congress (NPC) government of Northern Region issued an order which made it clear that it saw chiefs as fulfilling an essentially symbolic role.

Although they still possessed important functions in local government it was difficult for traditional rulers and the N.As to resist increasing subordination to the government. Zaria N.A. fell increasingly under the control of the Provincial Administration and the NPC government, a development that was facilitated by the pro-NPC attitude of Muhammadu Aminu, who had succeeded as Emir in 1959.

Transformation of the N.A. system under military rule, 1966-79

At the time of the first military coup in January 1966 there were 70 N.A.s in Nigeria, 54 of which were associated with chiefs and 16 composed by councils. Younger men who were less committed to the N.A. system than their predecessors but more dedicated to tackling national political issues dominated the new military leadership. In May 1967 the four regional governments were replaced by 12 states, six of them covering northern Nigeria: Benue Plateau, Kano, Kwara, North Central, North East, and North West. The reorganization of local government and other measures reducing N.A. powers followed.

Key law and order functions were removed from the N.As by stripping them of their control over courts and the police. In April 1968 the administration of justice at local level was taken over by the government when Area Courts were established to replace the previous Native Courts. Following an earlier recommendation, the N.A. Police were also taken over and integrated into the national police force (a process that was still underway in 1970).

The military regime also sought to undermine the political influence wielded by the N.As. so that popular loyalty shifted towards the state governments. In the early years of military control the N.As were allowed only a minimal role in the wider political process and its newly created legislative apparatus. The Military

Governor of Northern Nigeria announced that N.A. staff was to be denied active participation in party politics and excluded from holding political office.

Two local government reorganizations were undertaken and implemented by the military government. The first was carried out on a state basis. The term 'Native Authority' was everywhere replaced. In North Central State the N.As became 'Local Authorities' (L.As) and all of the councils became 'chiefs-and-council', meaning that chiefs had to abide by majority council decisions. LA councils were also required to have a majority of elected members. Two-thirds of the new Zaria L.A. Council was elected and many old council members with royal connections were replaced.

In North Central State these changes were reinforced by the creation of an additional tier of government between the L.As and the districts, the Area Councils. In April 1970 three Administrative Areas were established in the emirate: Zaria, Saminaka, and Kacia. An attempt was made to group culturally related districts together and the Zaria Administrative Area was by far the largest of them. The new councils were given financial independence from the L.A. and allocated most of the major functions relating to the provision of social and welfare services in their areas.

In February 1976 the number of states was increased from 12 to 19 and North Central State was renamed Kaduna State. The second local government reorganization was carried out nationwide in the same year. Local governments were strengthened as a third tier of government independent of the states, autonomous units within the federal structure. All of the emirates including Zaria were allowed to establish Emirate Councils, but executive powers were clearly vested in new Local Government Councils which were conceived as being composed of representatives of the people with an elected majority. Zaria Emirate (and the old N.A.) was divided into four Local Government Authorities (L.G.As): Ikara, Zaria, Saminaka, and Kacia. Each of these had a full set of functions covering the maintenance of law and order, economic development, and the provision of services to the local population.

The Emirate Council was conceived largely as an advisory body:

“The Emirate Council has been assigned the responsibility of holding chieftaincy, traditional and customary matters. Under the new local government system the Emir has certain specific responsibilities including the settlement of crises, the maintenance of law and order, assistance in tax and rate collection and the compilation of nominal rolls, the settlement of disputes and to provide leadership to the people, especially in national activities. Despite these responsibilities emirs have been insulated from politics to the extent that even minor chiefs with territorial responsibility have been prevented from contesting elections. What is significant is that the indigenous political class which under the old N.A. was the most powerful group in the local area is now gradually losing control to a popularly elected group.” (Yahaya 1980: 211)

Reference to “the settlement of crises” as one of the specific responsibilities of the Emir should be noted here.

Subsequent developments in local government

The basic functions of the Emirate Council appear to have changed relatively little since the 1976 reform: it remains a largely advisory body with the Emir at its head. But since the 1970s there has been a considerable reorganization of administrative units. When the current Emir came to power in February 1975 he inherited 16 districts. The creation of Katsina State in 1987 was followed by local demands for the re-establishment of older districts in Zaria, a change supported by the Emir. The eventual result of this process was that the number of districts increased to 38 (covering 337 villages), a proliferation seen as beneficial to the emirate.

Other changes were viewed as negative. Following the Zangon Kataf crisis, four additional chiefdoms were created in 1996: Jaba, Agwam Bajju, Agwam Atyp, and Ikulu. The Emir was reportedly unhappy with these excisions, but was not in a position to criticize the then military government openly. In order to survive

successive regimes and their different policies and interventions, traditional rulers have often had to hold their counsel in this way, and the Emir of Zazzau has been no exception in this respect.

The Emir and the Emirate Council

The current Emir, Alhaji Shehu Idris CFR, enjoys a considerable reputation for his role as a peacemaker and mediator both inside and outside of Zazzau Emirate. Although Zazzau does not rank as one of the most senior of northern emirates, nonetheless many people regard its present ruler as the most active and experienced Emir in the national arena. Shehu Idris was born in 1936 into the Katsinawa dynasty, one of four that traditionally provide candidates for the position of Emir of Zazzau (*Sarkin Zazzau*). Before his accession to the throne he served for many years in the Zaria N.A., rising to become the District Head of Zaria and Kewaye (the *Danmadamin Zazzau*) in 1973. He also worked as the Private Secretary of Alhaji Muhammadu Aminu, the Emir who had ruled since 1959. When the latter died in February 1975, Shehu Idris was one of 15 candidates for the throne reportedly considered by the Council of Kingmakers (*Masu Zaben Sarki*, currently numbering five). He was chosen partly on the basis of his personal merit and experience, and installed on 11 April 1975 with the approval of the state government.

The biography (hagiography) of the Emir by Dalhatu and Hassan (2000) provides a glowing account of his life and character and good deeds while in office. The Emir is described as a learned and committed Muslim, a “Grand Patron” of Jama’atu Nasril Islam, and a “modernist” who has worked tirelessly to promote social and economic development in the emirate while also taking care to revive some of its cultural traditions. He is depicted as a benevolent and popular ruler, sometimes distributing grain from his own farms to his subjects. But he has also faced criticism at times: notably in the immediate aftermath of his selection as Emir in 1975 and later, during the oil shortages in 1993, when he was accused of being a black marketeer.

According to his biographers the Emir endured these attacks with patience and responded magnanimously. Indeed such has been his general approach to difficult political questions:

“On the traditional power, he ventured into the realm of decentralisation of districts administration. The background objective was to bring people closer to the main stream of administration. He created new districts and appointed indigenes who had no royal background, to man them. In fact as a modernist, he lucidly pointed to the nation that appointment of *Hakimai* is not hereditary but based on merit. This endeared him to the vast majority of people. He further extended the privilege of offering traditional leadership to other ethnic groups residing in the Emirate. His unity in diversity policy endeared him to people and brought talented people into the realm of his administration. This heroic innovation won him the respect, love, loyalty and friendship of many ethnic groups both in and outside the Emirate.” (Dalhatu & Hassan 2000: 108-109)

The Emir has mediated religious disputes in the same conciliatory spirit:

“The 1970s was a decade of tense relationship between Muslim groups in Nigeria. The earlier decades particularly 1950s and 1960s were characterised by disputes among the Sufi groups, especially between the followers of *Quadiriyya* and *Tijjaniyya Sufi* orders. The emergence of *Izalatul Bidi’a-wa Iquamatis Sunna* aggravated the already tensed situation. The level of disputes between Muslims became a source of concern to many people, ... particularly the traditional rulers who exercise spiritual functions in society. His Highness had from the onset realized his central role. He settles countless disputes that arise from time to time. He embraces all the religious groups. He is a firm believer in the strong unity of the Muslims and always cautions against anything that might instigate disunity among Muslims.

Currently, the Emir’s palace is visited by a number of Islamic Scholars including the Imams from various groups and sects. Whenever a problem arises among the Muslims, the Emir normally assembles Islamic scholars to iron out their differences and reach a consensus on what to do. The Emir hated most any religious controversy that might lead to serious conflict or misfortune among Muslims.

Apart from promoting unity among Muslims, Alhaji Shehu Idris has excelled in maintaining peace and harmony among Muslims and Christians in the Emirate. It should be borne in mind that Zazzau Emirate is composed of a multitude of tribes with different religious beliefs. The Emir had accepted the

cultural diversity of his Emirate and appointed Christians as district heads in areas where majority of the inhabitants are Christians. He does this in the interest of peace and harmony.” (Dalhatu & Hassan 2000: 146-147)

The test of this has been the role that the Emir has played in managing serious community conflicts:

“The leadership qualities of the Emir of Zazzau Alhaji Shehu Idris can be clearly illustrated in some episodes which occurred in and outside the Emirate. For instance, the 1992 Zangon Kataf ethno-religious crises, which resulted in killing hundreds of people and destruction of properties, is one of such episodes. But the intervention of the Emir arrested the widespread of the ugly situation. A call for revenge by a large crowd of people in Zaria was calmed by the address of the Emir. The Emir addressed the aggrieved crowd in what appeared to be one of the most challenging situations in his life. He appealed to the people to be calm and tolerant, cautioned against violence and its unwanted consequences. He enjoined them to always remember their rich traditions of perseverance and self-control in order to ensure that peace and stability are maintained. According to the Emir, without peace and understanding in the society there could be no mutual confidence and the life of people would become insecure. The Emir promised to put their case before the government for necessary action. When the crowd eventually dispersed, the Emir drove straight to Kaduna without escort to discuss with the authorities so as to ensure that normalcy was restored quickly. He remained busy for days making necessary contacts with all concerned until peace and normalcy were fully restored in the state.” (Dalhatu & Hassan 2000: 109-110)

The Emir has served on many regional and national bodies, including some dealing specifically with the role of traditional rulers:

“In recognition of the importance of His Highness by the Government and his myriad of achievements, particularly his selfless service to the Nation, many regimes in Nigeria appointed the incumbent Emir of Zazzau to serve in many committees set-up from time to time. He was selected in 1996 as one of the eminent and much respected elder statesmen in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and a keen lover of peace, tranquillity and also an advocate of National Unity to serve in the Traditional Rulers Consultative Committee. One of the committee’s terms of reference was to critically look into the pressing issues affecting the country and other International matters in relation to foreign policy.” (Dalhatu & Hassan 2000: 151)

As reported by his biographers,

“The Emir has established a cordial working relationship with almost all the traditional rulers in Nigeria, all with a view to promoting the unity and protecting the sovereignty of Nigeria as a single political entity. He is a firm believer in the positive roles that traditional institutions in Nigeria could play in the maintenance of peace, stability and unity of the country. This view was clearly expressed by the Emir, in his welcome address on the occasion of the visit of the Oba of Benin, Omo N’oba Erediawa to Zaria when he said:

“The indispensable function of traditional rulers in Nigeria is a catalyst for the Unity and progress of Nigeria... The main responsibilities assigned to the traditional institution is that of unifying and promoting better understanding among the people by speaking with one voice, among others.”

In this particular address, the Emir of Zazzau reaffirmed his commitment to the unity of all the social groups in Nigeria. He regards all as members of one large family. This is why people always take their problems to him and receive prompt action or advice from him.” (Dalhatu & Hassan 2000: 110-111)

The Emir’s views on the past, present and possible future roles of traditional rulers in Nigeria have been clearly set out in a number of public addresses and debates. One of these is a paper on traditional leadership in Nigeria submitted by the Emir to a conference in the Sudan in 1995. Another is his opening contribution to a roundtable discussion on ‘The Role of Traditional Rulers in Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution’ that took place during the peace conference convened by the Northern Governors’ Forum (NGF) in Kaduna on 1-2 December 2004.

In an interview in 1999 the Emir described his contemporary role in government as follows:

“...we have on the whole, seventeen (17) Local Governments under Zazzau Emirate. As a result of that, I was appointed Chairman of Council of Chiefs. We hold meetings monthly or if there is any need or if there is anything we feel like inviting a meeting, I convene the meeting. The role of the council of chiefs under the Nigerian Constitution is only advisory to the State, Federal Government and any other organisation that we feel by giving it advice; it will assist our people at the grass-root level. Based on these, we give a lot of advice to government.

Apart from that, under the Nigerian constitution, we have the National Council of State where we serve as members. Only the Chairman of the Council of Chiefs attends the meeting of the National Council of State along with retired or outgoing Heads of State of Nigeria, retired Chief Justices of the Federation and the State Governors. This is also another advisory committee which is under the presidency, and is under the Nigerian Constitution. And we continue in our own ways to advise local governments within our domain because under Edict of the state, all Chairmen of Local Governments when elected under the democratic system, by virtue of their offices, are also members of the Emirate Council. If there is any local government making headway in any of the developmental aspects, then others will borrow a leaf, when we hold meetings. We can hold meeting at any time; as I said, our role is mainly advisory, so we advise the local governments as well. If we see where they are going wrong we draw their attention. We normally advise them and remind them on what they should do and if they still want us to give them advice on any matter, they liaise with us.

In each Local Government, we have a Security Committee, represented at these Local Government Security Committees are District Heads as well. There is another Security Committee at state level in which I represent the Council of Chiefs. In each state, the paramount leader, or paramount traditional ruler who is the Chairman of the Council of Chiefs is a member of the State Security Committee. We give advice to ensure that law and order are properly maintained from the grassroots up to the national level. These are some of the roles we played apart from our appointments.” (Interview dated 21st February 1999, in Dalhatu & Hassan 2000: 168-169)

Further details were collected during our research in an interview with Alhaji Ahmadu Fatika, the Sarkin Padan Zazzau, one of the Emir’s senior councillors. He listed the full and part-time advisors of the Emir, together with the five kingmakers who are eligible to elect a new Emir when the post is vacant. Some of the kingmakers are also councillors to the Emir. The full time members of the council report to the palace every day to discuss matters affecting the Emirate. The part-time members attend meetings as and when invited by the Emir, especially during emergency cases. Although each councillor holds a portfolio, they can also be assigned to handle other affairs.

