# THE IMPACTS OF MUSLIM STUDENT SOCIETY IN NIGERIA IN PROPAGATION SPREAD OF ISLAM IN IJEBU ODE


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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by Badrudeen Ganiyat Amope whose Matriculation Number is 18012218005 in the department of Islamic studies, Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu Ijebu Ogun state under my supervision.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to Almighty Allah, my parent, my husband and sister's and brother's for their unending love, my husband patience, understanding and to the lovers of Islamic who are willing to go extra miles to make my dreams come true.

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ABSTRACT

*This study focuses on the impact of Muslim society in Nigeria in propagation and spread of Islam (MSSN) and its involvement in the religious It posits that the notion of being a "good Muslim" has changed significantly, especially among Western educated Yoruba Muslims since the colonial period and that the MSSN not only play a key role in this change but also represent this change. it contributes to this literature. A few of these debates emphasised the nonadoption of prophetic traditions (sunna) that were deemed less suitable in the Yoruba social context, the use of Yoruba and English during mosque sermons, the public participation of women in religious and secular life, the enrolment of Muslims in Christian mission schools, and the employment of Muslims in colonial service. The knowledge of a good Muslim from this broader perspective also informed the understanding of Islam of the students who formed the MSSN, and for many years, this knowledge, in turn, shaped their social lives and the activities of the MSSN as an organisation. Over time, while the MSSN upheld many aspects of this notion of Islam, it nevertheless contested some of the fundamental positions in which the understanding of the religion is embedded. The emphasis on the adoption of prophetic traditions as the definition of what it meant to be a good Muslim was generally at the centre of this contest. Secondly, the study discovers that reform in the MSSN was inspired by historical and epistemological developments that were not only connected to the Yoruba Muslim communities but also the globalized Muslim world. The historical developments relate to the link between the MSSN and transnational Islamic movements such as the International Islamic Federation of Students Organisation (IIFSO), the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and the Muslim Brotherhood as well as the emergence of graduate students who studied abroad and in local Qur'anic schools. On the other hand, the epistemological development relates to the emphasis on proof based on the Qur'an and the Hadith, and on a different interpretation of prophetic traditions. These developments paved way for critical discourses on Islam and the MSSN practices as well as the revival of the prophetic traditions. Generally, the MSSN's interpretations of Islam encouraged a great deal of diversity in the religious and social lives of members and further added to the diversity of Yoruba Muslims. Fourthly, the study reveals that the MSSN is involved in the transmission of Islamic knowledge and posits that its involvement is one of the ways in which the 'classical' Islamic education has changed in Yoruba society and the Muslim world. The transformation of Islamic education shows evidence of The new forms of education introduced by the MSSN include the Islamic Vacation Course (IVC), the gendered Brothers' Forum and Sisters' Circle and the Leadership Training Programme (LTP) which are not only used to teach Islamic knowledge but also*

*socio-economic skills. Although the MSSN method of learning appears to challenge the pedagogy and epistemology of the 'classical' Qur'anic schools, the new forms, however, show continuities in various ways with these Qur'anic schools. Thus, this study argues that the new forms of Islamic education are a part of MSSN's contribution to religious knowledge production in contemporary Yoruba Muslim society, and to their religious change as a whole. In general, the study demonstrates the manifold contributions of MSSN to religious change and new ways of being Muslim, which include the formation of national and transnational Muslim organizations, revival of sunna, introduction of new forms of religious education.*

## TABLE OF CONTENT

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

The gradual changes pervading the political landscape had awakened the consciousness of Muslim students to come together for self preservation and common resolve to hold on to their faith and practice their religion unhindered by the Government or any group under whatever guise. Ilo , (2008)Before then, Muslim students were obliged to go to school during Muslim festivals of Eid-Fitri, Eid-Adha, or get severely punished for staying away from school during the celebrations. There were no holidays for Muslim festivals. Indeed some examinations were fixed on those days to compel Muslim Students to attend school. It was equally impossible for Muslims to go for Juma'ah service on Fridays and Muslim sisters were not allowed to wear the Islamic Hijab in Schools as they were forced to appear half naked (National Retreat, MSSN 2012). The advent of the MSSN in 1954, before Nigeria‟s independence was therefore the beginning of a revolution, a new consciousness and reawakening of the Muslim minds to the truth and fact of Islam and one of the greatest thing happened to mankind in this part of the world (National Retreat, MSSN 2012). The MSSN according to its by-law has among others the following aims and objectives: - Bring all Muslim in closer union and inculcate in them the true Islamic spirit of

brotherhood and absolute faith in Allah as the only basis for the achievement of peace among mankind. -Establish an Islamic Ummah govern by the principles and rules of the Shariʿah.

Today MSSN is the greatest mass movement of Muslim youth nationwide. It is doubtful in Nigeria, if any students organization, religious or secular is bigger than MSSN. It has provided example for others to follow. MSSN has contributed immensely to the spiritual growth and development of Nigeria youths. Through its rich, balanced and enlightenment programmes on the virtues of discipline and moral life, the society has to date remained strongly opposed to all forms of vices, indiscipline and cultism on campus. In the realm of the wide society, the MSSN records have also been impressive. In every sphere of life, education, economy, social, political, professionals, public service etc., MSSN has produced outstanding leaders and eminent personalities like the former Minister of Finance, AlhajiAdamuCiroma, AlhajiShehu Musa, who was the MSSN former National Secretary General, and Professor NuruddenAlao, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos who was as well former National Secretary General of the society, professor IshaqOloyede, former ViceChancellor, University of Ilorin, former Vice President AtikuAbubakar, a string of governors and numerous MSSN Alumni in the National Assembly and the various State Assemblies with many of them holding key legislative and political positions. MSSN also have number of Ministers, commissioners and other Government functionaries (Bye-Law MSSN,

2013). The judiciary is not left out as well as professions like Medicine, Law, Engineering and ICT. Perhaps, it is in the education industry, that MSSN has excelled most. Many MSSN Alumni have held Vice Chancellors position in Nigeria‟s Universities. In commerce and industry be it in the Banking sector, military and police force, MSS members are outstanding (Bye-Law MSSN, 2013).

The annual Islamic vacation course which is almost as old as the society itself provides a forum for interaction and promotion of understanding of Islamic culture and ethics among members. MSSN also foster the spirit of selflessness, compassion and discipline through periodic visits and show of generosity to the sick in the hospitals, the aged and the less privileged members of the society. Most importantly, MSSN has promoted national unity and harmony more than any organization in Nigeria history. It was the first society to provide the platform for cross-fertilization of ideas between the north and the south (Bye-Law MSSN, 2013). When it was a taboo for politicians of the three divides in Nigeria to mix freely and promote common ground for interaction, MSSN was building a structure that has later been exploited to national advantage by politicians.

