FROM EVOLUTION TO REVOLUTION:
The Kano Emirate, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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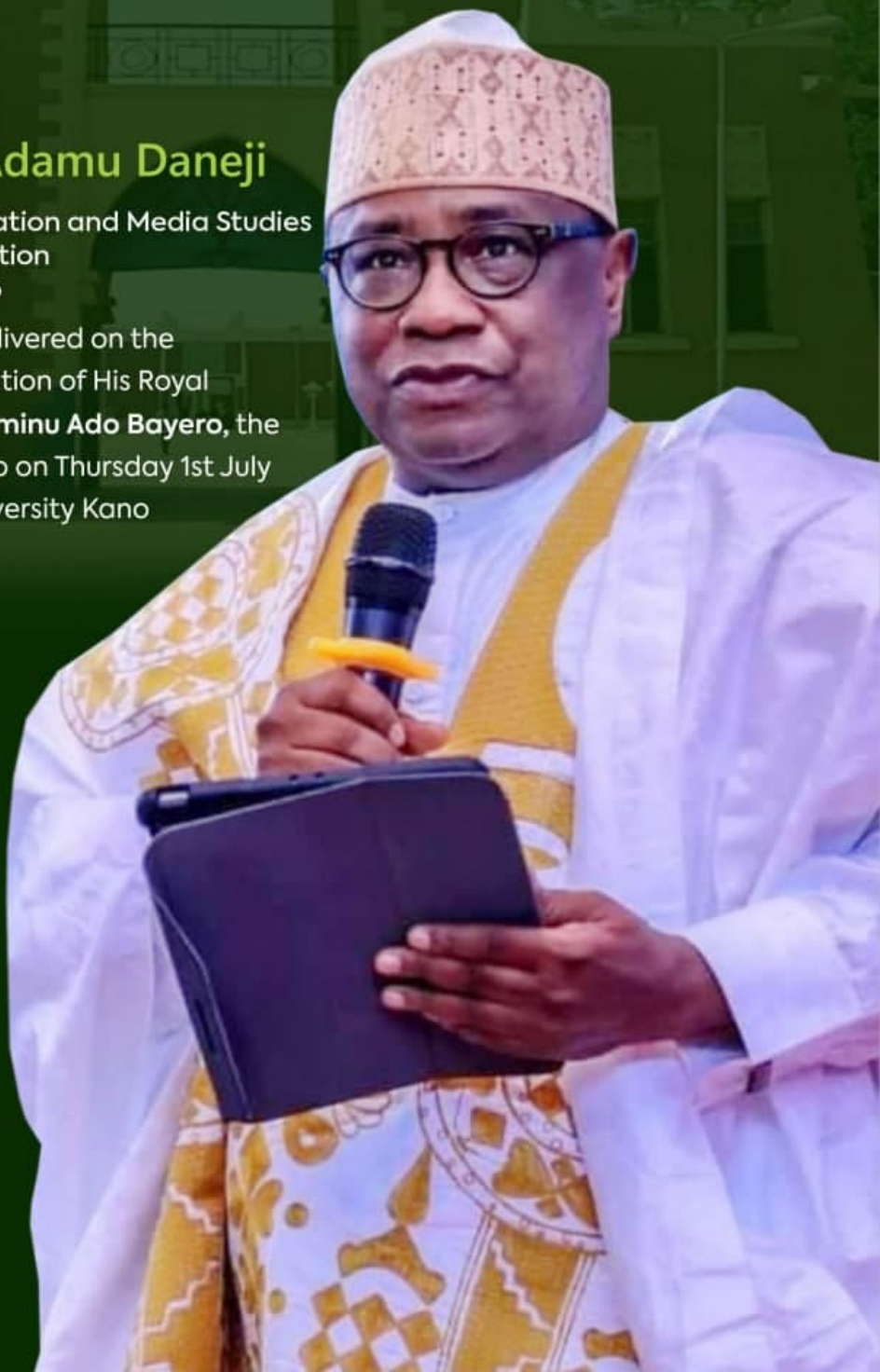
Coronation Lecture delivered on the occasion of the coronation of His Royal Highness, **Alhaji (Dr.) Aminu Ado Bayero,** the 15th Fulani Emir of Kano on Thursday 1st July 2021 at the Bayero University Kano Convocation Arena



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"(Kano!): You are Equal to a Thousand Cities!"
Anon. Tripolitanian Tribute to Kano

Introduction

Of all the grand emirates of Northern Nigeria, none has the spectacular and expansive history in its cultural anthropology like the emirate, now emirates, of old Kano in northern Nigeria. This was attested by the various European travelers – spies, adventurers, etc. – who visited the territory since 16th century to colonial conquest in 1903. These included Al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzân az-Zayyâtî (Leo Africanus, 1513-1515), Clapperton (1826), Heinrich Barth (1851), Paul Staudinger (1885) and P. L. Monteil (1892). However, to understand Kano, it is necessary to go further into history to unravel a fascinating trajectory of historiography that is connected to Kano. Fortunately for us, the history of Kano is well-documented both internally and externally. Internally, the earliest sources of history of Kano were *Daura Makas Sarki* (translated by Arnett 1910) and *The Kano Chronicle* (Palmer 1928). Externally, numerous commentators have provided a rich interpretation of these two sources of the historiography of Kano. A few included Hiskett (1957), Dokaji (1958), Paden (1973), Tahir (1975), Smith (1978), Smith (1997) Last (1980), Bashir (1982), Bello (1982), Smith (1983), Lubeck (1986), Albasu (1989), Hunwick (1993, 1994), and Adamu (1999). As Smith (1997, p. 138) noted,

> The Kano Chronicle is certainly one of the most illuminating and reliable contemporary accounts of the history of any African people or state available to us. As such it is a truly unique document, of which almost every word, its various errors, and its many omissions are equally significant. From the mid-fifteenth century onwards, and perhaps for 100 years before that, it is also sufficiently detailed and reliable to provide a sound basis for structural analysis of the processes of political development at Kano

Kano is fortunate in this respect of having a well-documented history that has stood the test of time. In my brief review of the Kano Emirate, I will bypass the numerous re-interpretations of the history of the emirate from these well-known sources, as such re-interpretation is not likely to add much to our current understanding of Kano. I will also not focus on individual ethnographies of the ruling houses, emirs and dynasties of the Kano Emirate, as these have also been extensively covered previously.

What I intend doing, however, is to situate the history of the Emirate within the framework of the cultural anthropology of Kano as a city which subsequently became an emirate. As Low (1996, p. 384) argued,

> The city as a site of everyday practice provides valuable insights into the linkages of macroprocesses with the texture and fabric of human experience. The city is not the only place where these linkages can be studied, but the intensification of these processes-as well as their human outcomes occurs and can be understood best in cities. Thus, the "city" is not a reification but the focus of cultural and sociopolitical manifestations of urban lives and everyday practices

In my analysis of Kano as a city, I modify the conceptual model outlined by Richard Gabriel Fox (1977) in which he classified the urban anthropology of cities in their cultural settings. Based on his studies, he suggested the evolutionary typology of five urban cultures based on their function, socio-cultural heterogeneity, economy, political power and the historical context in which cities arise.

The typology of urban cultures depends on a conception of cities as centers for the performance of cultural roles found only in state-level societies. According to Fox (1977), such societies have inequalities in economic wealth and political power. The former usually reflects class division, while the latter has specialized institutions such as ruling elites and government bureaucracies. Because cities do not occur in societies without state organization, the terms "urban cultures" and "state-level societies" are closely linked — the former emphasizing belief patterns, the latter stressing social organization in such societies. Consequently, Kano, as a city-state, came to embody the entire Kano Emirate.

Theoretically, the emergence of urban cultures can be sub-divided into three loose categories based on Fox's classification. *First* were urban cultures which emerged before the establishment of presently defined capitalist systems. These encompass at least three types of cities: ritual, administrative and mercantile. These stages seemed to be linear, with one preceding the other. *Second*, there were urban centers that characterize the emergence of capitalist systems and these include the industrial city and the mass-communications village. Third are the colonial urban cultures.

While the study of the emergence of the urban ecology of the Kano Emirate and as a city-state may fit in some of these theoretical frameworks, there are one or two problems. In the first instance, the framework does not provide for clear delineation of the evolutionary status of each category. Thus, it is not clear whether these are linear stages which every city has to undergo in its development, or whether the basic characteristics can all co-exist in the evolution of the same city. Secondly, the framework lacks a criterion which will provide indications of attaining developmental saturation within each development phase. In other words, how industrial should a city be to be considered a true industrial city? Finally, other categorizations seem missing from this broad classification of urban centers; for instance, the emergence of what can be called the *scholastic* city. This may be seen as a city devoted significantly to pursuit of academic activities.

Nevertheless, the classification of urban cultures by Fox, imperfect as it is (see, for instance, Stile, 1979) through which I wish to filter out the evolution of Kano provides a loose framework for the preliminary classification of the development of Kano In this regard therefore, I chose to apply the theoretical frameworks of the city in a linear fashion as: ritual, administrative, mercantile, scholastic, colonial and media hub characteristics.

Kano as a Ritual City

Kano was founded in the 7th century BC by a group of wandering blacksmiths from Gaya town (about 62 km from present Kano city) under the leadership of Kano, their leader, who gave the subsequent settlement its name. They were seeking for iron ore which they found in abundance in Dala hill in the present Kano, and settled there. In a few hundred years, they established a vibrant community with various trade guilds networked around the hill and close to the nearby lush forest (Kurmi) giving rise to Kurmi market. Thus, if Kano is considered a commercial emporium, it is because it deserved it. It was commerce and industry that established Kano.