When crucial matters such as conflict arise within the Emirate, some councillors are dispatched immediately to assess the situation and report back to council for further instructions and action. The district, village and ward heads in whose domains conflict has erupted are put on alert to communicate with their subjects. The councillor (Sarkin-Fada) recalled that when the Kafanchan religious crisis began in 1987 an emergency meeting was held to discuss the possibility that the conflict might spread to the Emirate and to consider what actions were to be taken if it did.

The councillor attributes the ability of the Emir to prevent and mediate major conflicts to his family background and personal ability. Zazzau Emirate has four potential ruling houses and the Emir is selected from one of them. When the post is declared vacant, the kingmakers meet and deliberate before choosing the most suitable candidate. According to the councillor, a transparent and honest process produced the present Emir of Zazzau, who has now spent many years on the throne. The Emir is from a decent family, trusted and respected by his subjects. He also received sound Islamic and western education, and spent some time in public service. The councillor argues that these qualities have contributed to the Emir’s successes dealing with conflict situations. The experience and abilities of the Emir’s councillors may also be an important factor. The Sarkin-Fada himself rose from being a classroom teacher to become, at different times, Minister of Finance, Agriculture, Health, Social Welfare and Information in the Northern Regional Government led by Ahmadu Bello. He also served as councillor to two of the present Emir’s predecessors.

Following nominations by the district heads the Emir also appoints all the Imams of Friday mosques, and they are turbaned by him or by a councillor delegated to perform this task. The Emir has successfully reconciled the various Islamic sects - Izala, Darika and Shiites - through dialogue and continuous mediation. Their leaders have on several occasions met with Emir in his palace to discuss matters affecting them.

Local government

The research team travelled to Rahma district, about 40 km from Zaria, to conduct interviews with district, village and ward heads. The local government has a security committee which meets twice a month to review the security situation. Members of the committee for Soba LG include:

- Chairman of the LG (also chairman of the committee)
- Divisional Police Officer
- State Security Services
- Criminal Investigation Department
- All eight district heads
- Councillor for Chieftaincy & Religious Affairs
- Councillor for Security
- Coordinators for Religious Affairs
- Two Imams
- Two Pastors
- Councillor for Land
- Three Sole Administrators of Development Areas
- Chairman and Secretary of the Cattle Breeders' Association
- Security Adviser
- Chairman of Civil Defence
- Legal Adviser (secretary of the committee)

The LG also has a standing sub-committee on Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs whose members are as follows:

- Vice-Chairman of the LG (committee chairman)
- Councillor for Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs
- Secretary Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs
- District Head Soba
- District Head Richifa
- Liman Soba
- Pastor Tudun Saibu
- Sole Administrator Yakasai Development Area
- Adviser Religious Affairs
- Two local politicians
- Assistant Legal Adviser (committee secretary)

The main function of the committee is tackling problems relating to Religious and Chieftaincy Affairs. Matters are tabled in the committee for deliberation and resolution. Cases that cannot be settled are referred to the main committee for further consideration. The committee holds bi-monthly meetings. It had, for example, been able to resolve a dispute surrounding preaching by Shiites.

2.2.5 Kano Emirate, Kano state

The Emir of Kano is similarly trusted and highly respected by his subjects and indeed the whole nation. In times of civil disturbances, his help is usually sought by the government to calm frayed nerves. In Kano state he is seen as the ‘father’ of all the residents. The court of Kano interprets government policies and conveys these to the grassroots through the traditional emirate channels of communication. The court also mobilises people to participate effectively in government programmes, and for this reason national and foreign dignitaries frequently visit to the Emir to solicit his support for their various programmes.

Religion-based protests, which often end up in riots, are not uncommon in Kano. Political and religious leaders often blame these on bands of hoodlums who operate under various names: Yan Darba (invincibles who believe that their bodies are impregnable to metal), Yan Daure (housebreakers or robbers), and Yan Dauka Amariya (rapists). From time to time the Emirate council fishes out members of these gangs and hands them over to the police for prosecution. Otherwise various religious and ethnic groups – Hausa, Fulani, Lebanese, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, and others live peaceably side by side in Kano.

In the precolonial period, Kano Emirate was organized along feudal lines. The Emirate was divided into districts and each district was further split into villages. Each village was made up of wards. At the apex of the system was Sarkin Kano, the Emir, who was assisted by the *Hakimai* (district heads). Below the village heads were the ward heads who controlled the local peasants. These Emirate functionaries represented Sarkin Kano in their respective territories. They paid homage to the Emir in recognition of his supreme state powers. Tributary gifts were collected from farmers’ harvests and a portion of these retained by traditional rulers at different levels.

Since the creation of Kano state in 1966, an Emirate council has been in place with the Emir as its chairman. The council advises government on religious, cultural and security matters. It also serves as an instrument for interpreting government policies and disseminating information from the state government to the grassroots. It also functions to promote Islam and by helping to maintain law and order within its territory. The Emir holds courts daily to confer with dignitaries and interest groups, and to adjudicate minor civil cases.

During fieldwork in Kano state, the representative of the Emir of Kano, some district, village and ward heads were interviewed. Leaders of Yan Daba (magicians) and Sarkin Bambadawa (traditional musicians) were also interviewed and we participated in the 2006 Sallah Id-el Kabir celebrations. The present Emir of Kano, His Royal Highness Alh. (Dr.) Ado Bayero, is one of the most powerful leaders in Northern Nigeria. When the then administration of Abubakar Rimi (Governor of Kano State during the 2nd Republic, 1979-1983,) tried to subvert the authority of the Emir, his subjects rose up against the government, and in the riot that ensued the Secretary to the Kano state government was killed.

During the 1st Republic (1960-1966), the civilian administration in Kano was instituted by the leftists. The Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) won and ruled Kano State. The administration of the 2nd Republic (1979-1983) under the Peoples’ Redemption Party (PRP) was equally a leftist party. Both administrations criticised traditional institutions and attempted to subvert the powers of traditional rulers. However, the strong historical roots of traditional institutions in Kano generated stiff resistance from their subjects. The legacy of this can be seen in the respect still accorded to traditional rulers and the paraphernalia and customs associated with them. The Sallah id-el-Kabir celebrations and homage paid to the Emir by district heads and other traditional titleholders demonstrate the strength, power and respect accorded to the traditional institution.

The long military rule in Nigeria contributed to strengthening the Emirate council in Kano. The military supported the council through the provision of expensive cars, buildings, and the furnishing of palaces in addition to financial support.

Kano Emirate is home to both Tijjaniya and Quadiriyya sects, which are still headquartered in Kano. These Islamic sects are firmly supporters of the traditional institutions and in turn enjoy the support of the Emir of

Kano and his district heads. The Izala sect, which resists some of the practices associated with traditional rulers, has, however, faced strong resistance in Kano.

The division of the old Kano state into the present Kano and Jigawa state has reduced the domain and powers of the Emir of Kano. He had previously ruled over the whole of Kano and most of Jigawa except for parts of Kazaure which was in Daura Emirate. There are now four Emirates and Emirs in Jigawa, but only one in Kano.

As noted above, Kano state has experienced many ethno-religious conflicts, the latest being a reaction to the Christian/Muslim clashes in Plateau state. The Emirate made frantic efforts to stop the killing of Christians and the looting of the properties of Ibo traders and others. Several Christians and Ibo took shelter in the Emir's palace. The Emir summoned all of the district heads and councillors in the Emirate council to ensure that the crisis did not spread to other parts of the state outside the city.

Unlike the previous civilian regimes, the present 3rd Republic administration in Kano State has a high regard for the traditional institution and especially the Emir himself. The introduction of the Sharia legal system has facilitated the development of a close relationship between the government and the Emir: government had to seek the co-operation of traditional rulers in implementing Sharia. Another factor in this context was the support given by the strongest Islamic sects in Kano to the traditional rulers.

2.2.6 Hadejia Emirate, Jigawa state

Jigawa state was carved out of the old Kano state and currently has four Emirates, each with a first class Emir. These Emirates are Kazaure, Ringim, Hadejia and Dutse. The latter two Emirates were sampled during fieldwork. Research in Hadejia focused on capturing the views of traditional rulers. His Royal Highness (HRM) the Emir of Hadejia asked his senior councillor, Dr. Usman Medugu, to answer our questions. The team was also introduced to the district heads of Birniwa, Kirkassama, Gwari and Auyo for further interviews. Some village heads (*bulamas*) and ward heads were also interviewed. While in Dutse Emirate, the study team interacted with subjects of traditional rulers including staff of Community Law Centres, leaders of Jigawa Women's Network for Access to Justice (JIWNAJ) and Yakub Memorial Youths Development Association, Birnin Kudu.

Jigawa State, an especially Hadejia Emirate, exhibit many features of interest to this study. Traditional rulers still have recognised authority and the Hadejia–Nguru wetland provides a potential environment for conflict. The authority of traditional rulers in the Hadejia Emirate took root in precolonial times, while the creation of Jigawa state in 1991 gave the Emir of Hadejia a degree of independence which he had not possessed previously. The Emir of Hadejia is dynamic and receptive to modernisation. For instance, during the fieldwork it was found that women had considerable freedom to voice their concerns and that a lot of efforts were being made to provide them with adult and Islamic education at the Emirate and district levels. District heads reported that this was helping to reduce marital conflicts. But this is not the case in all of the districts.

The 1990s witnessed high levels of conflict between cultivators and pastoralists in the Hadejia–Nguru wetland and particularly in Kirkassama and Gwari districts. These conflicts led to the loss of property and lives. Although problems of encroachment and access to grazing lands and watering points were responsible for the clashes, the construction of dams at Tiga-Chalawa and Baguda upstream of the Hadejia and Kafin-Hausa rivers precipitated this situation. Currently, one channel is blocked and therefore dry. Another channel is flooded and has taken over farms and grazing lands and watering points. These are further areas for conflict between the various users and in particular crop farmers and pastoralists. Traditional rulers at district level in particular are mediating between the two groups in order to prevent a reoccurrence of what happened in the 1990s. The district head of Kirkassama has initiated the formation of a committee which meets regularly to review issues.

The DFID-funded Jigawa Wetland Livelihood Project (JEWEL) has mobilised different user groups and they have nominated representatives to a wetland forum. This forum meets regularly to discuss problems in the wetland and their possible solution. This process is also supported by traditional rulers in the area.

Traditional rulers are also busy tackling family conflicts, conflicts between neighbours, boundary disputes, witchcraft allegations, and political and religious disputes. During interviews with the senior councillor of the Emirate council, the district head and vice-chairman of Mallam–Madori local government described how a land conflict between a family and a construction company had been settled. We were also told of incidents in which leaders had abused their powers. The Community Law Centre at Dutse informed the research team that an unnamed village head had connived with the police to extort money from a farmer who reported the theft of his goat. The women's group also narrated a story of a woman who was treated unjustly in an inheritance case. It is important to note that there are also negative attributes associated with some traditional rulers.

2.2.7 Daura and Katsina Emirates, Katsina state

Katsina and Daura are the two prominent Emirates in Katsina state. Fieldwork focused on Katsina Emirate. A representative of HRH the Emir of Katsina granted us an interview on behalf of the Emir. The district heads of Jibiya (Sarkin Arewa), Safana, and village and ward heads were interviewed. Representatives of Yan-agaji (Muslims Aid Group), leaders of the Market Association, civil servants and Fadama farmers were also interviewed. We also attended Sallah (Id-el Kabir) celebrations and viewed the paraphernalia of the Emir of Katsina, Alh. Muhamadu Kabir Usman.

Katsina Emirate is one of the seven Hausa States that took the flag of Uthman Dan Fodio. Katsina state has experienced incessant conflicts between crop farmers and pastoralists, especially since the mid-1980s. The clashes in Mai-Ruwa which claimed the lives of several people including the district head were one of several incidents. The disturbances between the two groups in Jibiya left several families homeless and many suffered casualties and the loss of property.

Since the 1980s the Emir of Katsina has formed committees at ward, village and district levels comprising of local traditional rulers and representatives of farmers, pastoralists and community elders. These meet regularly to discuss issues relating to conflict prevention and mediation. The committees located in the border areas, in particular Jibiya (Sarkin Arewa), have linked up with traditional rulers and the leaders of pastoral groups in the Niger Republic. The pastoralists coming in from Niger during the dry season had been accused of participating in conflicts in Katsina and other states in Nigeria. A similar approach was adopted in Hadejia Emirate in Jigawa state. At the time of the study it seemed to be working well.

The Katsina state government has also given their support to these processes. For example, key staff from the Ministry of Agriculture are members of the committees at different various levels. The committees are also being supported financially both by the state and local governments. Other conflicts related to marriages, inheritance and land issues, witchcraft, and minor theft are dealt with by the traditional institutions at village and ward levels.

Traditional institutions and in particular the Emir of Katsina still command respect. When conflict erupted in recently in the state capital many Christians and Ibo traders took refuge in the Emir's palace. The Emir made continuous appeals to the rioters to stop the carnage; and to this end emergency meetings were held with the Emirate councillors, officials of the Katsina state government, and subsequently with all districts heads.

The main Islamic sects and especially the Tijaniyya are solidly behind the traditional rulers. Perhaps this is why the Imams appointed for the central mosque in Katsina belong to the Tijaniyya sect. The Izala sect, however, has defiantly established its own mosques and appointed mosque leaders without the consent of Emirs and district heads. In the past these actions resulted into clashes between supporters of the two Islamic sects. The Emirs were gradually able to contain this situation and are currently accommodating the Izala

sect, which has recently moderated some of its positions. Similar situations were observed in Kano, Kaduna, Jigawa, Sokoto and Kebbi states.

2.3 The Middle Belt Emirates

2.3.1 Kontagora and Bussa Emirates, Niger state

In Niger state there are five district first class rulers: the Etsu Nupe in Bida and the Emirs of Agai, Suleja, Kontagora and New Bussa. Kontagora has been noted for its ethno-religious and political violence and there have been occasional clashes between crop farmers and pastoral groups. Similarly, Kainji National Park in New Bussa has been a flashpoint for clashes between pastoralists and the National Park guards.