Divergent political opinions were never a threat to MSSN. Its main feat is bringing under its Islamic umbrella, youth from the diverse groups that make up the country (Bye-Law MSSN, 2013). It is on record that the zoning formula now adopted by political parties in Nigeria was the age long tradition of MSSN which made succession from one National leadership to another easy, smooth and

pleasant. Leadership rotates from the north to the south. On election year, leadership are also groomed and tested before they take up their offices. Situation where money bags are elected or chosen irrespective of the source as leaders was never allowed in MSSN. In MSSN, leadership is service and the creed is selflessness in service. In MSSN, leadership is a function of contributing to the society, social work and commitment to declared goals and objectives, demonstrated capacity to lead with appreciable level of transparency and accountability.

The ability to be subjected to the scrutiny of the law, honor, humility in power and responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of the people at all times are the essence of leadership in MSSN (Bye-Law MSSN, 2013). The Muslim Students‟ Society of Nigeria still forging ahead has made a bold impression on the international scene. Having regard to its enormous Area Councils and Branch network, the society has become prominent in the Islamic world. It therefore attracted many invitations for international conference, seminars and workshops. It was through the influence of the MSSN that the International Islamic Federation of Student Organization (IIFSO) with headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the International Institute of Islamic thought (IIlT) with headquarters in United States of America, the Muslim Students of Canada and America were given birth to. Beneath these achievements are the silent but monumental support and

contributions of Muslim Leaders, scholars and philanthropists who made the dream and aspiration of MSSN come true (Bye-Law MSSN, 2013)

The problem of leadership faced by the Muslim community shortly after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) had done irreparable damage to the religion of Islam. That had, therefore, left the office opened to many contenders; most of who thought leadership is a title a leader assumes rather than a process he executes. Though, the doom was initially averted with the appointment of Abu Bakr as the immediate successor of the Prophet, this problem of leadership re-occurred each time there was the need to appoint the leader of the Ummah. Eventually, the problem broke out into a civil crisis, which led to the disintegration of the Muslim community. The situation could best be described as theologico-sectarian civil war. Each of the various warring groups and, in fact, individuals were not only giving wishful interpretations to the Holy Qur'ān, but were also fabricating Aḥadīth (Prophetic traditions) to prove the raison detre of their ideologies, beliefs and practices. The situation became worse when peoples of different socio-cultural backgrounds embraced Islam. Each was interpreting Islam in her own cultural context1 , which did not agree with the teachings of Islam. That introduces a lot of innovations into the Faith. Up to the 21st century, when Muslims not only have to live side by side with adherents of other religions, but also have to share with them the technological advancement of the modern

age, the situation remains unchanged–Islam is no longer practised in the pristine form.

Religion is no more the primary concern of the people. The structure of the one single community which the Prophet (SAAS) laboured to put in place for more than twenty-three years was thus not only divided into varying groups on personal interests, but was also demolished. Abdul was right therefore to observe that before the death of the Prophet, "the picture of the Ummah was complete but its future was not certain." 2Some people, however, looking at the situations of the Muslim community in which they live, felt that the system was inadequate and thus painfully unacceptable. They believed that Islamic theological thoughts, particularly when dealing with terrestrial realities, can only advance by reverting back to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. They, therefore, called for a return to Salaf. In doing this, they made deliberate, organized and conscious efforts to build a more satisfying Muslim Ummah by floating one Muslim organisation or the other. Nigeria, harbouring a considerable number of Muslims, also experienced the formation of such Muslim organisations. It is three Muslim organisations in Nigeria that this paper seeks to critically examine with a view to bringing out the merits and demerits of the enormity in their number. We shall endeavour to put on a looking glass, which will reflect the conditions; past, present and future of these organisations to see if their continued existence is worthwhile.

Conversely, the lack of appropriate pastoral care and guidance could make young people become more vulnerable to negative influences that might affect their spiritual growth. The concept of identity formation in these postmodern adolescents is presented by Frederick Schweitzer. He understands that the modern framework of identity formation in young people can no longer be applied in the diverse and pluralistic culture of the postmodern world. Schweitzer explains that "we are now in a new century, or even a new millennium, and the lifestyles of the 1960's have little to do with the lifestyles after the year 2000. The modern idea of identity is outdated because of far-reaching historical changes that make it difficult to hold this idea." Dean (2004).

Schweitzer (2015) considers the modern concept of identity formation as individualistic, and too narrow. These limitations, according to him, make it difficult for young people to stand up to the needs and challenges that are specific to the pluralistic postmodern culture of their time. Schweitzer then proposes the "plural self" as a substitute to the single identity formation in adolescence. The "plural self" in postmodern context is the awareness that no single identity defines a person, and is characterized by flexibility, adaptability, and the possibility of integration into different roles. Thus, this thesis confronts the question: how can we make pastoral care more adolescent-oriented in a postmodern multi-cultural society? The author will attempt to assess the developing trend of young people in postmodern Africa (and Nigeria in particular) and envision a pastoral care ministry

that will assist them, as they search for meaning, relationship, and purpose in Church and Community. It will carefully examine the postmodern concept of the plural self by Schweitzer as the alternative to identity formation, to determine how pastoral care ministry might nurture the spiritual development of young people in postmodern conditions in Nigeria. It is pertinent to note that the plural self as opposed to the predominant western modern philosophy of "the self" and self-actualization has been the functional foundation in most African/Nigerian cultures, where "it takes a village to raise a child."

Adolescent Spirituality will be discussed in this Thesis, in order to underscore the significance of pastoral care in the spiritual life of the young. In this narrative, I will identify and discuss key issues on spiritual values, prayer life, self-identity and self-esteem that are relevant to young people in the postmodern context. This will be done through the exploration of contemporary literature that addresses the human and spiritual development of youth in postmodern context. This thesis will explore the understanding of the lifestyle of postmodern youth in Nigeria, using the works of Frederick Schweitzer, who has expressed the need for Church and Theology to examine the "changing shape of adolescence as a period of life."