Historically, valleys and river banks provided favorable environmental factors making town living relatively easy: climate and soil favorable to plant and animal life, an adequate water supply, ready materials for providing shelter, and easy access to other peoples. In other parts of the world, Kano inclusive, the presence of rock formations provided the added security from attack by either herds of wild animals or by organized groups of other invaders. In the case of Kano, Dala hill provided an added advantage of being a base around which a rudimentary iron industry became established. Thus, the lush vegetative environment, the constantly flowing Jakara river, the iron-bearing towering and protective hill, the thick forest of Kurmi to provide hunting grounds, all laid the foundation of urbanization in early Kano. For an urban environment is nothing if it cannot guarantee protection, food, shelter and employment to its inhabitants. Early Kano did all these.

As a result of man's ingenuity he has been able to utilize almost any environment for town living. Environments favorable to the production of food and shelter and ease and comfort of living clearly provided advantages for the beginnings of urban life. But since man's first contact with his inner vision is through his spirituality, his first concern in his new urban setting is the establishment of a series of rituals to appease whatever he felt deserved his worship. Consequently, any early urban settlement can be regarded as a *ritual* city.

This theoretical postulate applied quite well to the development of Kano, which started as a small mercantile community geared towards iron-smelting and associated trades. The entire community, settled at the base of the towering Dala inselberg, and located near water ways of the Jakara river, developed a religious fixation with a section of the river which they revered. Thus, they developed an elaborate system of paying tribute to the spirits of the river. As the idea of having *Sarki* as a political leader was not known, the chief priest of the community, *Mazauda*, became the natural leader of the community. The arrival of a more enlightened immigrant (who was later simply referred to as Dala) with Middle-Eastern knowledge of ritual practices transformed the community into a highly organized ritual city. This raised the contentious issue of 'migrant reformer' on the same level as 'foreign invader' who comes, boldly into a settled society and introduced radical reforms hitherto unknown. In Kano, the priests worked together with other occupational families to entrench their power and control over the community.

Within this context, ritual cities represented the earliest form of urban center, in which the city served as a center for the performance of ritual and for the orthogenetic constitution and conservation of the society's traditions (Redfield, 1956). Dala's introduction of a four-cornered shrine, and his institution of an annual pilgrimage to the fetish housed in the shrine served as a focus through which a social tradition (the annual pilgrimage) is sustained.

According to Fox (1977), ritual cities were found in urban cultures that have been called "segmentary states" or "primitive states." Such states had minimal development of class stratification and political coercion. Although segmentary states had rulers, such as a chiefly lineage or a priesthood, control over land and other means of production remained with clans,

lineages, or other kin-based groups outside the rulers' domination. Political authority and economic wealth were therefore widely dispersed. Early Kano confirms this development. This was because the Dala community was structured according to specified hierarchies controlled by powerful families with whom resided all political and social power. The tradition had it that there were eleven occupational families or clans who controlled the Dala community in Kano, and who, between them, seemed to provide a well-structured social, if not political life for the emergent community.

Limited political centralization and economic coordination meant that the ritual, prestige, and status functions of the state loomed large. Segmentary state rulers were symbolic embodiments of supernatural royal cults or sacred ritual ones. They — their courts and temples — provided a model of the proper political order and status hierarchy that was adhered to throughout the otherwise weakly cohered segmentary state. Through the awe and fear they inspired, they extracted gifts from their followers with which to sustain their priesthood.

The cultural forms of ritual cities converged on the cult centers, temple complexes, or royal courts that dominated their physical space and defined their urban role. As the rulers' habitation, the ritual city spatially embodied the role of the sacred and ceremonial in defining the urban culture (e.g., Wheatley, 1971). The everyday population of the city consisted of those bound to court or temple by family, official duties, or craft and ritual specializations; at ceremonial times, people from the surrounding rural areas temporarily swelled the urban area. The Tsumburbura priesthood was a patrilineal assembly with Barbushe, Dala's great grandson, elevating the priesthood to the level of perfection. Therefore, rather than individualism, secularism, or impersonality, the calendrical round of state rituals, kingly ceremonies, divine sacrifices, sacred celebrations, feasts, funerals, and installations defined urban life, rendering it sacred, corporate, and personalistic (Redfield, 1941).

Kano as an Administrative City

The arrival of the first political leader of Kano, Bagauda from Daura and his army to the community, apparently, according to Dokaji (1958), on invitation from the various guilds who needed an objective leader to organize them into a cohesive political unit, dated as being in 999 A.D. merely gave the bustling commercial settlement an organized political leadership they clearly lacked, except for individual heads of various guilds. Although the ritualist cultists had Mazauda as their leader, not every member of the community was part of the cult – for the most part, the rest were busy with their various trades and crafts to bother about religious leadership.

Bagauda's arrival marked the first stage of the transformation of the community by creating a ruling house, the Kutumbawa, that was to last till 1807 when it was supplanted by the Jihad of Sheikh Usman ɗan Fodiyo. The merchants, hunters and farmers who now formed the community were apparently happy to have organized leadership to guide them, while allowing them to continue with their commercial activities. Bagauda laid the foundation of the transformation of Kano into an administrative city.

Like ritual cities, administrative cities were the habitations of the state rulers. And although Bagauda did not rule the territory from Kano city, he nevertheless left a garrison presence which administered the city on his behalf. It must be pointed out that while Bagauda founded a military dynasty in Kano, he was not the first ruler; Mazauda priesthood had that prerogative. Further, Bagauda's arrival did not really "found" Kano; for the antecedent community of blacksmiths, hunters and farmers had been existing in the territory for well over three centuries *before* his

arrival. Nevertheless, his arrival formed the nucleus of Kano being an administrative city with formal power hierarchies.

The major cultural role of administrative cities was to serve as the locus of state administration. State offices and officers had an urban location, from which they exercised a political control and economic exploitation of the surrounding rural areas quite unknown in ritual cities. Thus, the arrival of Bagauda established a bureaucratic political machinery that determined the structure of the community. As noted earlier, prior to his arrival, there was some form of leadership control, vested in the hands of occupational families. His arrival centralized the control in one locus. Elements of the ritual city mentality of course remained — and would continue to do so for centuries to come — with the Tsumburbura cultists clinging to their beliefs. Bagauda's reign was therefore a transition period in the urban ecology of Kano, where the ritualists — the antecedent *Maguzawa* — and the administrators co-exist, albeit not entirely peacefully. However, some of Bagauda's successors, in particular Gajimasu (1034-1095) were more diplomatic. While conceding to the existence of the ritualists, they nevertheless went about laying solid foundations for an administrative superstructure. Gajimasu had the defense of the realm as his priority and started building a wall around the community — thus confirming the emergence of Kano as a city. Incidentally, the confrontations between the new political leaders and the priesthood were based on turf power and territoriality, rather than religious differences. While some of the rulers of Kano before 1349 had Muslim or at best Middle-Eastern names, there was no evidence of organized Islamic injection in the community – they nevertheless do not seem to share the pagan beliefs of the priesthood they relentlessly prosecuted. Thus, Sarkin Kano Tsamiya (1307-1343) waged a ruthless war against the ritualists and firmly established Kano as a regal city. It was his son and later successor, Yaji (1349-1385) who established Kano as an Islamic Emirate or Sultanate after Islam had been formally introduced as State religion in Kano in 1350 according to Joseph Greenberg's interpretation of the event in the Kano Chronicle (1946, p. 12) by Wangara merchant-clerics from Mali.

And yet the fact that Sarki Yaji's first name was *Ali*, and having taken over the leadership of Kano from *Ousmanu* Zamnagwa (1342-1349) indicated Muslim, Islamic or Middle-Eastern presence in Kano at least among the ruling class, long before the arrival of the Wangara clerics, who in all intents and purposes, merely *empowered* Ali Yaji to declare Kano a Sultanate (and effectively fight the cultists his grandfather had been fighting, rather than '*converting'* him to Islam). The puzzle of the apparent Muslim names of the rulers before Ousmanu remains – for Bagauda was actually *Dauda* [Daud], another name common to Arabs as well as Muslims – remains unsolved.

Thus, it could be argued that Kano became a Sharī'ah territory from that year when Yaji mandated Islam as the only accepted religion in the territory. This also gave him the spiritual inspiration he needed to wage his own Jihad against the Tsumburbura cultists. The making of Kano a Sultanate in the 14th century with the acceptance of Islam by its rulers marked a fascinating cultural binary in the makeup of the community and created two Hausa groupings – Muslim Hausa, and non-Muslim Hausa. Following Joseph Greenberg (1946, p. 13), the latter became more commonly referred to as *Maguzawa* (singular, Bamaguje), a term he appropriated from the Muslim Hausa (or Kutumbawa, as he refers to them) who use it as a referent for non-Muslim Hausa, or what Greenberg himself refers to as 'pagan Hausa'.

Administrative cities also had a qualitatively different demographic and social complexity. They contained large populations, densely settled, often ethnically varied, with heterogeneous occupations. Such cities were nodes of communication and transportation and centers of

commerce, crafts, and other economic functions for the surrounding countryside. In the case of Kano, this was illustrated by the waves of Yemenite, Lebanese, Sudanese, North African and other migrants who brought in different trades, products and skills to the city. And as the city became more variegated and urbanized, it was clear that a civil service machinery that would deal with trade, commerce and leadership in a structured way must also be developed.

Kano as a Mercantile City

The classic mercantile cities appeared at the geographic margins or at times of dissolution of agrarian empires — for example, in medieval and early modern Europe, after a decentralized feudalism had fully replaced the Roman Empire. This urban type is thus a variant form that appeared, under particular conditions, in the urban cultures that also contained strong features of administrative cities. Kano, however, retained both agrarian and mercantile status; indeed, one fed into the other, for its agricultural production boosted trade and created more trade routes.