In Kontagora Emirate council efforts began in 1995 to reduce the violence in the area. The council tried to organise a committee of leaders representing the various ethnic groups resident in Kontagora. Regular meetings were held to discuss issues affecting the peace in the area. Although this forum was helpful it did not stop the excesses of youths in the area. For instance, in 1994 violence erupted when two political parties disagreed; this resulted in the razing of many properties including the local government secretariat right in front of the Emir's palace. In February 2006 ethno-religious violence erupted in Kontagora leaving many people dead; properties worth millions of Naira were lost. Although the Emir summoned emergency meetings and appealed to the subjects to end the violence the damage was done in some quarters. The Emir's intervention at least prevented the spread of the violence to other districts in the Emirate.

The ruler of New Bussa has intervened several times to stop the violence between Kainji National Park guards and pastoralists. The pastoralists claimed that the park had been their traditional resting point en-route to dry season grazing. The National Park used armed force to stop them from passing through with their herds. This caused a lot of trouble between the two groups including the loss of life. The mediation of the Bussa traditional ruler succeeded in minimising the conflict in a situation that both the government and the administration of the National Park found difficult to handle.

Political wrangling and interference in Kontagora Emirate seem to have reduced the authority of the Emir; his appeals during the February 2006 ethno-religious crisis were largely ignored. People went on the rampage until the government used armed force. The district head of Igede flouted the order of the Emir not to allow encroachment in Bobi Grazing Reserve and, worst of all, he argued with the Emir in public. However, several other disputes are being settled with the help of traditional institutions at various levels in both Kontagora and New Bussa Emirates.

2.3.2 Gombe Emirate, Gombe state

This section summarises findings of the field trip to Gombe Emirate council; the Waziri Gombe was interviewed there representing the Emir. He stated that there had been no major conflict in Gombe due to the actions of the Emir, who believes that conflicts should not be imported into the Emirate. This philosophy has gone a long way towards maintaining the peace in Gombe.

Udawa pastoralists have been a particular problem to the security of the state. There has been a long-standing relationship between the Udawa and the Fulbe of Gombe. Land was once so abundant that grazing rights were no issue. However, sedentary farmers are now cultivating grazing reserves. These nomadic pastoralists from Chad, Niger, Mali and Cameroun began to violate established procedures put in place to forestall conflict. Today they carry very sophisticated automatic weapons and graze with impunity without permission from the district heads. The conflict was an annual event until the government came down heavily on the nomads in a military operation which has reduced the number of incidents significantly.

The Waziri Gombe claimed that Christians and Muslims generally live together peacefully, and that this is evident during Christmas and Sallah celebrations. All of the major ethnic groups select their leaders and they

are presented to the Emir for recognition. They all take part in security meetings. During droughts Muslims pray and the Emir asks Christians to pray also. There is mutual respect between the two major religions.

Discussing the problem of unruly youth, the councillor opined that the Taliban phenomenon in Nigeria is exaggerated. The youths, he said, are being misguided by the shallow unislamic teachings of the Shiites and people know it. Therefore such preachers do not have a strong following. He considers Nigeria to be the country with the highest number of educated Muslims in the world. Demonstrations by misguided youths over the introduction of the Sharia legal system were ruthlessly suppressed by the law enforcement agencies during the regime of Governor Hashidu.

According to the Yerima of Gombe and senior district head, during the time of the British they respected the religion and traditions of the people. At independence Sardauna and Tafawa Balewa maintained British practice until the point when an American style of government was introduced. Today traditional rulers have no power: neither the 'rope' nor 'whip', no prison and power to punish. They are only recognised when trouble has erupted. He suggested that the constitution should be amended to give powers similar to those of the old N.A. system but with provisions to reflect modern realities. The Emir travels as far as Jalingo to settle disputes. He brokered peace in the industrial crisis at Ashaka Cement Company when there was retrenchment of workers as a result of a takeover of the company.

Ajiya Gombe and senior district head of Kwami also gave us insights into the role of traditional rulers in conflict prevention and mediation. It was Governor Hashidu who created the office of a senior district head of Kwami LGA in 2002. He has ruled for 35 years. He is not a member of the royal family but an outstanding farmer who merited the office of the custodian of armoury of the Emirate. The Emir appointed him a traditional ruler. He has ten districts under his care.

When asked about the role of traditional rulers in resolving the Udawa question in the Gombe area the senior district head said that they are Fulbe like them. Since time immemorial they have been involved in pastoral transhumance without conflict arising because land was abundant. The laws of cattle routes were observed until about 15 years ago when it became increasingly difficult for them to graze freely. For self-defence the Udawa started carrying weapons and arms. The conflict between the pastoralists and sedentary Fulbe farmers became worse and the Udas started hiring armed guards for protection. Things got so bad that these guards begin to loot the cattle of their patrons. The attempt to make Uda leaders observe a strict calendar of movement broke down and lawlessness resulted. All appeals to the Uda fall on deaf ears. However, in the last three years soldiers were drafted in to cut off the Gongola River so that Udawa could not cross it.

2.3.3 Federal Capital Territory Emirate, Abuja

Interviews were conducted in Kuje Area Council, Abuja. The chief of Kuje (Gomo) was interviewed; likewise the district head, Sarkin Kasuwa (Market Leader), Sarkin Wanzamai (Leader of Local Barbers), the Chief Imam and others. Sallah homage was observed and recorded in His Royal Highness's (Gomo's) palace during the Id-el Kabir celebrations.

Before the decision to transfer the Federal Capital Territory from Lagos to Abuja in the 1980s, the principal subjects of the Gomo of Kuje were Gade, Gbagi, a small number of Nupe, and a few Hausa. According to the Gomo these were ideal to people to rule. However, with the influx of different people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the traditional institution was faced with new challenges. New disputes emerged and the traditional council had to be proactive in order to cope with new issues.

New strategies had to be evolved. For instance, His Royal Highness (Gomo of Kuje) had to expand his council to include leaders of some of the ethnic groups that settled within his chieftom. The representation of these groups in the council gave Gomo the opportunity to gain respect and allows his authority to flourish. While the council was able to handle different kinds of dispute, the problem of cultism was one of the areas still to be tackled effectively. Cases of child abuse, rape, unwanted pregnancies and land disputes are some of the issues being handled by the traditional institution.

The senior councillors and district heads interviewed reported that there is currently more recognition of the traditional institution by government than in the past. For instance, the palaces of the rulers are properly renovated, expensive cars are provided by government, and the police and State Security Services (SSS) are permanently attached to the rulers to provide back-up security in addition to their traditional bodyguards (*Dogarai*). The rulers are also well funded to support them in performing their traditional roles.

The situation in Kuje Area council, Abuja, seems to differ from that in the Hadejia Emirate, for example, where the palaces of district heads are in poor condition and highly dilapidated. A district head informed the study team that he was finding it difficult to maintain his seven horses, one of the most powerful symbols of rule. The Emirate was poorly funded and important meetings had been postponed a number of times because there was no money to pay for them.

2.4 The Middle Belt

The Nigerian Middle Belt is a loosely defined collection of states north of the humid zone and south of the main Islamised area. It is extremely diverse in ethnolinguistic terms and in most areas, traditional society was acephalous. However, there were a number of traditional polities of varying size and these gained in strength in the nineteenth century in the wake of extensive slave-raiding through this region. The degree of Islamic influence varies in different courts, but the development of Christianity has also been a powerful influence. In some cases, the religious affiliation of the ruler may change as the succession passes from one individual to another.

Traditional rulership not fashioned using the Islamic model is the dominant system in the core middle Belt states that were not conquered during the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio. These are found on the fringes of the Kanem Borno Empire, Kwara, Plateau, Southern Kaduna, Nasarawa and Benue states. Unlike the Islamic states these rulers are not religious leaders even where traditional religion is still strong. The absence of authoritarianism makes these leaders weak and hence the obvious rise in conflict in the zone.

2.4.1 Igala, Kogi state

There are four major kingships in Kogi state which include Ebira, Igala, Kabba and Lokoja. Fieldwork focused on Igala kingdom, where His Royal Majesty (HRM), Alh. Dr. Aliyu Obaje, was interviewed along with his council members. Some village and ward heads were also interviewed. Similarly, religious leaders including adherents of traditional religion were interviewed.

The Igala kingdom has been ruled by HRM for almost 50 years and has experienced peace for almost the whole of this period. He has ruled a kingdom that has a balanced population of Muslims and Christians. Councillors of the kingdom, district, village and ward heads and religious leaders from the two major religions attributed this peace to the respect and authority HRM enjoyed from his subjects.

Some of the district heads described the Attah of Igala as a humble and honest ruler whose 'yes' and 'no' are 'yes' and 'no'. The ruler is not partial in his administration. The turbaning of two long serving missionaries in the kingdom was clear testimony to this. Of the five district heads interviewed, four are Christians and only one was a Muslim. The Attah himself is a Muslim but liked by his subjects irrespective of their religion. One reason for this is his openness. Like other subjects of the kingdom, women are encouraged to express their rights and freedom. The study team witnessed two women who disagreed with the secretary of the council and reported the case to HRM. The case was adjourned to a later date for conclusion. This contrasted sharply with practice in Kano Emirate, for instance, where gaining access to the Emir may take one month or even more. A representative attends to most of the issues requiring the Emir's attention.

In Igala it seems that the good leadership of traditional rulers provides the right atmosphere for peaceful coexistence. However, minor disputes among families do occur. These include conflicts relating to marriage,

land ownership, forests, fishing ponds, and crops and herds. These are dealt with by traditional rulers at the level that they occur.

2.4.2 Mai of Tangale, Gombe state

HRH Dr. Abdu Buba Maisheru II, the Mai Tangale, granted an interview at his palace in Biliri. HRH is the 15th Mai. The Tangale throne was of prehistoric origin. At the coming of the British there had been 11 Mais. The stool was considered so important that in 1945 the Mai was awarded the honour Knight of the British Empire (KBE). Up to the early years of colonial rule the Maidom was solely a Tangale affair. However, in 1948 the British relocated the palace to the plains and its present location. Now other ethnic groups are found in the domain. HRH invited two court scholars, Dan Masani and Alkalami, to present a written response to the main agenda of the research. The summaries below are notes taken from the discussion that ensued after the excellent presentation by the scholars.

The Mai opined that:

- Traditional rulers possess accurate local knowledge going back many years.
- They also have good networks of communication with the grassroots. Traditional titleholders are part of this network.
- He commands information from the grassroots that enables him to nip any crisis in the bud.
- His political neutrality helps prevent conflict and is just about as important as mediating conflict.
- Traditional methods of conflict resolution are more cost effective than modern ones. From time immemorial the traditional ruler had the power to bring rain and put curses on stubborn subjects.
- Traditional rulers must not abuse their office in order to command public respect.
- Visit to other traditional rulers is an effective tool for conflict management.

He explained that sources of conflict for southern Gombe are religious in nature and over resources. People live in fear that religious crisis may break out at any time. There is also the fear of marginalisation with regard to political appointments and government development projects. However, the situation now is a favourable for peaceful co-existence because of the mixture of religious groups in Gombe state: Muslims, Christians and traditionalists. He gave an example of the fear of his Muslim subjects that was expressed while he was contesting for the royal stool:

- They were apprehensive that a mosque building project would lapse during the reign of a Mai who is a Christian. However, immediately after being enthroned as the Mai he swung into action and set up a new Mosque Committee. Now the mosque has been constructed and in use for over 20 years.
- Another endemic fear has to do with local/state boundary disputes. Boundary dispute with a neighbouring LGA is a perennial problem and a conflict that has become intractable. He has suggested that the Federal government should intervene to resolve this vexing problem.
- The problem of Uda pastoralists destroying crops has subsided in the last two or three years. The government was firm and resolute in blocking this group of armed bandits from entering Nigeria. However, they still sneak in to attack, kill or maim people and steal cattle as well. The bandits stole 100 head of cattle just last week. The Udawa no longer drive stolen cattle as a herd but use vehicles to cart away their loot. Udawa are now armed robbers and use local spies to perpetrate their nefarious activities.

HRH gave more examples of his intervention in other conflict situations:

- People even in a riotous condition would listen to a traditional ruler and not law enforcement or LG or state officials. His role in this regard has been recognised and he has received several awards including one by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

- HRH set up a committee to study the phenomenon of young Tangale men marrying girls from other ethnic groups due to high bridewealth demands locally. This is now being addressed with recommendations made by the committee.
- Unemployed youths indulgence in the drinking of illicit gin called *agogoro* was a major problem in the area but the Mai intervened and the whole community agreed that the drink should be banned. Now it is completely forbidden and there is total compliance - in contrast to the failure of a previous attempt by the LG to tackle the same problem. Many of these youths are now living gainful lives.
- HRH made a representation to the governor over the clamour for full Sharia law in Gombe state. As a result this legal system has not been adopted in the state. This intervention on the part of the Mai illustrates very clearly that traditional ruler is a vital linkman.
- A recent boundary dispute led to killing of one person and the beating of a district head. The Mai had to go round the domain on foot to plead with his subjects not to take the law into their own hands. That calmed the situation and the dispute did not result in armed conflict.
- Two years ago HRH undertook a 2 weeks' tour throughout the length and breadth of his domain to listen to grievances and complaints of the people in order to make representation to government on their behalf. Common issues were the need for potable water, electricity, health care and protection against armed robbery. He offered solutions to some on the spot and referred others to the relevant government agencies.
- Political thugs referred to locally as *Kalare* have been stamped out in his domain. Disgruntled politicians and even unsuccessful princes in traditional leadership contests used *Kalare* to foment trouble.

Some other recommendations by HRH Mai Tangale

- Security is the main preoccupation of the traditional ruler. This costs a lot of money and it is the state government that is funding the sector.
- Only the paramount ruler (Mai), district heads (*Hakimai*) and village heads (*Dakatai*) are remunerated. The lowest cadre who are ward heads (*Joro*) are no longer remunerated because of the abolition of poll and cattle taxes. The state government pays the Mai and the LG pays district heads and village heads. When the Mai came into office these traditional rulers were without pay for two years. This debt was reduced and by end of 2003 they were owed arrears of six months only.
- Local Government showed no interest in the documentation of the traditions of the people but HRH through the assistance of the Tangale Community Development Association has been funding such projects. HRH suggested that the LG should be a mere liaison office between the State government and the grassroots.
- The 5% meant for traditional rulers should be deducted at source and channelled straight to them and not through the LG system.
- Vocational Training Centres should be established by the state government in every LG to curb youth unemployment through the learning of a trade.
- Ward heads should be empowered to identify strangers coming into their communities and channel information on any suspicious person to the village head who would in turn pass it on to the district head and finally to the Mai. This will help in flushing out miscreants.
- For now every TR should realise that he is working for his people and not to make money or earning a living.