Youth life style: Church Growth is a movement within evangelical Christianity which focuses on developing methods to grow churches based on business marketing strategies. It cannot be disputed that youths play a vital role in

the life of a Church as they are the leaders of tomorrow and future of the church. The elderly stands out but youth's contributions have been shinning and have always been flag bearers of every Church. For any tangible growth to take place in any Christian community, the youth must be significant in that process of growth. This is the more reason why wise nations, countries, groups and organization focus more on the development of youths so that the future of such investments would never be improvised or blind. It is therefore of vital importance in the Catholic Church to prepare assiduously youths for the tasks they would naturally face in the coming future. It is only when we have nourished our youths that they in-turn develop the Church. The questions are "what amount of attention do we give the youths and what level of devotion does the youths give to the church.

The youths of today have very high ideals, and to deny this would be grossly unfair. But we must admit that very often these ideals can sour, can be perverted and can be exploited. Often young people ultimately relinquish their ideals if they suspect that the situation is hopeless; if they conclude that nowhere can these ideals be fulfilled. Unfortunately, this is the usual progression of events today. Disappointments lead to abysmal falls, often to depths lower than those they condemned when their idealism was fresh. Where this does not happen, ideals are exploited by false prophets of good. The sectarians far from the fullness of truth are able to inspire youth to make such amazing sacrifices Yet at the same time, the Orthodox Church, possessingthe fullness of Truth, has a real difficulty in

keeping her youth(Abednego2009). It could be that in ignoring the high ideals and potential moral heroism of our youth we have failed to familiarize them with our examples of such heroism, displayed by our own young, even the very young, who loved Christ and His Church in past ages. The youths are important fabrics in the society. Can there be any society without youth? Obviously no, that is why we must see to it that our youths find their rightful places in the church.Church growth begins with church health and not the other way around. We see in nature that healthy things grow. This is by no means a new concept, but it's still true. From this research, we will discover what a healthy church is like and how youth life style can boost church growth.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

One key problem facing Muslim student society of Nigeria is the inability to examine youth life style and the understanding the teaching of islam. Another problem is how best to measure numerical growth. A variety of indicators for attendance and occasional offices are available, but all are affected to some degree by measurement error and random fluctuations. Such variability poses particular problems in spreading Islam, where the addition or subtraction of just a few people produces large proportional changes in the totals. The life style of most Mulism students today, a great percentage of our Muslim students, whereby living a life of disobedience to the teaching of Islam, they are copying the patterns of this world with dexterity. Today, the lifestyle of Muslim students especially in Ijebu Ode is

such that it is very difficult to have a distinction between those who knows understand the teaching of Islam very well and of those who dont. How can Muslim student societyeradicate/minimize propaganda facing Islam in reference to Ijebu ode? This research is vital because it aims at making an analysis on the impact of Muslim student society of Nigeria in propaganda of Islam in Ijebu ode.

In this regard, the researcher brought up at a time when Muslim student society was relatively good, and when the relationship between the students and Muslim leaders was also good. This made it possible for the researcher to have an enormous burden about information of Islam used to mislead people.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to find out the impact of Muslim student society of Nigeria in Propaganda of Islam in Ijebu ode.

Specifically the study sought to;

i. Find out the impact of Muslim Student society in the teaching of Islam
ii. Investigate factors militating against the teaching of Islam
iii. Find out whether Muslim student are ready to partake in the teaching of Islam
iv. Examine whether Muslim student society have adequate resources to propagate Islam.

## 1.4 Research Questions

Based on the above purpose of the study, the following questions were formulated.

i. What is the impact of Muslim Student society in the teaching of Islam?

ii. What are the factors militating against the teaching of Islam?

iii. Are Muslim student ready to partake in the teaching of Islam?

iv. Is there adequate resources to propagate Islam?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This research work will assist mosques,Islamic organisations, etc in discovering the vital roles of Muslim student society in the community and towards successful teaching of Islam. Based on this, the research work contains the researcher's contributions that would be of help and useful to education policy planners, Educationist, Ministry of Education authorities, Stakeholders, school administrations and management in schools and mosques towards helping students to improve the quality of facilities in the education system. Apart from the above, the research will provide valuable information on the influence of different interacting factors on the impact of Musilim student society of Nigeria in the growth of Islam. The content of the study will also serve as resource materials for others who want to carry out further research.

## 1.6 Scope of the Study

The study investigate the "Impact of Muslim Student Society of Nigeria in Propaganda of Islam". This study will be carried out in Ijebu Ode community in Ogun state.

## 1.7 Limitations of Study

1. Financial constraint- Insufficient fund tends to impede the efficiency of the researcher in sourcing for the relevant materials, literature or information and in the process of data collection (internet, questionnaire and interview).

2. Time constraint- The researcher will simultaneously engage in this study with other academic work. This consequently will cut down on the time devoted for the research work.

## 1.8 Definition of Terms

- **Muslim Society:** Muslim society in this study refers to the collection of muslim people who interact together in making decisions.
- **Students:** A **student** is a person enrolled in a school or other educational institution who attends classes in a course to attain the appropriate level of mastery of a subject under the guidance of an instructor and who devotes time outside class to do whatever activities the instructor assigns that are necessary either for class preparation or to submit evidence of progress towards that mastery.

- **Propaganda:Propaganda** refers information that is not objective and is used primarily to influence an audience and further an agenda, often by presenting facts selectively to encourage a particular synthesis or perception, or using loaded language to produce an emotional rather than a rational response to the information that is presented.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature related to the study. Emphasis will be on conceptual review, theoretical review, empirical review and appraisal of literature

## 2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The framework is formulated around existing studies on the concept of Islam as a discursive tradition, Islamic reform and revival, religious change, and Christian-Muslim encounters. This chapter aims to outline the central arguments in these studies and to show why they helped me to understand the involvement of MSSN and Yoruba Muslims in religious change. It also presents how my empirical findings link up with the debates in these studies. Given the main argument of the thesis, this chapter aims to demonstrate why the history of the MSSN and its contributions to the religious change of Western educated Yoruba Muslims can be understood within these debates.

In doing this, I first explore the concept of Islam as a discursive tradition as the basis of my analysis of Yoruba Muslim society and the MSSN history, which includes its definition of Islam and what it means to be a good Muslim. Based on the work of Asad, I note that this conception of Islam is significant because it helps us to appreciate the different ways Islam is lived and interpreted within the

MSSN. More importantly, it allows us to know that multiple interpretations of Islam and ways of being Muslim are interconnected with the process of religious change. This is so because religious change is not only practical, it is also discursive. In addition to religious change, approaching Islam as a discursive tradition is also linked to other frameworks of analysis in this chapter; Islamic reform and Christian-Muslim encounters. Islamic reform is an aspect of discursive tradition because it includes an effort to define what is correct and incorrect in the traditions of Muslims. Furthermore, the discursive tradition of Islam in any Muslim society is relational in nature. In this regard, the debates and knowledge of Islam are not only informed, for instance, by the Qur'an and the Hadith, but in relation to the prevailing historical and social contexts of Muslims. Using the example of Yorubaland, the context in which the MSSN discourse of Islam can be appreciated is the one shaped by Christianization and the legacies of colonization.