The growing reputation of Kano as a powerful kingdom served to attract traders and merchants from states and cities as far away as the Maghrib. Kano became a trans-Saharan terminus through which people exchanged goods and services across the continent to the north. The arrival of Islam in 14th century, coming in the company of a full contingent of traders, served to entrench the mercantile features of the city. Religion and trade thus served as impetus through which the city became increasingly bureaucratized and urbanized. And since both enjoyed the patronage of the ruling hierarchy, there was an administrative machinery through which trade diffused throughout the kingdom — further attracting more merchants who bring more goods and services. Soon villages began to be established. Some of the early ones included Lambu, Kanwa, Kwankwaso, Kura, Tamburawa, Yankatsari, Mariri, and Gunduwawa. To the east of the community there were Sugugun, Jirima and many others.

Consequently, the arrival of many migrant elements brought about a boom in external trade and exchange, through the establishment of various industries as ethnic groups came with their skills, in various fields of endeavor, to sell in exchange for their needs. As a result of this prosperity, a bourgeoisie class started to emerge. They accumulated wealth, slaves and other properties like horses. Thus, in a rudimentary way, the establishment of a mercantile mentality sowed the seeds of emerging capitalism in Kano as far back as 12th century, and gave Kano its rightful anthem of ‘center of commerce’.

Clearly, the mercantile city’s links with the wider culture — the rural agrarian communities that produced goods for the emerging capitalist merchants — were disjunctive rather than, as with the administrative city, supportive. A class of powerful and wealthy merchants not completely beholden to the state rulers grew up in such cities. The beginnings of such mercantile capitalists as the foundation of Kano city’s wealth were sowed with the subsequent arrival of the Agalawa during the reign of Sarki Abdullahi Barja (1452-1463). The Agalawa, with direct lineage to Tuaregs of central Sudan, established the tradition of the itinerant Hausa trader before firmly settling down in various communities in Ƙasar Kano, which included Garko, Wudil, Gezawa, Rafin Mallam, Jalli, Bichi, and others, although with the largest concentration in the city (Ɗan Asabe 1989). They were accepted and assimilated — an easy thing for a person carrying an immense amount of wealth. Their most illustrious legacy, however, was the emergence, from their roots, of the dynasty of Alhassan Ɗantata (Bello 1982), undoubtedly the wealthiest merchant class dynasty Kano has ever produced.

However, what confirmed the international mercantile status of Ƙasar Kano was first the large-scale migration of Tripolitanian Arabs in the 19th century due to the incessant wars in the Katsina-

Maradi corridor. Prior to this large-scale arrival, they had been coming in dribs and drabs, either enroute to other trans-Saharan cities, or as permanent residents, again during the reign of Sarki Abdullahi Barja, Leading the way, as early as during the reign of Rumfa (1463-1499) were Muslim clerics and scholars. The Jihadist campaigns against Gobir leading to the final decisive Gawukuke battle in 1836 (Smith 1967) in which the Jihadists were successful, unsettled the various trade routes and forced a large-scale migration of Arab traders from Katsina to Kano under the leadership of Abdullahi Kut-kut (whose surname was corrupted to 'Ƙulƙul' and named for the area in Kano city where they settled), at the urgings of Sarkin Kano Dabo (1819-1846), starting from 1836. Other settlements included Dandalin Turawa, Durmin Ƙulƙul (Yalwa), Shatsari, Dala, Dukurawa, Jingau, Alfindiki, Zaitawa, Ƙofar Wambai, Yan Awaki. They also introduced certain food items unique to north Africa such as *Alfatat, Alkubus, Gurasa, Kuskus, Gudun-Kurna, Sunnasir* and sweets like *Alkaki, Algaragis, Tammaset, Greba* and *Bakilawa* — which all soon enough became part of standard Kano cuisine.

The North African Arabs in Kano were divided into two racially separated groups. The first group were the citizens of Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and some parts of the Sudan. These controlled the trade process in Kano. The second group was composed of non-Arab African trade agents who worked for the Arabs. The members of the first group were mostly pedigreed Arabs, and that of the second group were of Hausa and Kanuri stock. The two groups were not known to have inter-married at the beginning of their settlement, and from all accounts it seemed that they maintained superior-subordinate relationship. Subsequently, however, there were many instances of intermarriages between the North Africans and their Hausa hosts, especially drawn from the Hausa elite class. This created a group 'Hausa Arabs' – Hausa with Arab parentage, but not able to speak the Arabic language. The extended family was the major institution organizing business firms — for instance the Ɗantata dynasty in Kano — political coalitions, and much elite social life. Other corporate institutions, like guilds and religious fraternities, joined city dwellers into highly personalized, ritualized associations that downplayed individualism and secularism in the city. Further, in suitable circumstances, as in the case of Kano, riches partly derive from the control of external trade, and thus the degree to which a city could maintain its position as a capital city depended much on the extent to which it was able to operate as an important center of trade. As Smith pointed out,

> In the early history of *birane* (cities in Hausaland), there is often mention of the building of the walls (*garuka*) which characterized these settlements. Basically, these were no doubt of military significance…but it is to be suggested that they were also a means of controlling trade and permitting the *sarki* to levy his tolls at the gates. The greatest of the kings of Kano, Muhammad Rumfa, was…the founder of the great city market — *Kasuwar Kurmi*. (Smith 1970, p.340).

Kasuwar Kurmi thus became the reference point for Kano mercantilism, as well as a trans-Saharan terminus for centuries.

Kano as a Scholastic City

One category omitted from the theoretical postulations of emergence of the urban culture by Fox (1977) would seem to be the academic, or scholastic city. While it is hard to imagine a city totally devoted to scholarship, nevertheless scholarship had historically played a strong role in the foundation of many cities. It is argued that Kano owes its emergence as to its scholastic tradition stretching back to the 14th century or earlier. The eddy of scholars and merchants in Kano set a trend which eventually created a city with a significant focus on learning. This was similar to how such cities evolved in other parts of the world.

The academic city, working closely with the city's administrative machinery created further opportunities for extending the fame of the city. The first wave of the Wangara (whom the Hausa refer to as Wangarawa) clerics who came to Kano around 1350 were actually on their way to Makkah. On passing through the Hausaland, they were persuaded to stay in various urban clusters to establish schools. And although they made Kano their permanent home — rich, prosperous and protected as it then was — their main mission of spreading literacy was maintained. Their efforts were sustained almost a hundred years later with the second wave arrival of more Wangara clerics. This group, under the leadership of Sheikh Abd al-Rahman Zait left a chronicle of their arrival (Al-Hajj 1968), during Sarki Rumfa's reign. Not only did they found the Madabo scholastic tradition, they also established faculties named after their various professors (sheikhs) in various locales in the city; thus, we have Kabara, Mandawari (Mandaghri), Sheshe (Shayshe) and Zaitawa. This way, Kano evolved as a learning center which it retained to this day, with a huge network of Tsangaya (Qur'ānic schooling networks) and Islamiyya (modern Islamic education) schools, on a larger scale than any Emirate in northern Nigeria. Indeed, its prosperity over the years attracted both scholars and students) who combined scholarship and commerce and further made Kano their home.

The accounts of the intellectual depth of the Wangara scholars given in the earliest recorded history of their arrival in Kano clearly demonstrates the establishment of rhetoric in the intellectual history of Kano. In the 15th century these scholastic traditions were sustained further by mass migration of Fulɓe scholars from Mali who worked to supplement the activities of the Wangara. Distinguished visitors made a point of visiting Kano and Katsina in their travels. Many scholars fled from Mali to Kano and Borno, bringing their books with them (Al-Hajj 1968). This further stimulated the book industry in Kano, which up till now is maintained in the Kurmi market. When rare books were obtained copies were made and sold. In this way, the knowledge spreads. Further, clerics and other professors in the system would write down their thoughts and theses which would serve as a basis for discourse. In this way, impressive reference library collections were made in all aspects of Islamic knowledge, all networked to Madabo school established by the Wangara. Massive library collections from this period were maintained by scholastic (Ulama) families such as Nasiru Kabara, Shehu Maihula, Muhammad Salga, Atiku Sanka, Aliyu Kumasi, Umar Falke, Sani Kafinga and many others.

Indeed, the argument was that the Madabo network of schools formed a veritable university in medieval Kano. This is because in the original sense of the word, a college, and subsequently, a university, was a group of students who gathered to share academic and residential facilities. Thus, each college was a component part of a corporate body called a university, the word being an abbreviation of the Latin *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* ("guild [or union] of masters and students"), organized for mutual advantage and legal protection. The Kano *gardi* system truly encapsulated this learning matrix in Tsangaya Qur'ānic colleges.

Sarki Rumfa's (1463-1499) radical reforms in economy, infrastructure, commerce and religion saw the introduction of the first prototype of 'national policy on education' with his introduction of visualized vocalization of Arabic alphabets as domesticated 'Ajami', based on Warsh Maghiribi script. This revolutionary educational system provided the Muslim Hausa with a literary script through which they were able to communicate with each other. It was maintained mainly among Muslim clerics until September 1903 when, under British colonial administration, it was heavily discouraged by the missionaries that injected themselves into the colonial administration (Adamu 2004).

Riding the crest of the of wave Kano's medieval scholarship was Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili (1440-1505) who arrived Kano during the most reformative period of Kano, which occurred during the reign of Sarki Rumfa (1463-1499). Al-Maghili's arrival from Algeria in the period and the strengthening of the Madabo scholastic tradition merely conveyed to the Maghrib the openness of the kingdom to trade — widening the route for more migrants to follow.

Al-Maghili's contribution to Sarki Rumfa saw the fashioning out of the first 'constitution' of a State in what later became Nigeria. Rumfa further purified the Islamic nature of the Emirate and introduced the first Ƙaramar Sallah. Other reforms included introduction of Alkali (judge) system, official appointment of Imams to lead prayers, instituting Tara-ta-Kano, a Council of Nine kingmakers. He also initiated the establishment of Qur'ānic Schools all over the kingdom for both youth and adults in order to change the directions of the society from the life of ignorance to that of Islamic enlightenment. Teachers in the schools were paid from state treasury every Wednesday, thus instituting *kudîn laraba* fees schedule (which were subsequently shifted to parents when the subsidy from the emirate lapsed after many years) that survived for hundreds of years. The clothing splendor of the Kano palace in particular, and the emirate in general was also Sarki Rumfa's innovation when he introduced wearing *manyan kaya* (flowing gowns), turbans, as traditional uniforms for the classes of aristocracy and scholarship.