We visited the ancestral home of the Tangale at Kufai and this was followed by a group interview with the traditional rulers at the palace. They suggested that if a constitutional amendment is to be made it should recognise:

- Judicial powers in farmland disputes.
- Custody of traditional rites and rituals; traditional rulers to be allowed to use traditional methods (e.g. ordeals) for resolving social conflicts.
- Judicial powers over marriage disputes.

- In short all former powers under the Native Authority System should be restored in the constitution.
- Governors should not be given the power to remove traditional rulers; at present the tenures of traditional rulers are not secure.
- A disciplinary committee must be established before a traditional ruler is removed.
- Ward heads should be given allowances.
- High morals should be demanded of traditional rulers especially in the context of farm and marital disputes.
- Traditional rulers should at least be allowed to make LG accountable in LG budgets and development projects.
- Selection of traditional rulers should be strictly according to the traditions of the people.

2.4.3 Berom Chieftom, Plateau state

The Berom are the largest ethnic group in Jos North, Jos South, Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas in Plateau State, and claim to be the principal indigenous inhabitants of Jos city. The Berom chieftom was a creation of British rule and the current paramount, the Gbong Gwom Jos, is only the fourth to be appointed in the chequered history of the royal stool. A recently published booklet, *An Evaluation of the Gbong Gwom Institution* by Drs. S. D. Nyam and C. C. Jacobs (2004), provides a very useful account of this history through to the death of the third Gbong Gwom in 2002. Indeed it was rushed into print so that it could provide an input to deliberations over the selection of his successor.

The Berom chieftom was unavoidably caught up in the severe crisis that began in Jos in September 2001 and subsequently fuelled many other conflicts in Plateau State. There is a large and evolving literature on the Jos and Plateau State conflicts (general accounts include Human Rights Watch 2001; Bawa & Nwogwu 2002; Danfulani & Fwatshak 2002; Bagudu 2004; Fwatshak 2005; Human Rights Watch 2001). The growing pile of paper includes the published and (mostly) unpublished reports of a series of peace initiatives headed by senior judges, administrators and others (for an overview see Plateau State of Nigeria 2004). These various papers and reports deal with different aspects of the Jos crisis and its aftermath. The role of traditional leaders is only of many issues discussed in the literature, but is the focus of the present case study, with particular reference to the Berom.

Historical background

The colonial period

As Nyam and Jacob's (2004) study makes clear, the British experienced extraordinary difficulty in fitting the Berom into the standard model of Indirect Rule. The pre-colonial Berom had no overall political authority but were divided into a number of small polities based on single villages or village clusters. Before the arrival of the British there were perhaps as many as 80 separate villages in Beromland, and the number of these increased under colonial rule, as did the number of local chieftaincies. Nyam and Jacobs describe these small polities as follows:

“Each polity was characterised by a chieftaincy institution of a limited kind. The chiefs, *Begwom*, were chosen from certain royal lineages whose right to produce candidates for the chieftaincy was generally based on either the leadership of a wave of migration or priority of settlement in a particular area. In most polities; but not in all, the chief was a priest-chief (*gwom kwit*) for his village group. It was from his overall ritual responsibility for the well-being of his village group that he derived his judicial and political powers. Due to the nature of his office the priest chief was surrounded by personal taboos which severely restricted his personal mobility.

He did not lead his people in war but confined himself to blessing the warriors on their departure for war. With a few exceptions, such as the chief of Kuru, Berom chiefs were usually not as wealthy as some rich commoners (*bedarwei*). The chiefs did not possess great powers of independent action since they were expected to consult and work in close collaboration with the elders who represented the kinship

groups, sitting in council, the *bekanat* and since the chiefs possessed no regular army or bureaucracy they were dependent to a large extent on ritual sanctions to ensure that their wishes were carried out. Thus in most Berom polities there were chiefs with fairly limited powers whose most important role was in the ritual sphere, and who to a large extent shared power with the council of elders, the *bekanat*, who were the senior men of their lineages.

Since there was no overall political organisation there was no recognised judicial procedure for the settling of inter-village disputes. In consequence, when disputes arose between individuals from different polities, they resorted to self-help. This frequently led to armed clashes, and to a pattern of retaliation. Thus some districts which were short of land such as Gyel were frequently at odds with their neighbours. In addition raiding, (*jugu*) was a source of profit and prestige to great warriors, (*besuga*) and this would in turn precipitate reprisals. However, while it cannot be denied that a state of insecurity prevailed in Berom land, it is worth pointing out that the scale of these military operations was very small, and that when engaged in military operations against fellow Berom it was a universal convention of war that heads were not taken, and that somewhat less lethal weapons were employed.” (Nyam & Jacobs 2004: 2-3)

The British struggled to convert this relatively decentralized system to their own purposes. Following the conquest of Beromland they appointed village headman who possessed little or no local legitimacy and were therefore largely ineffective. The growth of the tin mining industry created a further problem:

“The development of mining in the Berom area brought a large turbulent stranger population whom the Berom Chiefs could not control. In addition the mining companies were anxious to control their own mining camps and were not to allow these to be placed under indigenous Chiefs. In consequence the colonial authorities created a system of dual administration in Beromland by which the indigenes came under the direct administration of political officers, while the mining camps and stranger settlements which had grown up were placed under a Native Administration headed by the Bunu, a brother of the Emir of Bauchi. The Bunu’s position was described as being somewhat like that of a District Head, but with scattered units of the mining camps and markets as his “Villages”. Some hopes were initially entertained that the Bunu might inspire sufficient confidence amongst the Berom so as to create a model for indirect rule; but this was never realised.” (Nyam & Jacobs 2004: 5)

The Bunu died in 1917 and his successor was deposed by the British in 1921 for abuse of his position. An alternative arrangement was not devised until 1927 after the creation of Plateau Province of Bauchi Province. The stranger settlements were divided into four groups – Jos, Bukuru, Gurum and Gana Ropp – each with a Hausa headman and an *Alkali* court. This system survived until the 1940s when the Hausa settlements were absorbed by the Berom Native Authority.

The British, meanwhile, had considerable difficulty in identifying any kind of centralized authority other than their own to pull the Berom together into a single political unit. Jos Division was administered directly by District Officers dealing with each village separately. Indeed the lack of a coherent administration and administrative policy in Beromland and other non-Muslim areas was a key factor in the decisions that led to the separation of Plateau from Bauchi Province in 1926.

Despite a series of investigations and reports, the British authorities did not agree on a system for administering the Berom until 1935. This was based on the reorganization of Berom and neighbouring villages into 15 groups: 11 of these were Berom, two Irigwe, one Aten, one mixed Anaguta and Afisere. The Berom Tribal Council was constituted by the 15 senior chiefs who presided over the new village groups, plus the numerous village chiefs below them. Dachung Gyang, a dubious claimant to the chieftaincy of Riyom, then a declining ritual centre, was selected to be the permanent chairman of the Tribal Council and so the first Gbong Gwom or paramount chief of the Berom chiefdom.

Unfortunately Dachung Gyang lacked legitimacy even in his own village group, and his efforts to replace other chiefs with his own candidates succeeded only in alienating the rest of the Tribal Council. In any event this was proving to be an ineffective body because of the lack of unity among its members. Dachung Gyang was therefore removed from office in 1941 and the post of Gbong Gwom abolished. Instead the presidency

of the Tribal Council and its Native Court were to be held by the village area chiefs on a rotating basis. Despite their misgivings about this local reverse in administrative practice, the colonial authorities in Kaduna accepted this arrangement as necessary to maintain the wartime support of the Berom.

The rotating presidency lasted for six years. The decision to revive the institution of Gbong Gwom in 1947 was taken in response to growing agitation by the educated elite of Berom society. After the war some of them had set up an organization called the Berom Progressive Union (B.U.P.) to fight in particular for land rights, including increased land compensation and the rehabilitation of ex-mining land. Government taxes and the shortage of agricultural land were leading many communities to become increasingly dependent on mine labour, and the commoditization of land was accompanied by a growth in landlessness. At the same time the Christian missions and especially the Sudan United Mission (S.U.M.) were beginning to undermine older beliefs as well as produce an educated class that was prepared to challenge the existing order.

It was in this context that, as Nyam and Jacobs write, “The British who had hitherto been complaining about the conservatism and parochialism of the Berom chiefs found themselves faced with a ‘sudden political awakening’ of the Berom” (2004: 19). They were therefore more than happy to acquiesce to the senior chief’s request for a new permanent president of the Tribal Council, preferably an educated man who could represent their interests in the House of Chiefs in Kaduna. Rwang Pam was a school headmaster and B.U.P. member who had already been appointed to the Northern House of Assembly to represent non-Muslims in Plateau Province. He was acceptable to all of the major parties involved, including the British, and was duly selected by the Tribal Council to be its president.

Unlike his predecessor, the second Gbong Gwom was given real executive powers and an office in Jos with easy access to the District Officer. In the following year, 1948, he also took over the position of *Sarkin Jos* when the last of the line of Hausa headmen died. Jos town was given a town council headed by a president (the *Magajin Gari*), while each of the three principal ethnic groups – the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba – was given a *Wakili*. As Nyam and Jacobs note, this was the culmination of a long-standing policy of bringing stranger settlements into the Berom Native Authority. This policy and its implementation were also to have long-term significance, and form an important part of the background to the eruption of the Jos crisis in September 2001.

In 1949 the Gbong Gwom Rwang Pam was made a “chief in council” as a third class chief . In 1952 he was given a six member Executive Council and the Berom Tribal Council (*Gbong Duk Shot*) was reduced in overall size by cutting the number of participating chiefs down from over 80 to just 17 senior chiefs (*bedagwom*) who represented the constituent districts. In 1957 the Gbong Gwom was elevated to the rank of second class chief. According to Nyam and Jacobs he “had a somewhat stormy reign beset on one side by the Hausas and the non Berom ethnic groups, and on the other by those Berom who were afraid that he intended to establish a dynasty” (2004: 23). But despite various challenges to his position he survived in office through to the first decade of Nigeria’s independence, and the Gbong Gwom stool remained firmly established.

Table 2 shows the holders of the Gbong Gwom stool from 1935 to the present;

Table 2. Holders of the Gbong Gwom stool, 1935-present

Dates	Name	Comments
1935-41	Dachung Gyang	Appointed by the British following inadequate consultation and later removed by them
1941-47	-	Interregnum and rotating presidency of the Tribal Council and Native Court
1947-69	Rwang Pam	Appointed following the recommendations of the senior chiefs and all of the council
1970-2002	Fom Bot	Appointed after a keenly contested election that followed new rules gazetted in 1969
2002-04	-	Interregnum – prolonged because of the Jos crisis and subsequent political manoeuvring
2004-	Victor Dung Pam	Appointed from a ruling family.

The post-colonial period

When Rwang Pam's health began to fail in 1967, serious efforts began to revise the criteria for the selection or election of a successor. The Jos Native Authority Council decided not to make the office hereditary and after some debate a set of procedures for the appointment of future Gbong Gwoms were gazetted in 1969. To the consternation of many people in the chieftdom, eligibility to the stool was not restricted to the Berom and the composition of the electoral college was likewise widened to include some office holders, including the presidents of Jos and Bukuru Town Councils who previously had nothing to do with the Berom institution of Gbong Gwom. According to Nyam and Jacobs, "A cross section of the Berom believe that some influential Berom connived with the Hausa Fulani oligarchy to make the stool as loose as possible in order to endanger it in the future as it is being currently i.e. during the 2002-04 interregnum experienced" (2004: 30).

Rwang Pam died in office in July 1969 and was succeeded as Gbong Gwom Jos by Fom Bot, a well-educated candidate who had served as a Local Government Secretary since 1958. During his long reign of 32 years he became the first chairman of the Plateau State Council of Chiefs and also served as the president of the Jos Joint Traditional Council, comprising Jos North, Jos South, Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas. Fom Bot is credited with successfully defending the royal stool against a series of legal challenges from other ethnic groups and claimants. But he is also widely criticized for responding weakly to the Hausa-Fulani challenge and especially their claims to the ownership of Jos. Indeed some Berom believe that his weakness in this regard was one of the factors that led to the severe crisis that engulfed Jos in the year before his death.

The Jos and Plateau State Conflicts

The September 2001 crisis and subsequent conflicts in the state centre on contentious issues as the role of ethnicity, "indigeneship", religion and chieftaincy in generating these conflicts. On 28 August 2001, before the start of the Jos crisis, the Plateau State Youths sent a letter to the State Governor headed "Enough is Enough" and listing their various grievances. These included a call "for the position of poverty eradication coordinator to be given exclusively to indigenes and for all Hausa-Fulani chieftaincy titles to be scrapped and replaced by indigenous traditional titles." The letter "also called for the "immediate renaming and re-organization of all our Electoral Wards to indigenous names and original interest of our people"." (Human Rights Watch 2001: 6).

Peace Initiatives

The conflicts spawned a series of organized peace initiatives. These culminated in The Plateau Peace Conference that was held in Jos between 18 August and 21 September 2004. On 18 May 2004 the President of Nigeria declared a State of Emergency in Plateau State (subsequently ratified by the National Assembly) and appointed Major General M. C. Alli (Rtd) as sole Administrator. The Plateau Peace Conference was then convened by the state government with the participation of representatives of all of the recognized

ethnic groups in the state. The conference report was submitted to the Administrator on 28 September, accepted by the Plateau State Administrative Council on 4 October, and gazetted on 11 November 2004 (Plateau State of Nigeria 2004: i-ii).