In the next section, I focus on studies of Islamic reform and the different orientations of reformist movements in Africa that are connected to the MSSN. In these studies, I show that the meaning of 'reform' for many reform movements is not fixed because they have different orientations. I also demonstrate how Islamic reform has been studied in relation to 'modernity' and the difficulty of the attempt to link the two processes. While I note that the MSSN is a 'modern' organisation, I will also show that the idea of 'modernity' has its limitation for describing the

experience of its members. In the third section, I discuss religious change, the factors responsible for it and its different forms. I also show how the history of the MSSN fits into the process and forms of religious change among Yoruba Muslims. The final section focuses on the studies of Christian-Muslim encounters in Africa and shows why the history of the MSSN is an example of these encounters. The literature on Christian-Muslim encounters, based on the work of Benjamin Soares, emphasised the need to study the relationship between the two religious groups in its complex forms rather than focusing explicitly on either coexistence or conflict. I show why the history of the MSSN illustrates this complexity in this final section.

### 2.1.1 Islam as a discursive tradition:

The background to conceptualisation To understand the concept of Islam as a discursive tradition, I wish to give a brief background to its conception to show why it inspires my analysis in this study as well as the critique of Peel's position on the idea of "Yoruba Muslim/Islam" and the MSSN shift towards so-called "Sunni orthodoxy." The conceptualisation of Islam as a discursive tradition was proposed by Asad against the background of a search by anthropologists of Islam in the 1980s for a framework to understand 'Islam' and the heterogeneity of Muslims and their practices. This is given the fact that while Muslims frequently refer to the common foundational texts – the Qur'an and the Hadith – and agree on

many aspects of their creed, they also engage in debates and give multiple and conflicting positions on a wide range of social, religious, economic and political issues. They also have different practices which might include those adopted fromnon-Muslims. What inspired the search for a new framework to understand this diversity, as OvamirAnjum noted, was that the initial scholarship was dominated by Orientalists who essentialised 'Islam' and showed less sensitivity to the transformations, dialogues, and heterogeneity of lived Islam. Anjum added that many anthropologists also gave up the search for thinking about 'Islam' as 'one' and focused their investigation on the idea of the 'local Islams' rather than conceptualising the religion from a holistic perspective.According to Soares, the focus on these 'local Islams' had certain problems, a major part of which was the tendency for scholars to "attach ethnic and geographical qualifiers to Islam" such as "Moroccan Islam" and "African Islam."This created an assumption in such studies that "Islams" in the local contexts were on the periphery and different from the 'purer' form presumed to be in the Middle East.

In reference to the search for an alternative approach, Robert Launay noted that the task of the anthropologists of Islam was therefore "to find a framework in which to analyse the relationship between this single, global entity, Islam, and the multiple entities that are the religious beliefs and practices of Muslims in specific communities at specific moments in history." Some of the major questions that

confronted them include; what is 'Islam' or the 'real Islam' among the 'local Islams'? what is responsible for the diversity of Muslim practices? and, how can scholars conceptualise these diversities using a single framework? Clifford Geertz's Islam Observed was one of the studies that attempted these questions with the example of differences in Islamic religious change between Indonesia and Morocco. He showed that there was a unified religious tradition called Islam which was shared by the two societies even though they had two different cultures. Morocco, in the study, was a highly structured "tribal" society while Indonesia was a peasant society. Informed by their cultural differences, Islam in the two countries developed along two dimensions, experiences and traditions: in Morocco, it developed as one of "uncompromising rigorism," "moral perfectionism" and a "purified" creed, while it developed with "partial compromises, halfway covenants, and outright evasions" in Indonesia. Even though he reveals the diversity of Islamin the two countries, Geertz's study, according to Daniel Varisco, portrays two variants of this, one that is "scriptural" and another one that is "mystical." Many studies have continued to situate Muslims within these two perspectives. However, the wide range of Islamic reform orientations that we have today, as will be shown in the next section, demonstrate that this division is indeed inadequate.

Taking a contrary view from Geertz, Abdul Hamid el-Zein in “Beyond Ideology and Theology” challenges the assumption of a unified religious tradition called “real Islam.” His argument built on Geertz’s symbolic approach and recognises the diversity in which Islam is expressed. From this perspective, he argues that the diverse expressions of Islam have their own meanings and that Muslims are meaning-making subjects. However, unlike these expressions, the subjects can make meanings that are dynamic and flexible. The disparity between the two, according to him, points to the difficulty of locating the “real Islam” because each expression of Islam has “a web of frozen points of meaning” that is different from the “fluid meaning” which a subject who engages the expression inhabits. Thus, he concludes that “Islam” as an analytical object is not fixed and has no necessary existence. This argument does not only suggest that ‘Islam’ is unreal, it also implies that what Muslims define as orthodox practice or belief is problematic.

Another scholar who contributed to the debate is Ernest Gellner who draws attention to the importance of the “divine rules” that inform Muslim practices and traditions. He argues that “Islam is the blueprint of social order. It holds that a set of rules exist, eternal, divinely ordained, and independent of the will of men, which defines the proper ordering of society.” The problem with this argument is that it does not provide enough answer as to why Islam is understood differently by Muslim groups and individuals. Furthermore, as Asads points out, Gellner’s

argument implies that Muslims are “actors” who do not think but only ‘act’ based on the rules set by the divine. Michael Gilsenan’s study, however, moved away from thatposition.Instead, he suggests that the different things which Muslims referred to as ‘Islamic’ should be understood within the context of their lives and historical conditions. Based on this assumption, he encourages scholars to pay attention to what a Muslim or Muslim community regards as ‘Islam’ in their context and accept it as valid.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

A framework for studying Islam and Muslim societies Asad argues that Islam “is neither a distinctive social structure nor a heterogeneous collection of beliefs, artifacts, customs, and morals. It is a tradition.”Asad’s notion of tradition builds on Alasdair MacIntyre’s definition. While earlier scholars conceived tradition as a practice or culture that is fixed over time, MacIntyre posits that tradition is also a “historically extended, socially embodied argument” that is subject to change either by innovation, addition, extinction or depreciation. Relating it to Islam, Asad argues that Islam is a tradition made up of discourses that aim to teach Muslims the proper mode and function of a practice that is historically established.