The relationship between schooling, religion and ruling dynasties as antecedent web-links in a nascent university as in medieval Ƙasar Kano has strong origins in other parts of the world. This was because the oldest known systems of education in history had two characteristics in common: they taught religion, and they promoted the traditions of the people. Thus scholasticism, as a concept, found expression in university clusters in whatever community where religion, learning and the ruling dynasty provided the right atmosphere for the development of the basic systems for higher education. The Madabo university formed that base for Ƙasar Kano.

This scholasticism was further sustained in Kano by the development of Islamic Sufi traditions of Qadiriyya and Tijjaniyya (Paden 1973). By 2021, the leadership positions of these two major Sufi Islamic traditions in West Africa and Nigeria were held respectively by Sheikh Qaribullah Nasiru Kabara and Sheikh Lamiɗo Sunusi II, both from Kano. The followers of the two Sufi brotherhoods sustained public debates, often of divergent nature, concerning their practices. However, they literally joined forces in 1978 with the emergence of the Saudi Arabian Islamicist and Wahhabist flavored rhetoric of the *Jama'atul Izalatul Bid'ah Wa'ikhamatul Sunnah* (or *Izala* for short). This was followed two years later by the Shi'ite Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN). Both were counterpoints to Sufism in Kano.

It was not all smooth stimulating intellectual debates however. Fringe Muslim movements with disruptive social philosophies often chose Kano to launch their agendas against the State or other Muslims. This was perfectly illustrated by the scarcely-documented (but see Linden 1974, Crampton 1976 and Hulmes 1988) incident of the brief emergence of the *Isawa* cult in Kano during Sarki Abdullahi Maje Karofi (1855-1882). From mainly missionary accounts, it would appear that

there emerged in Kano a Malam Ibrahim who seemed to be keen on case studies of Jesus in the Qur'ān. The constant references to *Isah bin Maryam* in the Qur'ān excited him and consequently he attracted a following with a specific focus on Prophet Isa. He and his followers were soon enough referred to as *Isawa* (admirers of Prophet Isa). There were attempts by the then Emir to make him stop what by now seemed clearly heretic utterances and fixation with Jesus. Specifically, the Kano *ulama* were concerned about his preaching of the second coming of Jesus. He was ordered to reiterate the *kalmat shahada* (declaration of being a Muslim) and pray in public. He refused. He was publicly executed for these beliefs at Kasuwar Kurmi. His followers fled to Bauchi and Zaria emirates where they became willing substrates for Christian missionary conversion.

Almost a century later, a more physically destructive interpretation of Islam afflicted Kano. The Maitatsine riots from December 1980 up to 1985 reflected an example of such religious disruption. With no focused ideology, and simmering since 1960s, the leader of the Maitatsine cult, Muhammad Marwa's violent rhetoric exploded in 1980 in Kano. By the time he was sanitized by security forces, he had left a swath of death and destruction in the ancient city. His followers also moved to other places throughout the north of Nigeria, planting seeds of discord and destruction.

Kano as a Colonial City

Colonial cities arose in societies that fell under the domination of Europe and North America in the early expansion of the capitalist world system. The colonial relationship required altering the productivity of the colonial society in order that its wealth could be exported to the core nations, and colonial cities centralized this function. Their major cultural role was to house the agencies of this unequal relationship: the colonial political institutions — bureaucracies, police, and the military — by which the core ruled the colony, and the economic structure — banks, merchants, and moneylenders — through which wealth drained from colony to core.

Bombay and Calcutta under the British, the European trading cities in China and West Africa, the British East African and Dutch East Indian urban centers for the collection of plantation crops — from the 18th through the mid-20th centuries — represent this urban type (Fox 1977). The core capitalist nations implanted colonial cities as new growths into preexisting precapitalist state societies in many world regions, just as they altered the societies by making them unequal participants in world capitalism. The resulting urban culture represented a novel amalgam of the core and the periphery, with qualities not found in either parent culture.

This new combination was most in evidence in the elite population of the colonial city and its cultural forms. For example, new classes and urban lifeways appeared among the indigenous population. Most of the time the cultural role of the colonial city required the creation of an indigenous urban lower-middle class of merchants, moneylenders, civil servants, and others who were educated to serve the colonial political and economic establishment.

Considering its reputation from various travelers as an Islamic sultanate and its importance in trade routes of the Sudan, Kano understandably attracted the attention of Christian Missionaries. They were imbued with the fatal belief that the Hausa were subjugated by the Fulani and as such the former would welcome Christianity as alternative to Islam. Since such racial divide was never present, their various missions from 1841 failed; any success recorded was after the colonial subjugation of what became northern Nigeria by the British in 1903. Not only did the various missionaries suffered pain and death due to diseases they were not used to, they were humiliated by the various Emirs they visited. Their couching their mission with promises of education was not convincing to the Emirs. A particular sore case was the cold reception given to Bishop

Tugwell's Hausa Mission (due to their ability to communicate in Hausa language, learnt from Hausa in Tripoli) by Emir Alu (1894-1903) when they arrived in his palace in 1900. He gave them three days to leave. As Miller (1949, p. 35), a member of the team, recalled, Emir Alu told the evangelizing party:

> "Start a school? No. We have our own and our children are taught the Holy Qur'ān. Medical work? No. Our medicine is in the Holy Qur'ān and the name of Allah! We don't want you; you can go. I give you three days to prepare–a hundred donkeys to carry your loads back to Zaria, and we never wish to see you here again."

With Kano under British control and Sarki Alu exiled to Lokoja, the British invited Rev. Miller to come back to Kano in 1905 to propose an education system, although evangelism was to be restricted to Europeans and their servants, despite Miller's desire to carry out evangelical work.

In any event, Rev. Miller's obsession with the desire to convert young Muslims to Christianity through education lasted a long seed of mistrust and aversion to Western education. His obsession against Islam was specifically targeted at the Sokoto Caliphate and his belief that Hausa Muslims were subjugated and therefore needed Christianity to 'free' them from the clutches of Islam. In areas where such fanatical evangelism was absent, perhaps because there was no organized religion, Western education became easily accepted. In any event, Lord Lugard, then the British High Commissioner and Governor of northern Nigeria from 1900-1914, desiring simple clerks from Kano to work in the colonial civil service, recommended Hans Vischer, later to be known popularly as *Ɗan Hausa* in Kano, to set up the education system along more secular lines.

In 1909, Vischer came and got a piece of land from Emir Abbas at Nassarawa and opened the first modern school in Kano. He was appointed the Director of Education in Northern Nigeria in 1910 with his headquarters in Kano. He alone opened two classes at the Nassarawa school. The first class was the class of *Ulama* who were brought just to learn reading, writing and arithmetic along with their Arabic education. At the end of their training, they were sent to teach in second class which was the class of the children of Emir's and chiefs. The purpose of this arrangement was to produce a literate ruling class so that the new administration with its rules, regulations and the associated routines could be maintained.

As the school continued to operate, it was discovered that the children of the chiefs came to the school with their slaves and servants. When they were busy in their classes, the slaves were idle. It was decided that these slaves be trained also in handicraft and other useful trades. So a workshop was opened for them and a Mr. Beminister became the head of this new class. In the workshop they learnt masonry, bricklaying, motor-work (including, later, driving). Various indigenous crafts with improved method such as leather works, the tanning of leather, blacksmith and light metal crafts were taught.

When the Nassarawa school grew, it moved to Shahuci where it fulfilled its purposes, which was a steady flow of trained teachers, literate of ruling class and skilled artisans. Already, the first students of the school among the younger ones had joined the newly opened Katsina High College in 1922. In 1926, the N.A. established more elementary schools at Dala in the city and in 1927 those of Gaya, Gwarzo, Ɗanbatta and Ringim districts were opened. With opening of the Kano middle school in 1928, the N.A. laid a proper foundation in the provision of modern education in the whole Emirate.

The lamentations of subsequent administration in Kano on low enrolment of pupils in primary schools and high attrition rates in secondary schools persisted from the very foundation of modern schooling in Kano. Soon enough it was realized that a more acceptable parallel track of education

ought to be considered based on a reform of the Islamic education. Various colonial reports indicated thousands of pupils attending Qur'ānic schools in Kano; so it was not aversion to organized schooling – just to Western education which was not properly packaged right from the beginning. This lapse led to reform initiatives that approached both Western and Islamic education from a more innovative perspective. This was led by the establishment of the Shahuci Judicial School in Kano in 1928. It was essentially established to train judges (alƙalai). This was supplemented years later by the establishment of the Northern Provinces Law School in Kano in 1934, and renamed the School for Arabic Studies (SAS) in 1947.

These two schools served as catalysts to modernizing Islamic education in Kano. Seeking a way of integrating contemporary educational structures on existing Islamic framework, a group of concerned individuals began to promote the idea of an integral schooling system along these lines. The unlikely alliances of members of the ulama class such as Na'ibi Sulaiman Wali and his colleagues on one hand, and rabble rousers such as Aminu Kano and Sa'adu Zungur with their socialist outlook, nevertheless combined to produce a modernist framework for Islamic education in Kano, reforming the system and creating a hybrid Islamiyya schooling system that combined elements of traditional Islamic education in a contemporary structure. This innovation, on a private initiative was started by Aminu Kano in 1950 when he created the first Islamiyya school in Kano, and subsequently provided the roadmap for reforming Muslim education not only in the Emirate, but also the whole of northern Nigeria. It was instantly acceptable, particularly for girls, where the public culture perceived such form of education as being more acceptable for moral education of girls.