The Plateau Peace Conference took into account previous initiatives and their reports, which it lists as follows:

- a. **Justice Niki Tobi** Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Jos Civil Disturbances which submitted its report in September 2002.
- b. **Hon. Justice C. Okpene**, Federal Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Communal Conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba States, 2002.
- c. **Rev. Dr. Pandang Yamsat** High Powered Committee on Peace and Security in Plateau State submitted in 2002.
- d. Presidential Peace Initiative Committee on Plateau State Headed **Alh. Shehu Idris**, Emir of Zazzau, Submitted in May, 2004.
- e. Private Peace Initiative on Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State Headed by **Alh. Shehu Idris**, Emir of Zazzau.
- f. Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Communal Clashes in Wase Local Government Area Headed by **Justice Jummai Sankey** submitted in May, 2001.
- g. Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the crisis in Langtang North Local Government Area Headed by **Justice Jummai Sankey** submitted in May 2001.
- h. Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the crisis in Shendam Local Government Area Headed by **Justice Jummai Sankey** submitted in May 2001.
- i. Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the crisis in Quaan pan Local Government Area Headed by **Justice Jummai Sankey** submitted in May 2001.
- j. Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Civil Disturbances in Shendam, Langtang North, Langtang South and Wase Local Government Areas Headed by **Justice Felicia K. Dusu** submitted in June 2003.” (Plateau State of Nigeria 2004: 2-3)

The report of the Plateau Peace Conference comments “At best, these efforts have seemed more a palliative than making any appreciable impact since recommendations of the reports have not yet been released or implemented” (2004: 3). The report goes on to list the negative consequences of government inaction in this regard, and recommends that these different reports should be released, gazetted and implemented (2004: 3, 143-145). It is interesting to note here that the two initiatives headed by the Emir of Zazzau have received much the same treatment as all the others.

The 2004 conference generated numerous resolutions of its own, covering the full range of issues that were thought to have played a part in causing the 2001 crisis and its aftermath. The principal headings under which resolutions are listed are “Land Use and Land Ownership”, “Indigeneship, Citizenship, Settlership Syndrome”, “Traditional Matters”, “Social Factors”, “Religious Factors”, “Political Factors”, “Security Matters”, “Economic Factors”, “Farmer-grazer Conflict”, “the Role of the Media”, “Youth Matters”, “Women Issues”, and – as already mentioned – “Non-release and non Implementation of Previous Reports of Administrative and Judicial Commissions of Inquiry on Conflicts in Plateau State” (2004: iii-xii).

The role of the Gbong Gwom Jos

The Gbong Gwom told us that everybody in Nigerian society knows that the role of traditional rulers with or without constitutional provision is the maintenance of peace at all levels whenever it is threatened. They are able to do this because they are the custodians of the grassroots and enjoy considerable goodwill from their people.

Da Victor Pam became the Gbong Gwom in 2003 at the time when the Jos crisis had spread to the southern part of Plateau state. He was invited by the President to offer some solutions given his former experience as a senior police officer. He suggested an operation with the name “Operation Seal Plateau”, involving road blocks and the use of metal detectors. He further suggested that Pankshin, which happened to be the only

place not badly affected by the crisis, should be its operational base. He also recommended to the President that the operation should last only three months. The President accepted these suggestions and directed that he should liaise with the Inspector General of Police (IG). He did this and suggested that the army and air force should also be involved in Operation Seal Plateau. The funds of this were provided by the office of the President. Within one week of the inauguration of the operation hostilities ceased. Unfortunately, a state of emergency was declared soon thereafter and sporadic outbreaks of violence continued to occur.

The Gbong Gwom told us that the main peacekeepers should be the security operatives, and that traditional rulers are only to complement their role. He noted that the 1999 constitution is silent on the role of traditional rulers. As a result some overzealous state governors remove traditional rulers without regard for the traditions of the people. The traditional council of each chiefdom should be responsible for such matters and not politicians. He reported that Nasarawa state has passed a law providing an elaborate welfare package for traditional rulers in the state. He thinks that this is likely to be adopted for the whole country because a representative of the President was very impressed by this. The Gbong Gwom also suggested that the current laws regarding the appointment of traditional rulers in the state should be maintained. When this was not the case in Plateau, the traditional rulers went to court to squash a move by the government to undermine them.

The Gbong Gwom felt that the prospects for peace in Jos were bright because he has appointed a Hausa community leader as a member of the Jos Traditional Council. All community leaders keep a register of movement of people into their domains to curb the arrival of strangers who could foment trouble. He opined that any group that comes to a place with the motive of domination would be resisted. He had granted *Tell Magazine* an interview on this subject and when the President read it he asked the Gbong Gwom to explain why he was making inciting comments not becoming of a traditional ruler. He defended himself by arguing that even the Nigerian constitution recognises the concept of indigenisation in the selection of political appointees to high government positions.

He told us that the government was inaugurating an Inter-Religious Peace Committee with him as a member. This committee will spearhead the education of youths on both sides of the religious divide. It will also act as a forum for dialogue at the grassroots. However, people had the right to retain small arms for purposes of self-defence. Exploitation of the masses by the elite must stop for peace to take root because poverty is a major obstacle to peace. To this end he had supported a campaign against illicit gin and was keen to launch other programmes to stimulate economic production and promote education. He said that government is actually a stumbling block to progress, as was the case with government commodity boards that were buying produce very cheaply from farmers for resale at very high prices. The government should not have a hand in everything.

The role of other traditional rulers

We also interviewed another Berom chief, HRH Edward G. M. Bot. He was the district head of Ropp until 2003 when he was upgraded and appointed *Dagwom Rwei* of Barakin Ladi with 2nd class status. His colleagues in the Berom chiefdom are the *Dagwom Rwei* of Jos-South and Riyom LGAs. Under the *Dagwom Rwei* of Barakin Ladi are five 3rd class chiefs known as *Gwom Rwei*. The district heads under them are called *Dagwom* and under them are ward heads called *Gwom* and numerous village heads called *Damajeji*. The 2003 exercise was undertaken throughout Plateau state and further restructuring of the traditional hierarchy in the area was in progress at the time of our research.

The *Dagwom Rwei* described events of the recent crisis and his role in them. By 11 September 2001 tension had built up in Barakin Ladi town and surrounding villages and so he had to mobilise his subjects to resist the temptation of being drawn into a crisis that had nothing to do with them directly. Reports of killings of relatives by word of mouth and in the media did not help matters. He took a pragmatic and symbolic action by buying white handkerchiefs for each traditional ruler and community leader, leading a procession of them through the LGA capital and major settlements. Everywhere they went he would explain to people the advantages of not being drawn into the conflict. This was done for several days. Fulani settlements were not left out; in the LGA they have an overall *Ardo* assisted by *Chiromas*. The other ethnic groups that have recognised leaders are Igbo, Yoruba, Mwanghavul, Idoma, Ngas, Ron, and Hausa.

There was a minor incident involving a Fulani man at Fan who received the news that Christians in Jos killed his brother. He climbed a tree and started shooting aimlessly at people with his double-barrelled gun. He was easily overpowered and killed. As a result the Fulani started packing up. They were urged not to do so because the one incident had to do only with the foolhardiness of that single man. They could not be dissuaded and left. Unfortunately their houses were then burned down. The Fulani returned in the night and attacked Fan. The youths were very restive during the crisis period and were demanding the heads of Fulani people in revenge for Berom people that were killed in Jos. With the assistance of community and religious leaders, especially a prominent Christian leader, the Reverend Zongo, they were pacified and peace was maintained in the area.

He reported that there is an official Security Committee comprising the LGC Chairman, the *Dagwom Rwei*, Christian Association Chairman (CAN), Imam, Director Education Area Inspectorate, SSS, National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency and Divisional Police Office (DPO). At the peak of the crisis (2001-2004) youth leaders were co-opted into the Security Committee. Aside from this government institution, as the *Dagwom Rwei* he has the power to summon a security meeting as he deems necessary. Most of the conflicts he deals with have to do with grazing rights, demarcation of farm boundaries, and various family matters such as disputes between husbands and wives. These disagreements never reach conflict levels. He normally does this work on behalf of the *Gbong Gwom*. He has never clashed with the LG authorities in the discharge of his traditional duties as an advisor.

The *Dagwom Rwei* has no formal judicial functions but on a daily basis he mediates and arbitrates in cases brought before him by his subjects of their own volition. Where any aggrieved party feels dissatisfied with his arbitration the case can be taken to a conventional court. He recalled a case involving a dispute between him and another family over a farmland that was ruled in his favour on the basis of the witness of elders. His opponent was not satisfied and took the matter to court and won although he learnt later that the judge was bribed by the appellant to secure this favourable judgment. A typical day is spent attending to his subjects in the morning hours. For complicated cases, an appointment is given after the initial receipt of a complaint. Part of the day is spent inspecting disputed farmlands. There are constant meetings with traditional leaders at various levels.

He hopes that the crisis will not return again. However, he laid all the blame for it on politicians and the government. He argues that the ongoing government exercise of creating new districts without due consultation with existing traditional rulers could potentially lead to conflict. Barakin Ladi previously had five districts but now 40 new ones have been created and some of the appointed rulers have no villages or area to rule over. Instead they have resorted to collecting taxes from members of their own families. This proliferation has come about because of demands by people who want to assert their ethnic identity or gain political support. He believes that reforms of this kind should be based on current local knowledge rather than politically motivated actions. It would have been better to improve the conditions of existing traditional rulers with large domains than to create new ones with no domains.

Another interviewee was the *Gwom Rwei* of Fan, His Highness Da Dashwei Iliya Chungwom. He told us that from time immemorial traditional rulers have handled cases of theft, adultery, fornication, farm disputes and so on. This was possible because the Berom communities were autonomous and independent. The chief was very effective in the maintenance of peace; he was the symbol for the promotion of the socio-economic aspirations and defence of his people. There have always been conflicts within the communities and between communities. The root causes of conflict in this area are the following:

- high levels of poverty;
- uneven development with townships possessing most amenities;
- bad governance due to nepotism, favouritism, mediocrity of appointees and looting of the public treasury;
- lack of respect for traditional rulers who are recognised only when there is a crisis;
- the power to appoint and depose traditional rulers has been abused by state governors.

What can be done to improve this situation? The *Gwom Rwei* put forward the following arguments:

- Traditional rulers should be involved in the use of local public funds to ensure development and poverty eradication; monitoring should be undertaken at all levels: federal, state and LG;
- The 1976 reforms should be reviewed to return to traditional rulers the powers that they enjoyed under the Native Administration;
- Traditional rulers should be given formal powers to settle disputes using local customs. For example in Fan, there is a family in charge of administering public oaths and ordeals concerning judicial matters. Such customs should be recognised;
- Land use legislation should return power over land matters to traditional rulers because they are the custodians of customs and traditions.

He was chairman of the Youth Council in the LGA and so is very much aware of threats to security. On coming to the throne he knew that he had to carefully manage post-crisis traumas and especially the lack of trust between Fulani and the host community. People would always remember the battles in his domain. The 2001 crisis began in Jos on a Friday, spread to Bukuru by Saturday and to Heipang on Sunday. The Fulani at Nding decided they would leave in spite of assurances given to them that they would not be attacked. They insisted that they would leave but the youth would not allow them to carry their belongings. Three days later, the Fulani returned and attacked the village killing 13 people including the chief. The number of the Fulani killed could not be ascertained. The *Gwom Rwei* alleged that there was strong evidence implicating the security personnel in the crisis. Given the background of this deep-rooted enmity, it will take a lot of tact and patience to pacify both sides of the divide.

In April 2005 some Fulani came to settle along the Nding-Lo Fan axis. Conflict almost erupted when a Fulani cow was killed by the Berom. His people were resisting the arrival of the Fulani in the area because they were not known. He had to use the resolution of the 2004 peace conference which states that people should go back to their former places of abode to mediate the conflict successfully. He has made up his mind that any situation that ignites conflict should be referred to the police quickly.

One incident involved two families in a protracted land dispute that was resolved in a court of appeal after 22 years. Recently one of the protagonists, a retired reverend from the Church Of Christ In Nigeria (COCIN), led family members in forcefully taking possession of the disputed land. Members of the other family were alerted and gathered at the scene. In the scuffle that ensued one person sustained machete wounds. The *Gwom Rwei* was informed and he drafted the police in to make arrests. The reverend was detained by the police for four days before the *Gwom Rwei* requested that he be released. Unfortunately the reverend proved uncooperative and produced land documents to back his claims of ownership. The *Gwom Rwei* has now asked the police to establish the authenticity of these: if they are forged then the reverend will be handed back to the police. The *Gwom Rwei* believed that if he had not intervened promptly then this dispute could easily have escalated into a larger conflict.

An interview with Da Gyang Fom, the village head of Kassa, illustrates the role of traditional rulers at this level. He narrated that during the attack on his village by the Fulani, five people were killed. The attack came about as a result of a series of events. After the 7 September 2001 crisis in Jos the Fulani living at Kassa decided to leave in spite of the pleas and assurances of the locals. A few Hausa people also left. In May 2002 the neighbouring village of Kwi was attacked and ten people were killed. A written threat was then issued by the Fulani to another village near Kassa. Two days later this was attacked and four people were killed. The whole village relocated to Kassa. Hausa and Fulani were told to leave Kassa for their own safety. The Hausa/Fulani leadership was told by the LG security meeting to stop carrying out any form of activity at Kassa until total peace had been restored to the area. However, a few days later three Fulani youths returned to the deserted village to harvest cabbages. The infuriated villagers waylaid them and one of them was killed.

Another incident was a result of the resumption of full grazing activities by the Fulani, whose cattle encroached on farms. A Mr. Dung Fom attempted to protect his farm and received a machete cut on his head for his trouble. Two days later a Berom boy was shot dead. The Berom replied with a sweeping attack on all

the Fulani camps in the area. Five days later a reprisal attack on Kassa village by the Fulanis left five people dead and 80 houses destroyed. In both of these cases the Hausa/Fulani leadership and local traditional rulers proved ineffective in preventing the violence.