Based on this notion of tradition, he contends that scholars seeking to analyse the questions, ‘What is Islam?’ and ‘What are the reasons for diversity among Muslims?’ should proceed as Muslims do, which is through the discourse of

tradition. “An Islamic discursive tradition” as he defines it, “is simply a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present.”Anjum explained this furthernoting that the Islamic discursive tradition is defined by its own line of reasoning based on texts, history, andinstitutions, but this is not to imply that the reasoning is typically ‘Islamic’ or inaccessible to non-Muslims. Also, Asad draws attention to the mistaken notion that all the things Muslims say and practise is part of an Islamic tradition or duplicate of the past because what they do and say is also informed by their interpretation to connect with the past.

In addition, he notes that the teaching of “orthodox doctrine,” by which he meant “the correct process of teaching” and “the correct statement of what is to be learned,” is key to the tradition of Islam. This teaching could be taught by a Sufi Shaykh, an Imam or an untutored parent. However, he contests the assumption that underlies Gellner’s thesis of orthodoxy as a fixed body of thought that is found everywhere in Muslim societies. For Asad, orthodoxy is also a specific relationship of power and it can be found in any context in which “Muslims have the power to regulate, uphold, require, or adjust correct practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine, or replace incorrect ones.” This suggests that what is considered as correct practices is an attempt to establish a form of power, which therefore frequently provokes resistance from those who contest the definition of

that orthodoxy. Again, Asad contends that the argument and resistance enabled by this attempt are integral to the discursive tradition of Islam and it is important for scholars to pay attention to the social contexts that give rise to them. Running through Asad's argument is the assumption that historical and social conditions are important factors in the concept of Islamic discursive tradition. These factors are responsible for the heterogeneity of Muslim practices in different societies. The heterogeneity, according to him, is an indication of "the different Islamic reasonings that different social and historical conditions can or cannot sustain."136 In his elaboration of this point, Roman Loimeier notes that Muslim discourses in different historical eras seek to translate specific traditions in a corpus of "Islamic general knowledge" into local contexts. This corpus, according to him, is what is generally known to Muslims. It includes the Qur'an and the Hadith; "core" places like Mecca, Medina, al-Qudus, and sites of memorable battles; the Sunna of the Prophet; iconic symbols like the ḥijāb; and "core" religious debates such as the rules of fasting. To translateany tradition, religious scholars or actors refer to the corpus through a reinterpretation of the corpus in relation to the historical conditions of their societies. However, Asad contends that the diversity produced by this process should not be mistaken for lack of homogeneity in Islamic traditions. At the same time, it should not be assumed that Islamic traditions are essentially homogenous, but that despite their diversities, Muslims seek to achieve coherence even if this is impeded by the unstable and

disparate economic and political conditions of their societies. Largely, the conception of Islam as a discursive tradition reveals that various subjectivities and practices produced among Muslims cannot be reduced to only two categories, "scriptural" and "mystical" traditions, as portrayed by Geertz. It also allows a re-evaluation of one authentic Islam that is represented by a single authority or practised by one Muslim society which is different from others.

This is why I consider Peel's idea of "Yoruba Islam/Muslim" and his argument on the Yoruba Muslim adoption of the "orthodox Sunni," represented by the MSSN, as problematic. Taking Islam as a discursive tradition suggests to me that the idea of a good Muslim is difficult to fix to a specific point in the history of Yoruba Muslims or any Muslim society. Furthermore, as Scott Reese explains, discursive tradition also helps us to move beyond the thinking that Islam is a rigid and unchanging body of knowledge because this notion of Islam demonstrates that Muslims everywhere are continuously involved in a process of reinterpretation of their body of knowledge in a way that allows them to react and cope with transformations at different times.140 Taking Islam as a discursive tradition is also useful for conceptualising the process of "reform" and "revival," to a large extent. As EbrahimMoosa and SherAliTarren posit, we can "think of reform as a discourse of improvement, recovery, and healing" of tradition. Explaining this further, they contend that discourse of "revival" is "the process of restoring that

tradition, of sustaining the promise of its continued repetition and also inventing it simultaneously." They also note that despite the assumption of some modernist reformers that the process is a straightpath, reform does not have one connotation or follow a specific trajectory. And, even though the attempt is to repair an existing practice, Moosa and Tarren insist that reform is capable of producing something new through discourse. Loimeier provides another useful argument on the relationship between discursive tradition and reform movement. He argues that discourse is used by reform movements to develop distinctive positions in relation to their context and to other reform movements of their time and/or in the past. Discourse also allows reformers to contest and denounce some traditions as unlawful innovations (referred to as bid'a) using their interpretation of the corpus of Islamic knowledge. In turn, those who are accused of innovation also use discourse to reject the reformers claim and brand them as innovators. But the ultimate success or failure of this argumentation, as Loimeier contends, is not so much about which is right but the capacity of a movement to respond to socio-economic and political crises and to win people for its project of reform.

Approaching Islam as a discursive tradition applies to the history of Yoruba Muslims as well as the MSSN and its reform process in many ways. As I will demonstrate in the study, the concept helps to analyse what inspired reform in the Society, the actors involved and the reasoning that shaped their arguments. It

also guides my understanding of why discourses on correct practice led to real contests for power and division in the Society. Besides, the study shows that discourses in the MSSN are not limited to Islam. Many of the discourses also focused on comparing Islam with Christianity and the cultural practices in Yorubaland. This comparative discourse thus shows that Islam is not only understood from the traditions of Muslims but also in relation to the traditions of non-Muslims. Despite its usefulness, the discursive tradition of Islam is not without its critics. Among them is Ronald Lukens-Bull who argues that Asad's depiction of Islamic discourse placed more emphasis on the Qur'an and the Hadith.146 It is true that these texts are significant to Islamic discourse, however, according to Lukens-Bull, it is also important to consider other forms of knowledge that play into the Muslim discourses. Among these are the various texts produced by Muslim thinkers (in the past and in contemporary times), local concerns, and non-Muslim discourses and practices.