The innovative streak in education in Kano continued well into the 1970s when the Kano State Government created the first Science Secondary Schools network in Africa. At the time the schools were created to provide a huge base for scientific, technical and medical manpower from the State, the Bronx High School of Science (established in 1938) in New York and Science Lycée in Ankara (established 1964) were the only known science high schools. Through the Kano State Science Secondary Schools, the State has been able to produce thousands of skilled manpower needed for social development.

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Earlier in the colonial history of the emirate, the establishment of the Township administration in Kano and large-scale importation of West African nationals into Kano, as well as large numbers of southern Nigerians — all groups at cultural variance with the indigenous population, characterize the colonial city, and their heterogeneity truly reflected what can be called urban city. All these migrants required an orientation capable of turning them into Black Europeans to serve the colonial machinery. The British did not explore the fact that the native Kanawa, with over one thousand years of intellectual tradition could easily have acquired the new skills and new knowledge, so long as they were presented in a form similar to what they had inherited.

Thus, as in the Kano Township, the colonial educated lower-middle class often attempted to reform its culture in line with that of the colonizing power, most often through new urban institutions like schools, welfare associations, and sectarian or secular reform groups. A generation or so later, this class transformed by these urban institutions, commonly formed the leadership of nationalist, anti-colonial movements. Thus, the colonial city, which began as an instrument of colonial exploitation, became a vehicle of anti-colonial protest through this lower middle class and the cultural institutions, schools, newspapers, and other urban cultural forms it had constructed.

An enduring legacy of Kano's status as a colonial city was the second wave of migrations to the territory in modern times following the arrival of the British. When the ragtag army comprised of Nupe, Yoruba and Hausa cobbled together as West African Frontier Force conquered Kano under British military guidance, they outlived their usefulness as a fighting force. Not knowing what to do with them, the British quartered them in an encampment along what is now known as Court Road, Sabon Gari, which was the high street, as it were, in Sabon Gari in Kano. The army officers were settled at Geiza, which later became Bompai along what is now called Mundubawa Avenue. Bompai became the first administrative center as well as the location of the colonial police and army.

The arrival of railroad to Kano in 1911, and later the opening of the Kano International Airport in 1935, also brought with them many ethnic nationalities from Southern Nigeria and other countries in the former British West African colonies, such as Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia. As these nationalities came along with their religion and culture different from that of the native population of the emirate, a stranger ('guests') quarters' called Sabon Gari (new town) was created for them in 1912.

The settlement of the new immigrants in Sabon Gari was further necessitated by the refusal of the Sarkin Kano Abbas (1903-1919) to allow any non-Muslims to reside within the perimeters of the Kano city walls. It seems that that ancient Kano penchant for cultural tolerance had reached its upper limit. But then in the hundreds of years of immigrant settlement in the city, there do not seem to be records of large groups of settlers with a totally different religious or cultural orientation to the host community, except with the coming of the British.

The Yoruba provided the largest single group of settlers in the area. Indeed, the Yoruba, just like the Nupe, had been long-term residents in Kano city, bringing kolanut, salt, potassium, fruits to Kano, and exchanging them for livestock, hides, skins, onions, spices, and pepper. These commercial links with the Kasuwar Kurmi in the city led to their settlement in Unguwar Ayagi. But like some of the Tripolitanian Arabs, when the British came in 1903, some of the Yoruba — wanting to take advantage of the cheaper railroad transport system, — moved out of Unguwar Ayagi to Sabon Gari in 1916. Thus, of the 2,000 residents in Sabon Gari in 1921, about 1,478 were Yoruba (Baƙo, 1990). By then most were into the booming groundnut trade and haulage to the coastal areas. Edo immigrants started coming to settle in 1912 (Du-Sai 1986). The Igbo took longer to arrive because the railway links between the East and North was only completed in 1932 after the Makurdi Bridge was built.

It was not only Africans who migrated to Kano as a result of the colonial conquest. Transnationally, the Lebanese also made Kano their home in the period. However, unlike the Tripolitanian Arabs a century before them, the Lebanese refused to integrate in the mainstream Kano social fabric. Indeed, the only thing that made them different from the British was the fact that instead of coming to rule and exploit, as the British did, the Lebanese came to exploit. Like the British, they were indifferent to the mainstream life of Kanawa, although unlike the British they were ready enough to go and live in every nook and corner of the territory in the pursuit of their commercial interests.

While the North Africans came to the Kano territory through the Sahara, the Lebanese came through the Niger delta down south. By then the British had already established full control and thus their movements were carefully recorded. But since they were not in sufficient quantity to constitute a threat to British interests, they were largely ignored by the British, who treated them with the same contemptuous disdain they reserve for any other race, beside their own.

The first Lebanese whose migration was recorded by the colonial officers were two brothers who came to Kano from Lagos in 1903, although they did not settle in the territory until 1907. However, the first migrant to settle permanently in Kano city was recorded as Seman Naoum in 1912. Like all the other Lebanese that were to follow, he was basically a trader in European goods. The cultural aloofness of the Lebanese in early Kano were noted in the fact that when the British decided to implement the policy of racial separation and create their own reservation areas, the few Lebanese settlers applied for permission to leave the city and settle in the European areas. The British refused to allow the Lebanese to be their neighbors. Instead, in 1913 an area consisting of twelve plots was marked out west of the railway for "colored traders", meaning the Lebanese. The area eventually became Kantin Kwari, extending up to present Ibrahim Taiwo Road which was then known as the Syrian Quarters

While clearly maintaining a racial aloofness from the local populace, the Lebanese were nevertheless ready to settle in areas no European would, and adapt a life-style similar to that of the environment. More significantly, they were also ready to learn the local language if only to gain the confidence of the "natives", in the process driving a hard bargain for the products they wanted to purchase. Throughout the colonial interregnum, the Lebanese adaptability remained a constant source of irritation to the British — who encounter them in whatever economic activity they engaged in.

The burgeoning industrialization of Europe and demand for hides and skins led to a third Arab migration to Kano (after Tripolitanian Arabs and the Lebanese). This time it was the Yemeni from Southwestern Asia, although commonly lumped together with Middle-Eastern Arabs. From mainly Southern Yemen, the Yemini were 'imported' into the Kano economy by European companies interested in harvesting skins and hides – a trade the Yemini had extensive experience in. Their being Arabic and Muslim meant that they would be more acceptable in the hinterland than the British. The British avoided the Lebanese in this partnership because the Yemeni were hired and therefore worked for the United Africa Company (UAC) or other subsidiaries of UAC. This was to lay the foundation for their subsequent engagement into the colonial civil service. The Lebanese, on the other hand, were independent free-agents, also trying to cut in where ever the British trade direction goes. Never really having accepted themselves as Nigerians, the Lebanese showed little inclination to be employed in the civil service like the Yemeni.

The first Yemini arrivals encouraged others to migrate. This started to worry the British. This was because even though the British were willing to experiment with importing people from other parts of the world to help them exploit colonized territories, they were not ready to do it on a massive scale, as they did with the establishment of Sabon Gari. This was possibly because the Yemeni would come to Kano with an enhanced awareness of what they want, and with their militant background of historical conflicts, could easily constitute a security risk if imported on a large scale.

The Yemeni agents were given monthly stipend and given food rations – all which doubled if the agent gets married, especially to a local woman. Marriage bonds the agent to the community, and makes them more acceptable — which in turn makes him more productive to the colonial machinery. What made it particularly easier was the fact that the Yemeni, unlike the Lebanese in Kano, married out of desire to be part of the community. They thus gradually became integrated in the cultural life of Kano by their preference for marrying essentially light skinned 'pure Fulani' women who approximated their cultural profiles, subsequently creating a large community of Fulani-Yemini (with focus on race, rather than nation) Nigerians, whose children eventually spoke neither Fulfulde or Arabic languages – only Hausa. This created a socially trivalent community

torn between deciding to identify themselves as Arab, Fulani or Hausa. Nevertheless, it was the Yemeni adaptability to life in Kano, as distinct from a preserved Aden that make the Yemeni indelible streaks in the cultural configuration of Kano. What makes it even more variegated was the trans-Arab marriage relationships between the Yemeni Arabs and the Tripolitanian Arabs many of whom were literally neighbors, leading to the emergence of a distinct Kano Arab.

The Lebanese, on the other hand married local women principally to negotiate access into hinterland markets. Once they become well established and rich, they divorced the local wives and import Lebanese wives from Lebanon. This seemed to be their pattern generally in West Africa (Winder 1962), but more specifically in Sierra Leone, Guinea (Khuri 1968), Senegal (Boumedouha 1990), Côte d'Ivoire (Bierwirth 1999), Ghana (Akyeampong 2006) and Nigeria (Mambula 2010), amongst others. Consequently, most of the members of the Hausa-Arab communities in Kano were from Tripolitanian or Yemeni heritage, who, despite distinct racial profiles, have accepted themselves as Africans.

With the prospects of Nigeria gaining independence by the end of the decade to 1950s, it was clear that some alterations to British-Yemeni arrangement would have to be made. As a process of disengagement, the status of the Yemeni agents was changed to *Factor* in 1956. Under this arrangement, the Yemeni were no longer in the employee of the companies they represented. Initially there were protests against being called 'Factor'. But an elaborate explanation from the authorities seemed to palliate their fears. The Factor status gave them independence to sell their hides, leather and groundnut to any company or anyone they wish, but they must first seek clearance from the main company. This gave them some freedom to transact with whoever they liked. Those who accepted this arrangement had the name FACTOR stenciled on their frontage of their shops in the various locations.

Thus, culturally, Kano as an evolving colonial city introduced innovations and practices that undermined the base culture of those it subsumed. The elaborate processes of establishing separate residential areas for different races in Kano, the introduction of European sports facilities and the commendations given to the natives good enough to excel in these sports, all point to the slow cultural indoctrination of the colonial city. The colonialists soon left — to be replaced by their clones in black skins who were proud to sustain the colonial tradition as evidence of merger with the modern world.