2.5 Pastoral peoples

2.5.1 General

Nigeria has a rich pastoral heritage and this has been powerfully linked to the evolution of political authority following the Jihad of Usman dn Fodio. Table 3 shows the main pastoral peoples of Nigeria, with their locations and species herded;

Table 3. Pastoral Peoples of Nigeria

Group	Location	Main Pastoral Species*
Arabs		
Baggara	South of Geidam	Cattle
Shuwa	Eastern Borno/Cameroon	Cattle
Uled Suliman	Komadugu Yobe valley	Camels
Fulbe		
Anagamba	Eastern Borno	Cattle
Bokolooji	Northern Borno	Cattle
Maare	South-eastern Borno	Cattle
Sankara	North-western Borno	Cattle
Uda'en	Northern Borno	Uda Sheep
WoDaaBe	Central Borno	Cattle
Kanuri Group		
Badawai	Central Borno	Cattle
Jetko	North of Geidam/Niger	Camels
Kanuri	South-central Borno	Cattle
Koyam	South-central Borno	Cattle
Manga	North-west Borno	Cattle/Camels
Mober	North-eastern Borno/Niger	Cattle
Kanembu Group		
Kuburi	Extreme north-east Borno/ Niger	Cattle
Sugurti	Lake Chad shore	Cattle
Saharans		
Teda (Tubu)	Northern Borno/Niger	Camels
Others		
Yedina (Buduma)	On Lake Chad	Cattle

2.5.2 Fulbe

2.5.2.1 Traditional rulers and pastoralist leaders

Pastoralist leaders are usually appointed by the traditional rulers in the jurisdiction in which they settle and subsequently pay absolute allegiance to them. *Ardos* are mostly appointed by district heads; *Sarkin Fulani* are usually appointed by district heads and are turbaned in colourful ceremonies performed by the Emirs or their senior councillors. However, this differs from Emirate to Emirate. During fieldwork in Zaria, for example, we learned that the district head appoints the *Sarkin Fulani* of Rahama district and turban him at the palace of the Emir of Zazzau. He is a member of the district's security committee chaired by the district head. He reports all cases of insecurity to the committee or directly to the district head if the matter requires urgent attention.

Below the *Sarkin Fulani* there are usually several *Ardos* within a district who are responsible to him. Through this hierarchical structure the Emirate council is able to monitor and manage conflict, in particular the frequent disputes between crop farmers and pastoralists. The *Sarkin Fulani* typically meets from time to time met with all the *Ardos* to discuss issues of concern including ongoing disputes about the management and use of pastoral resources.

The Kaduna state government found this structure working so well that they upgraded one *Sarkin Fulani* (Haruna Jangidi) to the position of district head of Hedduga district in Kachia Grazing Reserve. He reports to the Chief of Ikulu, a non-Muslim leader in southern Kaduna, and this relationship has been working well. The district head is a member of the Ikulu Chiefdom council and this has given confidence to pastoralist groups living in the area. This has facilitated mutual understanding and the development of trust between different ethnic groups. The voices of the pastoralist groups are not only heard in the district but also in local and state government. This had added respect and authority to the Chief of Ikulu.

In Dalyam, Gashish and Panyam districts in Kebbi and Plateau states, the *Sarkin Fulani* or *Ardos* are included in all peace meetings. For example, during the Plateau state crisis in 2001, *Ardo* Gidado Ideris and *Ardo* Abubakar Idris of Gashish and Panyam respectively were able to liaise with the district heads and successfully prevent reprisal attacks. The peace dialogue has continued to third day. Hadejia Emirate in Jigawa state has accorded similar recognition to pastoralist leaders. A joint farmer-grazier committee set up in Kirkassama district has pastoral leaders as members including leaders of the Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN). Similarly, in its strategy to support the process of resource sharing in the Hadejia-Nguru Wetland, six elected pastoralist representatives take part in the mega-wetland committee. This complements other peace processes initiated by traditional rulers.

3. Religious associations

3.1 Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI)

The Jama'atul Nasrul Islam (JNI) is an association for the support of Islam. Its foundation is indeed the most important effort to unite the Muslims in the Northern Nigeria under one umbrella. It is the only religious organisation with a supra-regional orientation in which religious scholars and religious movements of different and opposing tendencies have come together in order to discuss and determine their political and religious aims and to present them to the Nigerian public (Loimeier 1997: 135). As such the JNI has contributed considerably towards the development of Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

In November 1960 Abubakar Gumi, who was then the religious adviser of the Prime Minister, and Dr. Abubakar Imam, the treasurer of Nigerian Peoples' Congress (NPC), suggested that an umbrella organisation for all Muslims should be created. A meeting was held by persons interested in the foundation of such an organisation on 15 January 1962 in Kaduna. Those who attended the meeting were mostly close

confidants of Ahmadu Bello. They included Mi Aliyu, Ahmad Talib, Hussaini Adamu, Ahmadu Joda, Mallam Musa Bida, Abubakar an-Nafaty from Ggombe, and al-Hajj Haliru Binji from Sokoto.

During the first meeting in Kaduna the participants agreed upon the future name of the organization (JNI) and undertook the first concrete steps to set up the JNI. Bello provided credit which enabled the founding committee to obtain a piece of land in Kaduna where the first JNI school was built. The new organisation received a lot of financial support from foreign countries. Copies of the Qur'an were donated by a Pakistani businessman and JNI's first centre was the new Sultan Bello mosque in Kaduna which was constructed with Saudi support.

The formal foundation of the JNI was proclaimed on 9 March 1964 in Kaduna. The Waziri Sokoto Junaidu was elected first Chairman of the JNI, and the Prime Minister acted as its supreme patron. The Sultan of Sokoto succeeded the premier after his death in 1960. Abubakar an-Nafaty from Gombe served as the Secretary-General and was succeeded by Ibrahim Dasuki in 1971 after his death. Ibrahim Dasuki remained Secretary-General of JNI until his nomination as the new Sultan of Sokoto in November 1988. With his nomination Dasuki automatically became the supreme patron of JNI while the Grand Kadi of Abuja, Bashir Sambo, became the new Secretary-General.

Various committees were formed to help in the day-to-day running of the organisation. Among these is a General Purpose Committee (GPC) with the responsibility of leading the JNI and managing its everyday affairs. This committee also drafted the revised 1975 and 1988/89 constitutions of JNI. The aim of the organisation was defined as first, the promotion of Islam; the establishment of schools and hospitals; the organisation of lectures, conferences and seminars; and the dissemination of propaganda relating to the unity of all Muslims. Others committees included the Central Council Committee, responsible for approving changes in the constitution, and committees for finance and education.

The JNI was organised in branches in each federal state. The patron of each branch was the respective traditional ruler of the region. Each state branch delegated one representative to the GPC. The state branch was fully responsible for the work and financing of the JNI in their respective areas. Area councils and local government branches were also established to facilitate the organisation's work. In 1979 the JNI had about 100 local government branches across Nigeria, the majority of them in the north.

Jama'tul Nasrul Islam financed its projects in part through its own sources of income. These include donations from members and supporters. Until 1984 all members contributed a monthly fee of at least ten kobo. The JNI received further fees from every new member and also part of the annual *zakat* payments, which could be made through JNI. The JNI drew further income from the rent of its houses and received annual dividends from shares it owned in a number of companies.

3.2 The Sufi Brotherhoods

Paden in 1973 wrote that 'the two Sufi brotherhoods, that is the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya are the only brotherhoods of importance in Nigeria'. The Qadiriyya had been present in Hausaland for several centuries and played an important role in the Jihad of 1804-1808. The Tijaniyya on the other hand was introduced only in the 19th century. From then on, the Tijaniyya became the second most important religious force in the Sokoto Empire. A number of Emirs and scholars, dissatisfied with the status quo, joined the Tijaniyya.

3.2.1 The Qadiriyya-Nasiriyya

The sect of the Tariqa developed around the Kano based scholar, Sheikh Nasiru Kabara. Since inception, the Qadiriyya-Nasiriyya was under pressure from the dynamic expansion of the Tijaniyya-Ibrahimiyya. To revitalize the Qadiriyya, Nasiru Kabara used policies which were similar to those of the Tijaniyya. These policies helped him to empower the Qadiriyya which transformed into a religious mass movement along the lines of the Tijaniyya-Ibrahimiyya.

When the Emir of Kano Wali Suleiman went on Hajj to Mecca 1937, Kabara used the opportunity to give Wali Suleiman a letter for the Khalifa of the Qadiriyya-Samaniyya in Mecca Sheikh Abu-I-Hassan as-Samaniyya. He requested the Samaniyya leader to initiate him and make him his Muqaddam of the Samaniyya branch. Abu-I-Hassan was impressed by his versatility in Islam and granted his request by appointing him, again by letter his Muqaddam and leader of the Qadiriyya-Samaniyya in Kano. Sheikh Abul-Hassan of course had nothing to lose at all by appointing him leader of this branch of Tariqa as was not available at all in northern Nigeria. This appointment made Kabara more prominent as regard to his foreign connection in the brotherhood. He established direct contact to the centres of origin of the different branches of the Qadiriyya and once in possession of the new Silasil he became the focus of attention for other followers and Malamai of the Qadiriyya in Kano and Nigeria who wanted to renew their new Silasil through him and therefore, had to recognize his superiority.

Thus between 1937 and the late 1950s Kabara's bid for leadership within the Qadiriyya in Kano and Nigeria was essentially successful. Kabara later got into direct contact with the leader of the Qadiriyya-Samaniyya during his first Hajj in 1949. He also received further Silasils from other scholars. These include Qadiriyya-Amaniyya, which at that time was lead by Muhammed as-Sayyid Sa'd, Qadiriyya-Shadhiliyya and the Qadiriyya-Arusiyya. The Muqaddam and leader of the Qadiriyya-Shadhiliyya in Kano was Ahmad bin Ali. He was a dynamic personality and was able to look over the Qadiriyya-Arusiyya during its time of stagnation. He was one of the most important disciples of Kabara; he also represented like Kabara a younger generation of scholars of the Qadiriyya in Kano who supported the revitalisation and Tajdid of the Tariqa.

The 1940s and 1950s saw an increasing number of new networks competing against each other in Kano. Because of this, Nasiru Kabara became aware of the need to establish direct contact with the original centre of the Tariqa in Baghdad. In 1953 he travelled with his trader-disciple Sanusi Dantata to Baghdad where they met the supreme leader of the brotherhood, Sheikh Sharif Ibrahim Saif ad-ain al-filani. It was reported that as a result of this visit, Kabara was appointed the supreme leader of all the branches of Qadiriyya in West Africa. This increased Kabara's prestige in Kano and Nigeria. How important Kabara became for Baghdad is indicated by the fact that Sheikh Saif ad-Din visited Kabara twice in Kano on the occasion of the Maulid' Abd al- Qadir. Thus we can see that Kabara became the first scholar of the Qadiriyya in Nigeria and the whole of West Africa to establish a direct personal link to the spiritual centre and the supreme leader of the brotherhood.

Kabara faced serious challenges in the course of his efforts to unify the Qadiriyya. For example, his teacher Muhammed as-Sayyid Sa'id at first refused to acknowledge his overall leadership of the Qadiriyya. But looking at Kabara's continued exploits and growing following, in 1956 he recognised Kabara as the supreme leader of the Qadiriyya. As a result Kabara achieved the unification of all branches of the Qadiriyya in Kano under his authority. Still, the old centre of the Qadiriyya in Sokoto continued to resist his efforts. Acknowledgement by Sokoto of the leading role of Kabara was to come later in the 1970s under growing pressure from Abubakar Gumi and Yan Izala. The breakthrough occurred in 1978 when Kabara visited the tomb of Dan Fodio and was handed the 'sword of the army of Dan Fodio' with the mission to lead the Qadiriyya in Nigeria in its struggle against the 'Yan Izala by the then Sultan of Sokoto.

Kabara is an intelligent scholar who has written a lot of books and treaties especially in defence of the Qadiriyya rites and rituals which are criticised by the Tijaniyya and the 'Yan Izala. Kabara's library in Kano has a collection of about 2000 books. The greatest part of the published works of Kabara deals with his description of the Qadiriyya and Sufism in general. His magnum opus is his translation of the Qur'an into Hausa. He also wrote a lot of rejoinders to attacks on the rites of the Qadiriyya. The rites which were criticised include the Dandiri-Dhikir, the celebration of the Maulid-Abd-al-Qadir, and the public performance of the Wazifa.

Nasiru Kabara's position as an important scholar is underlined by the fact that he conducts the annual Ramadan Tafsir in the Emir's palace. In 1958 he was appointed the principal of the Shahuci School of law, and he joined the Kaduna council of Malamai in 1963. He was also a member of JNI and the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and the council of Ulama. In contrasting the development of

the Qadiriyya- Nasiriyya in the last few decades to that of the Tijaniyya Ibrahimiyya, it will be observed that Kabara is the undisputed leader of the Qadiriyya in Northern Nigeria.

3.2.2 The Tijaniyya–Ibrahimiyya

The establishment of the Tijaniyya in northern Nigeria goes back to al-Hajj Umar Tai al-Futi who on his way back from the Hajj stayed in Borno and in Sokoto from 1831-1838. He was initiated into the Tijaniyya in the late 1820s, by Abdul al–Karim a Naqil whose own ‘Silsila’ (chain of transmission) led back to Ahmad at Tijani. His short stay in Borno led to the initiation of his host Muhammad Na Kumani, as well as the future Shehu, Umar and Shaykh al-Miskin into the Tijaniyya. When he left Borno for Sokoto, he had already won many supporters in Borno. In Sokoto, he succeeded in gaining the trust of the then Sultan, Muhanimad Bello; he became one of the sultan’s councillors and even married one of his daughters. During his six-year stay in Sokoto, al-Hajj Umar initiated a number of religious scholars into the Tijaniyya. For example Babban Malami Madabo, Shehu Umar in Kano, the Mallawa clan in Zaria that had led the Jihad in Zaria under Malam Musa. In 1852, he left Gwandu and Sokoto and went eastward with the intention of undertaking the Hajj. However, he was to settle in Adamawa where he died in 1862.