Samuli Schielke also contests Asad's notion of discursive tradition because, according to him, it placed more emphasis on religious tradition while little attention is given to everyday practices of Muslims. He is of the view that the practices and behaviours of Muslims, which are informed by "existential and pragmatic sensibilities of living a life in a complex and often troubling world," show a wide range of ambivalences and inconsistencies that challenge the

framework of a single tradition. This implies that despite their attempt to follow the correct traditions of Islam, Muslims are nevertheless unable to do so in many cases. This reality inspired the argument by Schielke that emphasizes the importance of incorporating failures and ambiguities in the conception of Islam to show that it is an incoherent entity. I am of the view that Schielke's argument does not challenge the usefulness of Islamic discursive tradition. As a matter of fact, my sources on the MSSN confirm his observation about the struggles and inconsistencies of being Muslim. There is also Gabriele Marranci who contests Asad's argument on the "object of study," Islam, as a tradition. Marranci's point is that "the main thing that Muslims share among themselves and others is certainly not Islam, but rather the fact that they are human beings."

As humans, Muslims engaged in relationships and behaviours with others and the environment in ways that generate "feelings." Thus, for him, this "feeling" is integral to what it means to be Muslim for many people insofar as "they feel to be Muslims" without adequate knowledge of the Qur'an and the Hadith. Furthermore, he argues that Muslims articulate "feelings" that are different from one another through discourse. Therefore, he suggests that Islam can be conceptualised "as a map of discourses on how to 'feel Muslim.'" This informs his argument that the starting point of our research should be on Muslims rather than Islam which appears theological in orientation. Marranci's argument is also

useful because it shows another important perspective to studying Islam and Muslims. Yet, I disagree with his theory of "feeling" which suggests that people must be emotionally attached to Islam or other Muslims before they can be considered as Muslims. This is problematic because it fails to consider the broad range of ways of being Muslim. There are studies showing how many Muslims converted to Islam in Africa following dreams and divination. These include Gbadamosi's work on the Yoruba and HumphreyFisher's study on dreams. Moreover, Lori Peek's study of Muslim students in the United States discovered that being a Muslim can be a developmental process, especially from childhood to adulthood. The process, as he points out, starts with Islam being an "ascribed" identity (when it was chosen for them by parents) to a "chosen" identity (when they embrace it for themselves) and later to a "declared" identity (when they strengthened and affirmed their belief). While Peek notes that his example may not be replicated in other places, he maintains that "religious identity is a dynamic and ongoing process" for many Muslims.

What I found useful in this argument is the idea of religious ascription which can be related to the experience of most members of the MSSN. For the students I worked with, the fact that Islam was chosen for them by their parents does not preclude them from identifying with Islam except we want to say they are not Muslim enough as Marranci implies here: "it is that feel to be which makes an

enormous difference when we try to understand Muslim societies." I can understand Marranci's argument from the point of view of removing theological bias from the concept of Islam. But doing so not only runs the risk of not understanding the wide range of being Muslim, it could also create the impression that there are 'proper,' 'improper,' 'good' and 'bad' Muslims. The concept of Islam as a discursive tradition is, however, useful to help us avoid this impression. In the next section, I will discuss Islamic reform and show how it is related to the concept of Islam as a discursive tradition.

## 2.4 APPRAISAL OF LITERATURE

The Islamization and Christianization of many parts of Africa by the twentieth century have been theorised by many scholars. Among them is Robin Horton who contends that the conversion to the two religions is due to the religious thought process of Africans and how it2.4 Religious change The Islamization and Christianization of many parts of Africa by the twentieth century have been theorised by many scholars. Among them is Robin Horton who contends that the conversion to the two religions is due to the religious thought process of Africans and how itIn his response to Horton, Humphrey Fisher proposes a historical approach to Islamization based on three stages. He notes that there was a "quarantine" stage when Islam gradually made an inroad into the "animist" communities; a "mixing" phase, where the people assimilated Islamic traditions

but retained elements of old beliefs and practices; and the "reform" period, where they abandoned these elements. Largely, Horton and Fisher give some insights into the understanding of religious change today. However, Janson's study challenges their approaches because they offered an understanding of religious change as a straight path, that is, a shift from Traditional Religion to Christianity or Islam. Using the example of a member of TablighJama'at in The Gambia, Janson argues that conversion can also be "in terms of a transformation of the self" which could happen within the same religion, either Islam or Christianity. She also calls attention to the conception of this transformation as a fluctuating process rather than a unilinear pathway. Thus, one of my understandings of religious change builds on Janson's argument. Her argument supports the experience of the Yoruba Muslim students in the MSSN because one of the forms of their religious change involves a shift from one notion of Islam to another.In addition, I build on the conception of religious change by Jack Eller as an aspect of wider cultural change. Eller considers religious change to fit into Bronisław Malinowski's definition of cultural change as "the process by which the existing order of a society, that is, itssocial, spiritual, and material civilisation, is transformed from one type into another."Though it appears as a unidirectional process, this conception of religious change suggests that transformation in religion will generally affect other aspects of culture. When this happens, the key change processes will function in both religion and culture. The key change processes, as

he notes, are “innovation” and “diffusion.” Innovation can occur in culture when an individual or group bring a new idea, object or practice into being. In religion, the innovation can be “a new entity to believe in, a new myth to tell, a new symbol to use, a new ritual to perform, etc.” For the process of diffusion, it can occur if “an idea, object, or practice from another society is introduced into the first society which entails further cultural processes such as contact, migration, intermarriage, invasion, or conquest.”

From a sociological approach, Meredith McGuire contends that the dynamics of religious change relate to a broader process of social change. This suggests that rather than happening in isolation, religious change is also stimulated by social factors. This perspective informs the object of research of many sociologists from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century seeking to understand religion within the society. Among them is Karl Marx who is well-known for arguing that changes in the economy are central to religious and social change. This comes from his conceptualisation of religion as a creation of the material and economic realities of the society and a tool used by the rich to oppress the poor. This view is less popular today because it tends to subject the historical process only to the forces of the market. There is also Émile Durkheim whose perspective to the debate differed from Marx. As Bryan Turner argues, Durkheim considers religion to be the seeds of social life and collective activity.

This informs his concept of religion as a "social fact" – "a phenomenon outside the individual, existing independently and exercising moral force over society."Although Durkheim was criticized by many secularists for this position, Turner argues that the revival of religion today has made his argument relevant again.

The various perspectives above show that there are complex factors at play in the process of religious change. This view confirms Peel's argument that "the factors involved in religious change in Africa are very elaborate" such that historians and social scientists can offer different explanations. This heterogeneity of processes of religious change informs my understanding of the concept in this study. This perspective is important because it allows me to approach the history of MSSN in a complex way. As part of the complexity, I consider the establishment of the MSSN as an innovation that was enabled by the social process of Christianization and colonialization.