Kano as an Industrial City

The industrialization of Kano started with cottage industries, mainly carried out in homes and local community clusters. The influx of north African traders generated a new food industry revolving around north African Arab delicacies in baking and confectionaries that became eventually domesticated as Hausa food.

The British who colonized the territory from 1903 to 1960, had no real intentions of encouraging industrial development in Kano, and only consented to semblance of industrial activity when it became clear that independence was not far off when industrialization moves started. This was motivated by the pressures from the resident Lebanese migrants to be allowed to experiment in small-scale industrial activities. Again, right from the beginning of the "industrialization" of Kano, only few of the indigenous merchants seemed to be interested in the new venture. The lucrative groundnut trade, initiated by Alhaji Alhassan Ɗantata and which saw the stacking of 'Groundnut Pyramids' at the current site of Kano Line transport company opposite

Kano Technical School, created intense competition between the Lebanese (particularly George Calil), the Greeks (particularly P.S Mandrides) and local merchants. Nationalist activities created a barrier to continued Lebanese participation in the areas that the indigenous merchants also wanted to be involved in.

The Lebanese then shifted their focus to industrial production due to the hostility of local merchants in agricultural commodities, especially with the background to nationalist activities (Albasu 1989). In the early 1950s the Nigerian government introduced incentives to industrial investment through the *Aids to Pioneer Industries Ordinance* and *Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance*. Both these laws attracted the Lebanese and others to the industrial sector by providing generous tax relief and other incentives. Thus between 1954 and 1961 many private Lebanese companies were formed. These included A. J. Karouni (Transport), Akle Brothers (General Business), Steel Construction Co. (Steel), Habis Travels (Travel Agents), and Gazal Industrial Enterprise (Tiles etc.). Strikingly, none of them had a Nigerian director (Albasu 1989).

The Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) and the creation of Kano State in 1967 opened up more windows of opportunities for both indigenous and Lebanese businessmen when there was a mass exodus of Igbos from Kano — leaving wide open a lot of enterprises in which they were predominant. This further stimulated industrial investments by the Lebanese (but not indigenous merchants who did not seem ready for the corporate structure of industries). Thus, more industries sprung up, such as Moukarim Metalwood and Fawaz Steelwork which supplied the mushrooming government schools and hospitals with furniture. Nigerian Spinners and Dyers, Kanotex, and Kano Textile Industries cornered the supplies of linen, uniforms and general apparels to schools and hospitals in Kano. By then those Lebanese who had become wealthy remained virtually untouchable and have continued to dominate some of the most profitable sectors of the Kano economy (Albasu 1989). Thus, before March 31, 1974, the Lebanese owned almost all the leading manufacturing concerns in Kano. According to Albasu (1989), they owned 10 out of 14 steelworks, five out of seven sweets manufacturing, and three out of five leading oil mills. The only plastics company, Metalloplastica (which later became Kano Plastics) was owned by the Lebanese. By 1970, the Lebanese were dominant force in the textile trade.

Even when the Kano State Government established the Kano State Investment Company in 1971 to look after the investments it inherited from the defunct Northern Region, the first General Manager of the company — Mr. K. R. Kazandijan — was Lebanese, recruited after an interview direct from Beirut!

When the Nigerian Government introduced the Indigenization decree from March 31, 1974, the entire industrial landscape of Kano was forced to change, and the Lebanese were forced to acquire indigenous partners in all their firms. The indigenous merchant class, hitherto uninterested in industrial production, suddenly found themselves being sought by the Lebanese industrialists to comply with the decree. For instance, Ɗantata brothers had interests in more than a dozen industries as a partner to Lebanese companies; Alhaji Baba Ɗanbappa was a principal shareholder in Star Sweets of Nigeria, International Tanners and several others. Similarly, Nababa Badamasi, Inuwa Wada, Sani Marshall and Garba A. D. Inuwa, all became partners in many Lebanese firms (Bashir 1982).

Thus, significantly, only few of the emergent oligarch industrial magnates totally own the industrial establishments associated with them — most being mere fronts for Lebanese Svengalis who operated behind the scenes and reaped the profits to the maximum. Further, it would appear that the manufacturing concerns were mere assembly pre-fab units, rather than full blown industrial establishments capable of transforming Kano into a truly industrialized city. The cheap

labor, lack of sustained Research and Development practices typical of industrial development, as well as lack of enforcement of industrial safety and regulations were not attractive enough for many aspiring "industrialists" to pitch up the industrial tent in the State.

Back to the Future | Kano as a Bustling Media Hub

The Kano emirate having evolved over one thousand years, has undergone tremendous transformation, from evolution to revolution in all aspects of its development. By 2021, Kano has retained its lead as innovatory Emirate incorporating, as it does, not only all the antecedent structures outlined, but also capping it with total acceptance, expansion and development of new ones, including new media.

Kano's media journey started with the establishment of visual entertainment in the public space by resident Lebanese entrepreneurs in the colonial era. This was ignited by the presence of Free French Forces, formed following the call of General de Gaulle (1890-1970) who was to later become the President of France, and the *de jure* government ('Free French Government') of France in exile as of June 18, 1940. Part of the forces were camped in Kano in anticipation of launching a war against neighboring Niger republic (then a French colonial territory). Thus, the French Military cantonment was created as an Officer's Mess for the French officers at what later became Hotel De France (along Tafawa Ɓalewa Road, Kano). The referent to cantonment became domesticated by Kanawa as "Kantoma" to refer to the head of the cantonment.

To entertain the French troops and their officers, provisions were made to screen European films in the small theater created in the cantonment. This theater was referred to as "Kamfama", a corruption of 'cantonment'. Although more or less exclusive to the French, the theater attracted a few of the more educated local citizens—*yân takarda*—who associated cinema-going with European sophistication and taste. When the French troops left Kano in 1943, the theater was left unused till 1945 when its management was taken over by resident Lebanese merchants who continued screening European films in it, and renamed it Rio. By then, Rex cinema, whose application for its establishment was approved by the colonial administration in 1937 had been completed. Thus Kano saw its first two cinemas in 1945. Rex cinema was located at the present site of 'kwanar Singa' facing the bustling Sabon Gari market. Subsequent cinemas in Kano, all controlled by the Lebanese, included El-Duniya (1947, burnt down in a fire outbreak in 1951), Palace in the heart of the city near Jakara, and now a hospital (1952), Plaza in Fagge (1957), Queens (facing the Brigade high street, 1968), Orion (near Ƙofar Wambai market, 1971), and more recently, Marhaba located at the Farm Center near Tarauni (1990). Others, established by locals, including Sheila Cinema at the old offices of the West African Pilgrimage Agency (WAPA) in Fagge followed rapidly after independence in the 1970s and 1980s. Most of the cinemas suffered closure following the reaffirmation of Shari'a in the State in 2000.

Since the main purpose of establishing the cinemas for the local populace was entertainment, Hindi films with their spectacular sets, storylines that echo Hausa traditional societies, mode of dressing of the actors and actresses, as well as the lavish song and dances would seem to fill the niche. This was particularly so after colonial departure in 1960. Rex cinema led to the way to screening Hindi cinema in November 1961 with *Cenghiz Khan* (dir. Kenda Kapoor, 1957).

Thus, by 1960s Hindi popular culture, at least what was depicted in Hindi films, was the predominant foreign entertainment culture among young urbanized Kano viewers. These cinemas effectively entrenched foreign entertainment culture in Kano. While going to cinema was considered a social vice when they were first established – and something which definitely

excluded what were considered virtuous women – the films screened in the cinemas soon started appearing as part of TV programming in Kano, which focus on Hindi films.

In 1972 the Nigerian Government of Gen. Yakubu Gown introduced the Indigenization Decree, which demanded the transfer of ownership of hundreds of cinemas from their foreign, mainly Lebanese owners to Nigerians. This was to give more Nigerians an opportunity to play a more active role in the Nigerian cinema industry. This was because the industry was dominated by foreigners since the 1930s. The West African Pictures Company (WAPCO), the American Motion Pictures Exporters and Cinema Association (AMPECA), NDO Films, and ACINE Films were all dominated by Lebanese and Indians importing American, European and Asian films and screening them in the cinemas the Lebanese owned. The indigenization decree effectively stemmed the legal availability of foreign films – opening up the thirsty Nigerian market to massively imported pirated films and music from Southeast Asia. This only eased in Kano in 2015 when Filmhouse cinema franchise opened a multiplex in Ado Bayero Shopping Mall – opening up the doors to international films, especially those from Hollywood. It also gave local Hausa films opportunities of being screened in international settings. In July 2021, Platinum cinema was opened in Zoo Road by part of the technical crews of Filmhouse to provide competition to Filmhouse.

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The Federal Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) was established in a retrospective decree in 1976. Being a Federal television house, the main focus of NTA was on programs aimed at fostering national unity, especially during the most turbulent years of Nigeria's history punctuated by military coups and countercoups. The main fare were TV dramas such as *Things Fall Apart*, *Checkmate*, *The Village Headmaster*, *Behind the Clouds*, *The New Masquerade*, *Mirror in The Sun*, *Cock Crow at Dawn*, *Jaguar*, etc. These drama series, national as they were, nevertheless reflected the fundamental social space of southern Nigerians—a world culturally remote from Muslim Hausa northern Nigeria and certainly of Kano. What exacerbated the situation of course was the lack of specific Hausa dramas that would have a wider national appeal. It was only in 1984 that a Kano-based English language drama, *The Magaji Family* was broadcast on the national television. Noting audience rating falling down, the NTA stations started showing Hausa programs from other Hausa speaking states such as NTA Maiduguri (e.g. *Tumbin Giwa*) and NTA Sokoto (*Ɗan Wanzam*), NTA Jos (*Rana Bata Ƙarya*) and the most popular of them all, NTA Kaduna (*Tambari*, due to the performance of the legendary Hausa dramatist, Ƙasimu Yero).