The development of the Tijaniyya in Kano and northern Nigeria in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s was dominated by the efforts of the Tajdid of Ibrahim Niass. He succeeded in uniting the various competing networks of the Tijaniyya in Kano under his authority and he established the Tijaniyya-Ibrahimiyya as a mass movement in northern Nigeria. Niass appointed various Muqaddamun scholars and they consequently set up their own networks. After the withdrawal of Ibrahim Niass from Nigeria in 1963, the quarrels between these networks broke out thereby permanently weakening the Tijaniyya in northern Nigeria. The Emirs exploited the differences between both networks, especially Abdullahi Bayero, so as to maintain their own claims of political and spiritual leadership.

In the face of this situation, in the 1930s the Salgawa, one of the networks of the Tijaniyya, tried to draw support from the outside by using their extended networks of trade. In the 1930s trade contacts had been established with Senegal, where the rise of Ibrahim Niass was already underway. The Emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero, in 1937 was advised by Wali Sulaiman to go on pilgrimage in order to meet Sheikh Niass. Ibrahim Niass had laid the foundations for his rise within the Tijaniyya in Senegal prior to meeting Abdullahi Bayero. While in Mecca, the Emir of Kano, Abdullahi, and his advisor, Wali Sulaiman, met and acknowledged the authority of Niass as the leader of the Tijaniyya. Bayero further invited Niass to visit him in Kano. Before coming back, both Abdullahi and Wali received a new Silsila from Niass.

The first official visit of Niass to Nigeria took place in 1944, but was kept secret from the Tijaniyya followers. He used that opportunity to distribute some copies of his works to the people through Emir Abdulkhi and Wali Suleiman. The second public visit of Niass to Kano took place the following year. This time he met not only the Emir but also a number of selected Malamai of the Tijaniyya and explained some aspects of his teachings to them. He gave new Silsila to some religious scholars and was acknowledged by them as the overall leader of the Tijaniyya.

Even before Niass’ visit to Nigeria, some Nigerian traders and scholars prepared his acknowledgement as the leader of the Tijaniyya in Nigeria. The first Nigerians who visited Niass in Kaolack (Senegal) were the Salgawa Umaru Falke, Tijani Usman and Muhammad Sani Kafanga. Umaru Falke had established an extended network of trade that reached to Southern Nigeria and Ghana. On his journeys, he spread the Silsila of Niass to southern Nigeria. He had been initiated into the Tijaniyya as early as appointed Muqaddam of the brotherhood in 1925. Tijani Usman grew up together with Muhammad Salga in Kano. After the death of Abdullahi Salga in 1962 he was one of the out standing leaders of the Tijaniyya in Kano. Like Umaru Falke, he was also a trader.

Muhammad Sani Kafanga (1909-1989) was another famous leader of the Tijaniyya in Kano. He originally studied under the supervision of his father, a Kanuri Malam from Kibiya (Rano). After that he studied under many scholars in Zaria, Birnin Kebbi and Kano. He started trading in Biayeles and later concentrated on the

trade on gems and mirrors on the Kurmi market in the old city of Kano. He acquired an image as a scholar and wrote about 50 small booklets. His centre of teaching was the Sanka Mosque in Unguwan Sanka. Like Tijani Usman and Umaru talk he was a follower of the NPC and later opposed Emir Muhammad Sanusi's claim of overall spiritual leadership within the Tijaniyya in Nigeria. Until his death on 29 May 1989, he was one of the most renowned religious scholars of the Tijaniyya in Kano. He had as one of his disciples Aminu Dantata of the great trading house of the Dantata family, who in turn was one of the most important financiers of the Qadiriyya in Kano.

The following of the Tijaniyya-Ibrahimiyya not only grew in the urban centres of the North like Kano but was also propagated by the trader-scholars in the trading outposts of the Hausa in the cities of the south. Finally, they pushed further along the new roads and railway tracks into the rural regions and established bases in rural centres like Gusau, Argungu, Kaura Namoda, Funtua, Malumfashi and Ringim.

The connection they had with the populist movement, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) under the leadership of Aminu Kano and Sa'adu Zungur whose centre of activities was Kano gave them a mass of followers. In the course of increasing politicisation of public life since the late 1940s, more and more young followers of the Tijaniyya felt themselves drawn to this party. The increasing radicalisation of many young Tijanis, however, was seen by the leader of the ruling party in Northern Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello, as well as by a number of conservative Malamai of the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya, as a threat for the further development of their own policies in the north.

In 1956, on the occasion of a public Tafsir (interpretation of the Qur'an) Nasiru Kabara forbade his followers to join the NEPU, and some Malamai of the Tijaniyya like Tijani Usman, Muhammad Sani Kafanga also followed suit. Despite the support of this group of Malamai by Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Tijanis preferred to keep their links with the NEPU and to end their affiliation with the above mentioned Malamai. An official political alliance between the NEPU and the Tijaniyya-Ibrahimiyya was realised only after the deposition of Muhammad Sanusi in 1963. Until then he was one of the leading politicians of the NPC in the north.

The dynamism of the Tijaniyya-Ibrahimiyya was reflected in its development as an organisation. Other organisations included Jama'at al faida founded by Niass in Senegal in 1930, Jama'at Ansar ad-Din (the community of the supporters of the Religion) 1946, Jama'at Anwar al-Faidat (the community of the Rays of Grace) 1958. Significantly more powerful among them was the Fityan al-Islam (The Heroes of Islam) founded on 11 November 1963. The Fityan al-Islam was founded by Sheikh Mudi Salga, a Kano-based Tijani leader. It originated as a reaction to the emergence of the dissident Ahmadiyya movement in Kano in 1962 and as a forum of the conservative Kano Malamai against the modernising efforts of Ahmadu Bello and his new Kaduna-Sokoto based Islamic organisations with Jama'at Nasr al-Islam (JNI) in the lead. Mudi Salga was elected first national president of the Fityan al-Islam.

Sir Ahmadu Bello registered Fityan al-Islam in 1963 after JNI's Secretary General, Abubakar An-nafaty, convinced him that the Fityan al-Islam would not work as a force of opposition to the JNI. In the 1960s the Fityan al-Islam rapidly became the most dynamic Islamic organisation in northern Nigeria and was soon able to set up regional headquarters in all the northern provinces, including Sokoto, Niger, Kaduna, Plateau and Bauchi. Membership fees, contributions and donations financed the movement. The Fityan al-Islam had modern Islamic schools and mosques. They also maintained a team of preachers in order to fight the anti-Sufi propaganda of the Yan Izala; the leader of this team of counter-propagandists was Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi.

In 1962 Abdullahi Salga and Umaru Falke died, and in 1970 Tijani Usman and in 1974 Abubakar Atiku were to follow. This led to a change of generation in the leading circles of the Tijaniyya in Kano. As a consequence, a multitude of locally competing networks developed within the Tijaniyya in the 1970s. No scholar within the brotherhood since Niass had left in 1963 was able to unite the brotherhood to the extent of being recognised as its leader in Nigeria. By the mid-1980s the Tijaniyya presented the picture of an accumulation of numerous quarrelling networks, and only some of them have gained regional importance.

These centres of power within the Tijaniyya are grouped essentially around the following Malamai: in Kano the scholar-traders Uba A. Ringim, who also supports Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi, Uba Waru, who supports Khalifa Ismail Ibrahim as well as Ishiaka Rabi'u and Aminu Dantata. Another Kano-born trader and businessman Garba Hamza is a major supporter of the Tijaniyya in Lagos. In Maiduguri, Ibrahim Salih, Sheikh Abul-Fatih and Sheikh Al-Miskin were the leaders, in Bauchi, Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi: Kaduna, Sheikh Umaru Sanda, Sheikh Siraj and Malam Audu Bida, and in Jos, Alhaji Salihu Nakande. The break-up of the Tijaniyya into smaller units had a negative impact. This became worse after the establishment of the Yan Izala which constantly attack the Tariqas especially the Tijaniyya.

3.3 The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

This organisation was formed in August 1976 as a political arm of the Christian church in Nigeria to meet the desire for an apex organisation. According to Enwerem (1992: iv, 5) CAN emerged in 1976 as the political umbrella in the service of a diverse group of Christian churches. The Protestant Christians are members of the Council of Christian Churches of Nigeria and the Catholics are not. With the creation of CAN as an umbrella organisation the political response of Christians to national issues is a unitary one regardless of particular church allegiances.

CAN allows for the existence of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria as a semi-autonomous branch given the different ways in which these non-denominational churches operate. The founder of PFN was late Archbishop Benson Idahosa. The Pentecostals have a membership numbering millions and are very influential in CAN. Members would not carry out any instruction of CAN unless the PFN leadership have spoken. PFN are very radical both in theology and practice and can be very uncompromising as far as inter-faith debates are concerned.

CAN has youth and women's wings in addition to PFN. By the middle of the 1980s the youth wing was providing martial training to its members. CAN's mandate is neither religious nor evangelistic but a conceived as counter-force to any threat to the churches in Nigeria. Government had hoped that it would be easy to standardise and harmonise Christian practices in Nigeria through CAN, but history has shown that sections that do not need financial support from it are quite vocal. CAN believes that

“[T]he Islamic elite of the North has political domination over the country and its ethnic/religious groups. In other words, Islam and the political realities of the North dominate and dictate the tone in which the national politics is played out. Why? It is as a result of the elevation and subsequent institutionalization of the Hausa-Fulani Islamic group to superiority over the other ethnic/religious groups in the country by the British Colonial Administration. How has the Hausa-Fulani been able to maintain this aspect of the colonial legacy in the Nigerian political terrain? It is by way of the Hausa/Fulani elite locating, defining and grounding their politics within a cultural discourse, specifically in the religion of Islam. Thus political opponents are depicted not as politicians with different views, but as being bad Muslims. CAN is the most visible attempt through which Christians in Nigeria as a group have made their most coordinated impact on the politics of contemporary Nigeria. Kukah noted that Christianity in Nigeria which hitherto, has been ‘always protesting against discrimination and domination by Muslims’ is beginning to shed this ‘weeping-child’ image and replace it with a self-confident face “seeking to shape the direction and content of Nigerian politics.” (Enwerem 1992: 24-25)

4. Regalia and traditional symbols of power

The nature of power held by traditional rulers requires that they symbolise that power through its visible representation. This was well-established during the pre-colonial era, with all levels of power having fairly standardised appurtenances, such as long trumpets, ostrich-feather fans and particular types of sandals. Music played a major role in dramatising the power of the ruler, particularly at the major Islamic feasts of Id-el-Fitri and Id-el-Kebir. Social hierarchies and the authority delegated to individuals was reflected in dress codes and the appearance of uniformed retainers.

On the edges of the Islamic zone, the symbols of power were less well codified. Islamic but non-Hausa Emirates such as Busa and Nupe had their own regalia, which related to their specific history (in both cases, powerful states prior to the spread of Islam). The beaded crowns of Yoruba rulers are maintained in the Islamic areas, despite their ambiguous elements.

In modern times, the symbolic representation of power is more confused. The oil-money flowing into Nigeria has created many wealthy individuals who are more likely to express their status with cars and large but idiosyncratic mansions and to compete to appear in celebrity magazines such as OK. Rulers who can afford it buy impressive cars and upgrade their palaces, but there are difficulties in switching codes; if they exchange the traditional regalia for the markers of modernity, they jettison what makes them distinctive.



Royal drums, Zazzau



Keeper of the royal drums, Zazzau



Regalia of the Mai Tangale



Medals belonging to the Mai Tangale



Regalia of Senior District Head,
Gombe town



Ceremonial dress for horses, Gombe



Turbanning ceremony in Zazzau



Salah in Kano



Salah in Kano



Salah in Kano



Salah in Kano



Salah in Kano



Salah in Kano



Salah in Kano



Bodyguard, Rahma District, Zazzau Emirate



Bodyguard, Berom Chiefdom, Jos



Hadejia palace guards



Royal guards, Tangale

5. Preliminary conclusions

5.1 How do traditional rulers function today?

As the case studies in this interim report show, the current situation of traditional rulers is very ambiguous. They command considerable traditional allegiance in certain areas, but their non-elected status also makes them a target for local politicians. Some are impressively hard-working in the promotion of their region and representation of the interests of the people they serve, others are corrupt and have been summarily ejected for factional behaviour or financial misdemeanours. Government is willing to make use of their services in peace-making, but is not willing to give them the political and administrative support to make the chieftaincy institutions function properly. In addition, the widespread upgrading and creation of chieftaincies is often a way of rewarding wealthy political donors. As a result, their position is regarded with scepticism by the general population and they do not command the allegiance essential to making this role function effectively.

Another issue this study is intended to consider is the role of Islam in supporting the authority of traditional rulers and its significance for conflict resolution. While it is certainly true that Islamic theology is used in the promulgation of chiefly status, in reality, rulers stand or fall by their behaviour. Unpopular rulers will be forced out, regardless of their religious affiliation. In terms of conflict, it is important to note that although Christian/Muslim conflict tends to attract more media coverage and is certainly typical of presentations of conflict, internal conflict between Muslim factions is almost equally prevalent. However, a recent trend, certainly exacerbated by access to international media, but also probably a consequence of action by groups outside Nigeria to influence the agenda, is the development of radical groups that reject all external authority, as the 'Taliban' episode in 2004 showed clearly. Combined with the unchecked flow of arms into the country, this could be the beginning of a worrying future trend.

5.2 Government policy

As of the date of this report, the Nigerian constitution has no provision for traditional rulers although they are intended to play a role in the document under discussion. Policy is made on an *ad hoc*, state-by-state basis and evolves rapidly. But government could consider;

- ❖ Creating a clear and constitutionally specified role for traditional rulers with transparent mechanisms for either making or approving choices and for demoting or dismissing those who fail in their tasks;
- ❖ Specifying remuneration for traditional rulers and the sources of that remuneration;
- ❖ Reducing the certain of 'new' traditional rulers and halting the upgrading process;
- ❖ Specifying more clearly the role traditional rulers would be expected to play in conflict resolution.