The transformation of MSSN into a reformist movement is also shaped by varying postcolonial realities both in the Muslim world and in Nigeria. However, despite offering a fluid conception, Eller suggests that the multiplicity of processes involved in religious and cultural change also mean that one is not always certain about the "ultimate source of novelty." This is made more challenging by the problem of reducing phenomena like "religion" to specific meanings. For instance,

the notion of "religion," as Wilfred Smith argues, is a reified term confused together with "religious" practices such as rituals and praying, while the idea of "religion as a category that abstracted human activities and experiences" does not exist. The problem of constructing "religion" has therefore raised certain questions in many studies such as those on new religious movements (NRM).

### 2.4.1 Forms of change

Eller posits that the result of religious change may include various processes that include "addition," "deletion" "reinterpretation" "elaboration," "simplification," "purification," "syncretism," and "schism/fission." I wish to point out that even though each of these processes implies different things, they are all connected, in different ways, to how discourse results in a religious change. For instance, "addition," as Eller points out, may occur if a new item is introduced to a pre-existing repertoire. The new item becomes a practice once an argument is made to authorise it. This happens many times in the MSSN and among Yoruba Muslims in general.. Another major example is the introduction of music which is used for entertainment in the MSSN but also regarded as a type of da'wa (propagation of Islam). However, employing music for da'wa raised several debates on whether it was a correct practice in Islam and was dropped by the Society in the late 1980s. The dropping of the music is part of what Eller refers to as "deletion" in which a society or religious organisation discontinues a ritual.

Eller also identifies the case of "reinterpretation," a process in which initial beliefs and practices may be given new meanings. This can occur due to generational difference or by the introduction of new viewpoints. This process calls attention to the idea of reform and how it was inspired in the MSSN, . In this case, the Society gave a different perspective to the notion of sunna which departed from how it was conceived by many Yoruba Muslims. A major example is the use of certain veils that cover the woman's face which many Yoruba Muslims considered being less obligatory but was emphasised by the MSSN as central to what it means to be a good Muslim.

An aspect of this process of "reinterpretation" is what Eller refers to as "elaboration" which occurs when an old idea or action is widened and improved. In the MSSN, it happens that after promoting a different notion of sunna, the understanding and practices considered as sunna such as veiling were also expanded. To illustrate this, before the reform, female Muslims in Yorubaland used the loose scarves during prayers and in the public domain. This is not to suggest that these scarves are no longer in use. However, these scarves are not considered to fit into the prophetic examples with which many female MSSN members wish to be associated. This has made different types of knitted veils, some of which are in the form of a garment, popular among these female MSSN members.

Another aspect of reinterpretation can be "simplification" which involves reducing the detail of an existing idea or practice. For instance, while education in the classical madrasas starts with the mastery of Arabic, the MSSN promotes the use of English translated texts in the acquisition of knowledge. This is not to suggest that the Society de-emphasises the importance of Arabic. However, the English texts have been simplified following the process of objectification and they fit into the Western educational pedagogies which the students are familiar with.

Besides, Eller explains that "purification" can also be a variant of reinterpretation, In this case, the effort is to get rid of an element which an individual or group considers to be wrong or alien and to return to the 'real' or 'pure' form. This happened when the MSSN dissociated itself from the Ahmadiyya movement and the Sufi orders because they were regarded as innovation (bid'a) into the 'real Islam.' Islamic reform, discussed above, is therefore an example of this process of "purification."

**Muslim-Christian encounters**

While I locate the history of the MSSN in the context of religious and social changes above, I also wish to point out that many aspects of the change are

historically linked to how Yoruba Muslims encountered the various Christian missionaries and their followers. To understand this point, I build on Soares' discourse on the way Muslims and Christians have encountered each other in Africa. Soares adopts the term "encounter" as an analytical perspective to situate the range of interactions between Muslims and Christians over time. He is of the view that the interactions "cannot be understood as simply existing at a point on a one-dimensional continuum that runs from coexistence to conflict." This argument is a critique of approaches and assumptions in studies that exclusively focus on either 'relation,' 'dialogue' or 'conflict' between the two religious' groups. In many of these studies, according to Soares, Muslims and Christians are treated as single communities that relate as blocs without crisscrossing each other's boundaries. Some of them build on a functionalist approach that conceives of religion as instrumental to stability in society. Apart from this, many of these studies tend to presume that 'peace' and 'tolerance' is the "normal" societal condition.

So are is aware of studies like Akinade's work which seek to respond to the tensions that have characterised the interactions between members of both faiths. Nonetheless, he insists that "interactions between Muslims and Christians in Africa must be understood in their full complexity." To analyse this complexity, as he proposes, is not "to focus exclusively on either conflict or peaceful

coexistence." At the same time, the spotlight should not be on religion alone because it is only one of the elements that define social identities. On the contrary, the focal point should be on the wide range of phenomena on which they interacted. To do this, there is a need to be aware that while Muslims and Christians have confronted one another and live side by side in peace, they have also converted to each other's religion. Moreover, they have borrowed and appropriated from each other, and married among themselves. It is this complex form of interaction that informs his conceptualisation of encounter as an alternative analytical category for understanding Muslin-Christian relations.

The history of the MSSN provides another useful context for looking into the dynamics of Muslim-Christian encounters in Yoruba society. The educational institutions, for instance, show how one of these dynamics can be appreciated. As I will demonstrate, the Muslim students interact in the same settings with Christian students whose church missions pioneered the school system and set many of its pedagogies. The school is also a place where the Muslim and Christian students acquire the capital and skills which they both need to achieve economic and political resources from the opportunities provided by the state. Beyond their quests for knowledge, the school also facilitates a varying degree of co-existence and borrowings between the Muslim students and their Christian colleagues. The establishment of the MSSN, for instance, was inspired by those of the Christian

mission schools called the SCM and SU. At the same time, the interaction between Christian and Muslim students in the schools showed many incidences of conflict and critique of each other's religion and way of life.

In conclusion, it is possible to link the conceptual frameworks in this study by arguing that religious change is a process which takes different forms in many areas, some of which, in the context of a Muslim society, are made possible through the process of reform or revival of certain traditions. The prevailing social and historical conditions in a society can also shape the outcome of religious change. Certain forms of religious change can equally be motivated by encounters between people of different religions, particularly in a multireligious society. In all, discourses and counter-discourses are central to these three processes because they are used to frame the introduction, interpretation and discontinuity of a practice and what to belief

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODODOLOGY

This chapter presents re search methodology for this study under the following sub-headings:

- Research design
- Population of the study
- Sample and sampling technique(s)
- Instrument for data collection
- Validation of the instrument
- Reliability of the instrument
- Method of data collection
- Data analysis techniques

## 3.1 Research Design

This study employed descriptive research design. This design aimed at discovering the impact of Muslim students society of Nigeria in Propagation of Islam with reference to Ijebu Ode Community in Ogun State. Survey aids the study of overcrowded population through small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence and distribution. Also, this study shall involve both quantitative and qualitative data from a combination of different sources of data.