These drama series were made by the established drama group stage actors who thus found a comfortable niche in the new medium, and soon hour-long prime time television dramas like *Ƙulliya Manta Sabo*, *Taskira Asirin Mai Ɗaki*, *Kwaryar Ƙira*, *Ɗan Kurma*, *Karo Da Goma*, *Kowa Ya Bar Gida*, *Ƙaikayi*, *Ba'are, Ɗan Hakki, Jauro, Ƙatantanwa* and *Ɗan Malam* became the in-house programs of the NTA Kano. It was from these television dramas—most focusing on the intrigues and intricacies of traditional Hausa society—that the major respected actors of the subsequent Hausa video film were to emerge.

The NTA Kano still lacked a night-time entertainment program to "pull audience", and hit upon the idea of asking some firms to sponsor the showing of the "late night movie" of their choices which will guarantee high ratings—and advertising audience. Dala Foods Ltd and Unifoam (makers of mattress) accepted the offer. Starting in 1976, NTA Kano started showing Hindi films at "late night movies" on Fridays and sponsored by these companies. Thus from 1977 to 2003, Unifoam sponsored the showing of Hindi films on NTA Kano, while Dala Foods Ltd sponsored

the Hindi film screenings from 1982 to 1985. Between the two of them, the firms made it possible for NTA Kano to broadcast 1,176 Hindi films through television from October 2nd 1977 when the first Hindi film was shown, *Ann Bann* (dir. Prakash Mehra, 1972), to 7th June 2003. Subsequently other companies also started sponsoring the screening of Hindi films as a platform to advertise their products.

A combination of Hausa TV soap operas and immersive fandom of Kano youth to Hindi films led Aminu Hassan Yakasai, a novelist, to initiate a locally produced home video film, effectively giving birth to the Hausa video film industry, Kanywood (with latter alternative spelling of Kannywood) in 1990 with its first film, *Turmin Danya* (dir. Salisu Galadanci). The video film industry that emerged became characterized by cloning Hindi film plots which revolved around love triangles, forced marriage, and song dance routines. These led to turbulences in the industry creating a censorship board in 2001 to limit what the public culture perceived as its excessiveness.

The first effort to seriously intellectualize the Hausa video film industry started with the variety and range of magazines that accompanied the popularity of the industry from 1997 to 2003. These magazines provided not only historical archival data, but also document how the industry developed from multiple perspectives – those of the stars, the production facilities, and government regulation. Most significantly, they provided platform for critical discourse on the nature of the Hausa video film industry and its direction from the public sphere. Starting with *Fim* magazine in 1999 and published in Kano, although covering essentially the industry mainly located in Kano, other magazines, mostly based in Kano, followed suit. These included *Mumtaz*, *Bidiyo*, *Mujallar Sharhi*, *Majigi*, *Annashuwa*, *Nishadi*, *Duniyar Fim*, *Marubuciya*, *Garkuwa*, *Abida*, *Suda* and *Madubi*. *Fim*, however, remained the most consistent of them all, becoming the first Hausa video film magazine to own a website while others ceased production after just one to three years. The internet provided the new press moguls with an opportunity to go beyond their print editions and created sites of varying professionalism for the magazines. Examples, besides *Fim*, included *Mudubi* (established 2003) and *Gidauniya* (established 2004). By 2021, only *Fim* survived, albeit intermittently, as an online news source on Kannywood.

For many years, the stretch of road from 'Tal'udu' (corrupted from Taylor Woodrow, the British construction company that made the road in 1982) roundabout along Aminu Kano Way that bisected the city to Ƙofar Mata, served as the home of northern Nigeria Kanywood, a term coined, and the first of its kind in Africa, in 1999 by Sunusi Shehu Burhan, editor of Hausa-language entertainment magazine, *Tauraruwa*. On the other hand, the term Nollywood, reflecting the Nigerian film industry, was coined in 2002 by Norimitsu Onishi, a *New York Times* journalist.

The early Kannywood films gradually moved from cassette tapes to Video CDs (although never having made the media leap to DVDs) to YouTube and a Netflix clone, Northflix. At the same time, the industry created a new distribution formula that saw Kannywood films being legally downloaded from YouTube through licensed agreement between the downloaders and the film producers. The download route became the main alternative in popularizing the films due to the availability of cheap Smartphones that rapidly replaced DVD players with their requirements of a TV set as well as electricity which both not easily available. A 1GB memory card, on the other hand, can take dozens of films (at ₦50.00 each), giving opportunities for audiences to watch as many films as they can afford, at their own comfort zones. By the time the industry entered the 'download era', the emphasis of the producers shifted from features to series.

The emphasis on the series was motivated by the massive popularity of *Dadîn Kowa* TV series broadcast on Arewa24, with production offices in Kano. The station, established in 2013, was the first 24/7 free-to-air Hausa-language entertainment and lifestyle satellite television channel for the Hausa-speaking community in Africa and diaspora. The fact of its funding via a grant from the US State Department of Bureau of Counterterrorism for the first few years of its establishment gave it

a ‘spooky’ conspiracy theory of US intelligent services muscling in on Hausa culture to monitor local narratives, as well as specter of ‘US soft power’ in Africa – the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes you want (Nye 1990).

As a media initiative in the War Against Terror, the channel had two requirements: it needed to have peacebuilding and countering violent extremism at the program’s core, and it needed to transition to a private sector commercial entity at the end of the grant period to become fully sustainable. It achieved both successfully. By August 2017, the private sector company, Network AREWA24, Ltd (“NAL”), was a 100% Nigerian corporate entity, operating and growing solely from its own revenues and private equity investment funding. The donor mission and milestone of full AREWA24 commercialization, privatization, and long-term sustainability have been achieved.

The station featured shows that empowered women, addressed deep-rooted socio-political norms, showcased emerging musicians and artists, sports, magazine talk shows, and dramas. At the same time, the local team launched a robust social media platform enabling the content to be made available on YouTube and creating a platform for viewers to engage with the programming providing critical community feedback about the programming that pushed for tolerance, peace, and acceptance. One of its flagship programs was *Zafafa Goma* (Top 10), a Hip-hop/Rap music video program presented by Aminu Abba, a Rapper with stage name of Nomiis Gee. While massively popular in its reproduction of American MTV and Rap entertainment culture among youth, criticism from the Islamic public culture, particularly on social networks, trailed the program, but it survived.

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Kano paved the way to the establishment of fully computerized Business Centers in the north. This started with Abacus Computers (founded by Adamu Sufi) in 1990, followed by Midtown Business Services (Faruk Ɗalhatu) in 1992 outside the walls. Within the walls of the city, Auwalu Hamisu Yadudu’s Umma Computers and City Business Center (Abba Lawan Daneji) both in 1992 established themselves as the first computerized business centers in the city. All were using the IBM clones then available, running WordStar, WordPerfect, MultiMate Advantage, and latterly, Microsoft Word. However, City Business Center went a step further by establishing itself as a one-stop solution to not only typing, but also later on, editing of Hausa video films, and in the process, training dozens of subsequent film editors in the bustling Hausa cinema industry.

These business centers, as they were, provided opportunities for budding novelists in the Hausa language, leading to the mushrooming of the romantic genre of Hausa fiction, commonly referred to as ‘littattafan soyayya’. Full of ‘boy-meets-girl’ scenarios, they provided both creative and emotional outlet for dozens of authors, mainly female, to vent their, often subversive narrative on Hausa traditional perceptions of domestic ecology. By far the greatest center for the production of the new fiction was City Business Center in Daneji. By 1996 the massive popularity of the novels, particularly among school girls had started to irritate the Kano State government – which blamed students’ obsession with the novels for the series of high school examination failures. Both the fascination with the novels and the examination failures persisted, however, leading to first institution of a Censorship Board in 2001 to censor all creative works for ‘immorality’ and a public ‘book burning’ by the Kano State government in May 2007 – a symbolic gesture to communicate non-approval of the novels, and contemporary Hausa popular culture in general.

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Internet came to Nigeria in 1996 and in January 1997, Linkserve Limited in Lagos obtained license from Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC, itself established in 1992) to provide Internet services, becoming the first Internet Service Provider (ISP) in Nigeria. It took up to 1998 for Internet services to reach Kano, making it one of the first northern Nigerian States to do so. It first became available to the Bayero University (BUK) community only through the National Universities Commission (NUC) Nigerian Universities Network (NUNet). However, ISPs such as Sammy Davis, NetZone, GlobalSpace, ECNX Samanja Electronics and Galaxy Backbone ensured that Kano outpaces any northern city with regards to Internet penetration. Soon enough Internet Cafes started springing up in Kano between 1998 to 2000. What accelerated the growth was availability of data services through the deregulation of the telecommunications sector by the Federal Government in 1992 with the creation of NCC, which was charged with regulation of competitive provision of communication services. Prior to this, Internet services were controlled by Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (Nitel) and was extremely inefficient, and expensive, since its dial-up services were based on long-distance call charges.

The monopoly of Nitel was further broken down in August 2001 when Global Systems for Mobile Communications (GSM) was introduced – eventually making mobile phones affordable, and communication easier. ECONET Wireless (present Airtel), MTel (the successor to Nitel) and MTN both in 2001, Globacom (Glo) in 2003, Etisalat (later, 9Mobile) in 2008 started the competition in the provision of communication to Nigerians. Although extremely expensive (an MTN SIM card in 2001 cost about ₦20,000, while a cheap mobile phone was about ₦30,000) it heralded the telecommunications revolution in Nigeria. By 2021, mobile phones are no longer just technologies, but essential commodities; necessary for survival.