5.3 What role for the donors?

For international donors concerned about the situation in Nigeria and willing to provide assistance, for example, to conflict resolution, traditional rulers present something of a problem. They are clearly effective, and yet they are unelected and sometimes clearly side with factional interests. However, it is clear that Federal Government policies in the arena of conflict resolution are completely dysfunctional, suggesting that any civil society institution that can play a role in improving the situation is worth support. To this end, donors could consider;

- ❖ Developing a 'good rulers guide', an examination of the traditional rulers' institutions that are functioning effectively;

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- ❖ Assist in developing government policy both to provide traditional rulers with more political support while maintaining the capacity to get rid of wayward individuals;
- ❖ Providing funds for conflict resolution out of a pool, so that they can be available flexibly and rapidly where conflict breaks out;
- ❖ Work with traditional rulers to develop an 'early warning' system, to identify potential sources of conflict.

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Appendix I. Fieldwork itineraries**Itinerary for fieldwork by Selbut Longtau**

Date	Activity	Research assistance
30/10/05	Meeting with Roger Blench (RB) & Umar Hassan (UH) in Jos to plan the start of fieldwork	-
31/10/05	Continued discussion with RB & UH in Jos	-
1/11/05	Meeting to review draft proposal by RB on the framework of the study	-
5/11/05	Brief meeting with other team members, Martin Walsh (MW), Philip Ostien (PO), RB & UH in Jos	-
6/11/05	Final review of study framework and field trip to Kaduna	-
7-8/11/05	Library research at Arewa House, Kaduna	Mr. Salisu Bala and staff
9/11/05	Library Research at Institute of Administration, Ahamdu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, and return journey to Jos.	Mr. Andrew
10/11/05	Visit to Ministry for Local Government & Chieftaincy Affairs Jos & booking visit to Gbong Gwom's palace	-
14/11/05	Visit to ministry for collection of documents and confirmation of appointment to see paramount ruler	-
15/11/05	Received MW and planning of research	-
16/11/05	Interview with Dagwom Rwei of Barakin Ladi LGA at Lobiring Ropp	Mr. Rwang Pam
17/11/05	Search of bookstores for local literature with MW	-
18/11/05	Field trip to Foron for an interview with the Gwom Rwei	Mr. Rwang Pam
19/11/05	Interview with Gbong Gwom Jos at Little Rayfield	Dr. Samuel Nyam Dung
20/11/05	Some analysis of field data with MW	-
21/11/05	Interview of Gwom Rwei of Fan and Gwom Kassa.	Mr. Rwang Pam
22/11/05	Trip to Abuja together with MW	-
23/11/05	Writing up more field notes and discussion with MW	-
24/11/05	Joint training on powerpoint preparation etc. with UH	-
25/11/05	Return trip to Jos	-
28-30/11/05	Literature review	-
1-8/12/05	Newspapers review	-
12/12/05	Trip from Jos to Shendam and Ba'ap to book to interviews with Long Goemai and Long Pan	-
13/12/05	Interview with the Long Goemai at the palace in Shendam	Mr. Raymond Daze
14/12/05	Interview with District Head of Inshar	Mr. Raymond Daze
15/12/05	Interview with Long Pan at Ba'ap	Mr. Ayuba Damisa
16/12/05	Interview with subject groups at Ba'ap	Mr. Ayuba Damisa
17/12/05	Interviews at Namu with subjects	Mr. Ayuba Damisa
18/12/05	Return trip to Jos	-
28/12/05	Writing monthly report	-
25/1/06	Trip to Gombe together with Dr. Gerhard Kosack (GK)	Rev. Daniel Biliri
26/1/06	Group interviews at palace of Mai Tangale	Rev. Daniel Biliri
27/1/06	Trip to ancestral home of Tangale people and group interviews	Alkalami Tangale
	Interviews with Waziri Gombe	Mal. Dauda
28/1/06	Interview with Yerima Gombe & Senior District Head of Gombe	Mal. Dauda
	Interviews with subjects	Pastor Michael Musa
29/1/06	Interviews with Ajiya Gombe & Senior District Head of Kwami	Mal. Dauda

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Date	Activity	Research assistance
30/1/06	Interviews with Fadama II facilitators at Gombe	Mr. Moses Dogari
	Some analysis of Gombe data with GK	-
31/1/06	Travel from Gombe to Abuja	-
1/2/06	Completion of field notes from Gombe	-
2/2/06	Wrap-up meeting with GK & UH	-
3/2/06	Return trip from Abuja to Jos	-
6/2/06	Interviews with HRM Mal. Tagwai Sambo Chief of Marwa at Manchok	Mr. Raymond Gobum
7/2/06	Group interviews of District and Village Heads at Manchok	Mr. Raymond Gobum
8/2/06	Return trip to Jos	-
9/2/06	Interviews with HRH Mr. Gambo Makama the Etun Numana at Gwantu	Mr. Elias G. Mairabo
10/2/06	Interviews with subjects at Gwantu	Mr. Elias G. Mairabo
11/2/06	Return trip to Jos	-
12/2/06	Trip from Jos to Lafia, Nasarawa state	-
13/2/06	Visit to SSG's Office and interviews with officials in-charge of chieftaincy affairs	Mrs. P. Barau
14/2/06	Interviews with subjects & women in Lafia and Nasarawa Eggon	Mr. Williams Ebuga
15/2/06	Interview with HRM Mr. Bala Angbazo Aren Eggon at Nasarawa Eggon	Mr. Williams Ebuga
16/2/06	Interview with HRH Mr. Ayuaba Audu Zhe Migili in Obi LGA	-
17/2/06	Return trip to Jos	-
21/2/06	Trip to Tafawa Balewa and interview with Mr. Jonathan Manzo	Mrs. Salamatu Gowon
22/2/06	Group interviews with agitators for Siyawa Chieftdom.	-
23/2/06	Return trip to Jos.	-
28/2/06	Writing monthly report	-
1-5/3/06	Preparation of draft interim report.	-
17-23/3/06	Editing of interim report	-

Itinerary for fieldwork by Umar Hassan

Date	Activity	Research assistance
30/10/05	Travel from Abuja to Jos to begin work with RB and Selbut Longtau (SL) on planning the study	-
31/10/05	Continued discussion with RB & SL in Jos	-
1/11/05	Meeting to review draft proposal by RB on the framework of study	-
5/11/05	Received MW in Abuja & travel together to Jos	-
6/11/05	Further review of study frame with RB, MW & SL in Jos	-
7/11/05	Final recap of study plan & travel to Kaduna with MW & SL	
8/11/05	Library search at Arewa House, Kaduna, with MW & SL	Abdullahi (Librarian)
9/11/05	Library search continued	Abdullahi (Librarian)
10/11/05	Team travel to Zaria & commenced further library search at Institute of Administration, Congo	Librarian (Local Government Studies Library)
11/11/05	Met the Emir of Zazzau briefly & established rapport with palace staff	Abubakar (Protocol office)

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Date	Activity	Research assistance
12/11/05	Visit to Sabo LG prepare ground for field interviews. Training on camera handling & powerpoint	-
13/11/05	Revisit to Emir of Zazzau's Palace for more data, booking to visit Sarkin Fada (Senior Councillor of the Emirate). Further training with MW	-
14/11/05	Interview with Sarkin Fadan Zazzau; typing up field notes & further training	-
15/11/05	Interview with staff of Soba LG, district and village heads of Rahama district, Zazzau Emirate	Ismaila Maiwada
16/11/05	Travel from Zaria to Jos	-
19/11/05	Field interviews in Kwaru	Adamu Galadima
21/11/05	Badarawa and Malali, Kaduna state.	-
22/11/05	Revisit to Zaria for a write-up from the Emir of Zazzau	Bala Na-Sharu
23/11/05	Wrap-up meeting with MW & SL in Abuja	-
30/11/05	Report writing for the month of November	-
5/12/05	Travel	-
7/12/05	Kogi state Ministry for Chieftaincy Affairs	Sam Abulaka
8/12/05	Travel to Okene (Ebiraland)	Salihu Ibrahim
10/12/05	For rapport building and field interviews	-
11/12/05	Travel to Idah (Igalaland), interviews	-
13/12/05	With the Attah of Igala, senior councillors, district, village and ward heads	Salihu Ibrahim
14-15/12/05	Visit to Niger state Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs	Balarabe Ramalam
16-18/12/05	Fieldwork in Kontagora Emirate	Balarabe Ramalam
19-22/12/05	Field work in New Bussa Emirate	Balarabe Ramalam
31/12/05	Report writing for the month of December 2005	-
4/1/06	Making contacts and report writing in Kano Emirate	Muhammad Barkindo
5-9/1/06	Field interviews with Wambai Kano (Emir's representative), district heads, Yan Daba and Sarkin Bambadawa, Kano state	Muhammad Barkindo
10/1/06	Sallah (Id-el Kabir) coverage in Kuje, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja	Ibrahim Gaji
11/1/06	Id-el Kabir celebrations' coverage in Zazzau (Sallah Homage), Kaduna state	Madaki and Bala Na- Sharu
12/1/06	Coverage of Id-el Kabir's celebrations in Kano Emirate, Kano state	Muhammad Barkindo
13/1/06	Id-el Kabir (Sallah) celebrations coverage in Katsina Emirate	Saidu Hussaini
14-18/1/06	Making contacts and fieldwork in Katsina Emirate	Saidu Hussaini
19/1/06	Received GK in Abuja and travelled to Hadejia, Jigawa state	-
20-22/1/06	Interviews with senior councillor (representative of the Emir), district heads and Bulamas of Birniwa, Kirkassama. Guri and Auyo, Hadejia Emirate, & Jigawa subject	Facilitation by Steve Fraser, JEWEL project and introductory letters from Emirate council
23-24/1/06	Interviews with staff of Community Law Centre, Jigawa Women's Network for Access to Justice (JIWNAJ) and Yakubu Memorial Youth Development Association, Birnin Kudu, Dutse Emirate, Jigawa state	Facilitation by Ciroma, JEWEL project
25/1/06	Travel with GK to Bauchi, met SL. Travel with GK to Abuja	
31/1/06-1/2/06	Revisit to Katsina and Zazzau Emirates, to complete fieldwork and collect write-up from Emir of Zazzau	Saidu Hussain and Adamu Galadima

The Role of Traditional Rulers in Conflict Prevention and Mediation in Nigeria: Interim Report

Date	Activity	Research assistance
2/2/06	Wrap-up meeting with GK & SL in Abuja	-
8-9/2/06	Fieldwork at Kachia Grazing Reserve, Kaduna state, with pastoralist leaders	Adamu Galadima
14-16/2/06	Fieldwork in Kuje Kingdom, FCT, Abuja	Ibrahim Gaji
18-23/2/06	Fieldwork in the Sultanate of Sokoto, Sokoto state.	Mahmood Balarabe.
24-27/2/06	Fieldwork in Argungu Emirate, Kebbi State	Mahmood Balarabe
28-3/3/06	Fieldwork in Gwandu Emirate, Kebbi state	Mahmood Balarabe
4-16/3/06	Preparation of interim report.	

Appendix II. Terms of Reference

PREAMBLE

The Role of Traditional Rulers in Conflict Prevention and Mediation

Objective

The objective of this study is to document the current and historical role of traditional rulers in the prevention and mediation of conflict, with a focus on North and Central Nigeria. The study will inform ongoing national discussions on the role of traditional rulers, and DFID and other development partner programmes dealing with conflict, livelihoods and governance. The study is also intended to feed directly into current policy debates about the nature of authority in Islam.

Scope of Work

Nigeria has traditionally had a large number of traditional authorities and rulers who have played an important role in community coherence and traditional justice systems, especially in the North and Centre of the country. During the colonial era, the positions of existing authorities were recognised, and new chiefs were created to harmonise the system. Although this system has persisted until the present day, the rise of alternative poles of power, in particular the local and state governments, has tended to undermine the powers of such individuals or councils.

It has been observed that in parts of Nigeria, traditional rulers' long establishment and the respect in which they are held makes them more effective in conflict resolution than 'official' mechanisms. They are also able to take pre-emptive action through their familiarity with the different sections of the community, where the government has been observed to be reactive. Some traditional rulers work extremely hard with little official recognition of their efforts.

Not all rulers have equal respect or equal authority. In much of the south (with a few important exceptions), their posts are little more than ceremonial. The Hausa Emirates in the north retain significant authority and influence, but the role of traditional leaders in that region is relatively well documented and understood.

The 1999 constitution does not define the role of traditional rulers. This is now seen in some quarters as a policy failure, and the President has established a committee to look into the part they should play in a revised Constitution. The Government Panel established in Plateau State in 2004 to make recommendations following the State of Emergency consisted of 'Elders' representing each ethnic group. This choice of traditionally respected individuals is an example of recognition of the impotence of government officials in these situations and the corresponding importance of respected individuals. Greater information on this topic should thus feed directly into high-level policy debates within Nigeria and also illuminate the nature of Islamic authority systems across the wider region.

This study focuses mainly on the North Central zone (the middle belt), where there have been significant violent conflicts in recent years, and where the role of traditional rulers appears to be significant but is not as well documented as in the north. However, it will also include the northern region, where the researchers believe there are new developments affecting previous understanding of the role of traditional rulers.

Method

The consultants should conduct a study of the authority of traditional rulers, especially across the North and the Middle Belt, which will highlight their roles, looking at both positive and negative aspects, with a particular focus on their potential as mediators in conflict resolution.

The study should;

1. Conduct a literature review on the origins, distribution and current legal and political status of traditional rulers in North-Central Nigeria;
2. Review the origin and evolution of the power of traditional rulers, both within a framework of Islamic law and the Nigerian legal system;
3. Design and carry out a survey of traditional rulers in areas where their power is still functional but largely undocumented. For the reasons given above, the main focus of the work will be the North Central zone of the country. The survey should interview a wide range of stakeholders, including the rulers themselves, palace officials, local politicians, security officials, and subjects of the rulers. The survey should concentrate on the following questions:
 - Where are the traditional rulers who still have recognised authority? What is the basis of that authority, and how do they exercise it? Are there case studies, with a particular focus on their role in prevention or mediation of conflict?
 - How do the affected populations rate their exercise of that power?
 - How do those rulers acquire and maintain their power?
 - How are they funded?
 - What are the constraints on that power?
 - What advice can be given to government concerning the constitutional position of traditional rulers, to enhance their role in conflict mediation and prevention?

Should donors be involved in assisting such rulers, or other engagement with them, and if so in what way?