Noticing the thirst for information about Kano made available through Internet, in 2001 a Kanoonline Bulletin Board was established in New Jersey, United States by Salisu Usman Ɗanyaro, originally from Soron Ɗinki in Kano city. This was to cater for both Hausa diaspora and those at home, and most importantly to give a Kano Hausa voice to events in Kano. Soon after, a series of other discussions fora were created on the now defunct Yahoo! Groups platform to provide spaces for discussion on music, films, and literature as they develop in Kano. All these were before Facebook (created in 2004 and available in Kano 2009), WhatsApp (created 2009, available in Kano almost immediately, though not widely subscribed) became the common forms of online interactivity. In this way, Kano revolutionized dialogue and narrative expression on social networks at a faster rate than any other State in northern Nigeria.

Emails also replaced fax machines – costly and inefficient – as the main modes of communication in the State, especially to the outside world. Main email servers such as Hotmail (1996), Yahoo (1997) and Gmail (2004) became popular, although up to 2000, elitist and restricted to universities and few individuals in government agencies. Websites such as Gumel (1998) and Dandali (1999) became the main cultural hangouts for Kano citizens increasingly getting connected to the Internet on uploaded cultural information. By November 2000 a Kanoonline Working Group had been formed to provide a digital perspective on Kano. Researchers were engaged, but lack of funding eventually killed the project.

By 2021 Kano had a massive presence on the Internet and the State with the most intensive indigenous language use on Social Networks (providing thousands of pages of information and discussions) and Social Media (uploading thousands of user-generated videos, music, audio files (sermons, speeches) and pictures on Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram. Through their efforts, both amateurs and professionals, it had been possible to digitize thousands of historical cultural artefacts in the performing arts, and thus provide endless data sources for researchers on the most media-rich State in the north of Nigeria.

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FM Radio, as part of traditional media contributed immensely in providing Kano with an innovatory and public democratic space on a higher scale than other northern Emirates and States. By 2021 Kano had 22 active radio stations, with only one, Radio Kano, controlled by the Government. The growth of Kano private radio (others such as Raypower, CoolFM, Wazobia, etc. were part of larger, national broadcasting franchises) was ignited by Freedom Radio. Conceived in 2002 as Savannah Radio and indeed part of the first private and commercial film studio in Kano (Film Laboratory and Production Services Limited), it became Freedom Radio in 2003. It was the first private radio station in northern Nigeria.

Freedom Radio's ballistic urbanism unsettled the staid political class in Kano. Not only does it provide anyone with anything to say a voice, it also introduced innovative transnational programs that challenged the Kano public spaces. Its Kano Music Express, which started broadcasting from 2010, was the first radio program in the north to devote itself to the American flavored Rap music genre. Produced and presented by the half of K-Boyz Rap crew in Kano, Hassan Muhammad Auwal, it was hugely popular and provided a platform for the emergence of over fifty budding Rap artists from Kano. These Rap artists were mainly enthusiasts, rather than professional crews; Freedom Radio gave them a sense of identity and recognition as performing artists.

However, perhaps the most colorful program offered by the Kano radio stations that truly displayed the vocal vibrancy of the State were those sponsored by politicians and delivered by their followers. Leading the pack was Freedom Radio's *Kowanne Gauta* (beneath the surface) in 2004, barely six months after the station started full operations. The program gave platforms for individuals to praise, but mainly condemn politicians of all parties, usually on the basis of personal gratification or grudges. Such aggrandizement, essentially Post-truth in political communication, drew the ire of the Kano State government, NGOs and security agencies at various stages, complaining of lack of balancing in expressing political opposition.

Such post-truth (focusing more on emotions rather than objective facts) narratives on air created a large of pool of 'sojojin baka' (vocal army) to reflect their 'war and peace' with the political class which mainly sponsored them in order to create higher visibility for their political agendas. Essentially social media influencers, they were both vilified, glorified, arrested and jailed as disseminators of fake news, hate speech, personal insults and disinformation. Yet they survived in most private radio stations in Kano – adding vibrancy, humor and drama to the largest political audiences in northern Nigeria. They also contributed to the development of Hausa political neologisms in the way they construct unique often insulting vocabularies that convey, ironically, shared meanings, despite their newness, many with onomatopoeic rhythms. Examples include, 'gangancin gangan', 'daga Gama an gama', ɗan taka kara, ba ɗan takara ba', 'likimoniya', 'kayan aiki', 'ko a yi Barau, ko a yi baram-baram'. 'taliyar ƙarshe', 'Kaci baka ciba, baka ciba kaci', 'baki da kunu', etc. Their linguistic ingenuity included the creation of two cults of followers –

Kwankwasiyya (after a former Governor Kano State, Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso) and *Gandujiyya* (after another Governor, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje).

Closely affiliated at least in political philosophy of the sojojin baka, was a massive pool of Hausa Afropop political singers in Kano whose set lists and compositions were devoted to invective narratives on politicians – at least when in power, because the singers often change track when they fall out with a particular politician. This led to the amusing creative disjuncture where in one composition the politician is glorified; and in another, vilified, demonstrating lack of ideological focus on the part of the performers.

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The radio, being more readily accessible, fared much better than the newspapers established in the State, before the coming of Facebook that serves as an alternative 'printing press', devoid of the political economy of professional newspaper publishing houses. Kano-based newspapers, as usual, the largest in the north, included, *The Triumph*, *Weekend Triumph*, *Sunday Triumph*, *Albishir*, *Alfijir*, *Al-Ahram*, *The Pyramid*, and *Al-Tajdid*. *Alfijir*, (dawn) truly reflected the dawn of new mass readership in that it was published in Ajami (using Arabic alphabet to express non-Arabic languages), a script extremely familiar in Kano and its environs.

Indeed, Kano has persistently blazed the trail in indigenous knowledge systems. Since the reign of Sarki Rumfa (1463-1499), a mnemonic device was created in Qur'ānic schools to domesticate and visualize Arabic alphabets into Hausa, resulting in *Ajami*. It was essentially rendered in the more vocal Warsh (Warš) Maghrebi script. It was disdained and neglected by the mainstream Islamic scholastic community that favors using Hafs script that is more 'Arabic'. Yet the entire Tsangaya Qur'ānic schooling system is based on students using the Warsh script and their familiarity with it provided a basis for using it as an instrument of mass literacy among non-Western educated youth in Kano.

While Ajami existed in the media as rendered in Alfijir newspaper in Kano, it was in the Hafs tradition. The more familiar Warsh tradition was revived in 2021 by a research cluster, Visually Ethnographic Networks in Kano, in a project titled *Ajamization of Knowledge* and integrated with Social Media to enable Qur'ānic school pupils, their professors and parents to interact with each other via the increasingly common Smartphones. This was made possible by access to Alƙalami Hausa Maghiribi TrueType Unicode font, which is in the public domain. Designed by Becca Hirsbrunner Spalinger for her MA Typeface Design (MATD) at the University of Reading, U.K. – earning a distinction in 2017 – Alƙalami was the first attempt at a typeface design based on handwritten manuscripts from Nigeria, in a style of writing called *Rubutun Kano*, whose template was the handwritten Qur'ān of Sheikh Bala Gabari of Kano. The availability of the Alƙalami font saw the production of the only Warsh Ajami newspaper in Nigeria, *Tabarau*, which debuted in Kano in July 2021. This unique effort at ensuring 'education for all' by any means necessary merely signpost's the revolutionary scholarship of Kano from medieval times to now.

Conclusion

Both the city, the Emirate and its traditional institutions have benefitted from relative structural and narrative stability. It is this that makes Kano the most unique Emirate in the country – its inherent historiography that created a singular cultural identity. True, Kano has benefitted from waves of either singular or group migrations leading to settlement in the territory over the centuries. Yet Kano retains the ability to merge these national and transglobal identities into a single Kananci identity. The swagger and ultra-cool attitude of Kananci gave rise to the confident epithet, كمثلك الف اجل القرى, popularized by Tripolitanian Arabs, and translated as "Kano, you are equal to a thousand cities", and recontextualized in the local parlance as "Kano ko da mai kazo an fi ka" [Kano is simply the best]. This is reflected in the massive urbanization of Kano. Anyone driving around Kano in June 2021 cannot fail to notice the incredible property development. The transport sector, as chaotic as it undoubtedly is, merely accentuated the rural drift of hundreds of young people looking for jobs and prosperity in the metropolis. Sadly, there is an increase in substance abuse and crime, but these are characteristics of any prosperous urban cluster which often unfortunately emphasizes the line that divides people.

So far Kano had been more or less monolithic. The ruling houses were really just one ruling house, and divisions merely indicated periods of ascension and control. True, a bloody civil war amongst members of the same family was fought, but a winner did emerge and the system stabilized and continued. However, July 2021 signaled another chapter in the continuation of the tradition that had kept Kano Emirate as part of historical narratives of African kingdoms. This was the Coronation of His Royal Highness, Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero, as the 15th Sulluɓawa Fulani Emir of Kano by the Kano State Executive Governor, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje. He was earlier appointed the Emir of Bichi on 9th May 2019, and then the Emir of Kano on 9th March 2020.

The transformation of Kano from two ancient Emirates (the other being Rano) to five [Kano, Rano, Gaya, Ƙaraye and Bichi] in 2019 indicated the democratization of traditional leadership in African societies; for no longer is power concentrated in one place, but equally shared throughout the territory, giving members of each community a right to participate in their history. With this devolution also comes a greater sense of cultural preservation; for territories hitherto neglected and attention concentrated in one place now suddenly becomes more open.

For cultural anthropologists it heralds an exciting development for many reasons. First, it enables a closer microscopic mapping of the anthropology of each of the new Emirates. So much about each has been subsumed by the larger 'big brother' identity of Kano. Now an opportunity has arisen to delve deeper into their structure. Second, extension of the Emirate titles. It is likely newer titles, peculiar to each Emirate, will now emerge, giving the new title-holders a sense of ownership and responsibility. Third, while the Emirate tradition is about preservation of identities, nevertheless a new focus on the Emirates will stimulate local commerce and industry. Kano, truly, is simply the best.

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كَتْوْ

كَمِتْلِكِ اَلْوَ آجَلِّ الْقَرَى

3RD JULY, 2021