## 3.2 Population of the Study

Population of the study comprises of all muslim in Ijebu ode community.

## 3.4 Sample and sampling technique

Simple random sampling was adopted for this study. The sample size of one hundred (100) respondents will be used for this study.

## 3.5 Instrument for data collection

The researcher developed 5 survey questions from each research questions and sent out hundred copies of such to the prospective respondents.

In the questionnaire, open-ended questions were asked. These questions gave the respondents the opportunity to answer according to their own understanding.

The researcher also tried as much as possible to simplify the language used to avoid under ambiguous phrases and sentences. All the questions given were contextual in nature. The aim was to draw the best from the respondents on the subject treated.

## 3.6 Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the face and content validity, three (3) draft copies of the questionnaire will be produced. One copy for the researcher's supervisor and two (2) copies for the two (2) other experts. Based on their suggestions the instrument

will be restructured and the corrected draft questionnaire will be taken to the project supervisor for the final approval.

### 3.7 Reliability of instrument

Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using test re-test method. One of the mosques not selected for the study will be used. Twenty (20) respondents will be randomly selected. The instrument will be administered on the same set of respondents within a space of two weeks and the data collected will be analyzed by using the Pearson Product moment correlation analysis to compute the reliability index.

### 3.8 Data Analysis techniques

Data collected in this study was analyzed using simple percentage. The analysis has been presented in tabular form for quick appraisal by the reader, as is seen in the successive presentation of tables.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first decade of the MSS also laid the foundation of its visibility in political circles. Although little is known about the nature of its involvement, its relationship with political actors and the state was obvious. This relationship emphasised the need for the MSS to be neutral in political circles rather than identifying with a specific political party or actor. This was achieved with the appointment of patrons who represented all major political parties in Nigeria. They included Ahmadu Bello of the Northern People's Congress (NPC), Alhaji Dauda Soroye Adegbenro (1909-1975) of the Action Group (AG), Alhaji Adegoke Adelabu (1915-1958) of the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and Alhaji Aminu Kano (1920-1983) of the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU). These political figures supported the MSS in many of its programmes. An example was Adelabu in Ibadan whose vehicle was used on many occasions for its activities. The executives of the Society were also scheduled to break their Ramadan fast at his residence when he died in 1958.635 Association with these political figures was further symbolised by MSS' participation in official government functions relating to the Muslim world. Through Alhaji Adegbenro who was an associate of Chief Awolowo, Adegbite and Adeniran were both invited to a luncheon in honour of the Pakistani and Sudanese Presidents in 1958.

This was considered within the MSS as one of the ways it communicated with the government on national issues. The participation of MSS representatives at this luncheon can be linked to the political history of Yoruba Muslims, showing another dimension of their growing solidarity with the political elite in the region. Apart from this, the Society's association with the political elite also appeared to shape the process through which many Muslim students negotiated for power and resources in Nigeria. The relationship between them enhanced the emergence of members including Adegbite into political administrative positions such as commissioners and ministers later in life. In turn, these political elite used the MSSN platform to campaign for votes during election

## 4.2 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MSS

In the MSS constitution, the students had visions and objectives which reflected imaginations of how to be Muslims in a non-Muslim environment and how to engage non-Muslims within their social context. They adopted the motto "Peace, Love and Comradeship"584 to express these visions and the kind of orientation they wanted to promote about their movement. Saidat was of the view that the motto suggested that the aim of the Society at inception was "not overly religious" compared to its "radical" character in later years. Even though it supports the desire for social interaction which the students wanted, Saidat's view should also be understood within the socio-historical context of Yoruba Muslim students and

in generational differences on what is understood as "overly religious." The point of view of many students I interacted with suggests that generational differences have shaped the understanding of the objectives of the MSSN. The students actually considered the MSSN activities as avenues to meet new friends, chat and play while they were growing up until they became adults and understood them as ways to learn about Islam and shape their lives as better Muslims.

The idea of 'Peace' in the motto is understood by many members of the Society to reflect the meaning of Islam as a "peaceful religion." according to Adegbite, the pioneer members were also concerned about the political tension of the late colonial period leading towards Nigeria's independence. Therefore, they made it known that the MSS was a 'peaceful' association of Muslim youths and it was non-partisan, although the history of the Society does not confirm that it was politically neutral. Since its formation was connected to the Ahmadiyya Movement, this vision of peace could also have been influenced by Ahmadiyya's idea of loyalty and the harmonious relationship between Muslims and the British colonial government, as Humphrey Fisher noted. Based on their relationship, it is possible that MSS' emphasis on 'Love' was also influenced by the Ahmadiyya's motto of "Love for all, hatred for none." Aleah Connley suggests that this is one of the teachings of the Ahmadiyya to encourage Muslims "to accept the oppressive attitudes and actions of others, to forgive intolerance and to move beyond these

experiences."The notion of 'Comradeship,' according to Adegbite, was chosen because the Society wanted to promote among its members "that feeling of solidarity which is the mark of the religion of Islam." This became symbolised in the epithets "brother" and "sister" used by members as a prefix to their names to further create what he considered "the genuine feeling of brotherhood."593 However, what is implied in these epithets among many Yoruba slightly differ from this, as they are mostly used to show deference between junior and senior persons usually the adolescents and the unmarried men and women. What is more is that the idea of brotherhood was also expected to help deal with the problem created by the ethnic identity crisis and discrimination which not only haunted many parts of Yorubaland but also Nigeria as noted above. In this regard, Muslim brotherhood was considered by the Society to ensure "equal treatment which presupposes respect for the other man." K. K. Oloso, "The Concept of the MSS of Nigeria's Motto: Faith, Brotherhood and Peace," Comradeship was further seen as a vision to bridge the gap caused by the division among different Muslim groups in Yorubaland to which their parents belonged and between those attending Muslim and non-Muslim schools. This idea was reflected in the first objective of the Society, "To bring into close union the Muslim students of different educational institutions." Apart from promoting interaction, the MSS also considered unity among Muslim students as an instrument to combat the challenges facing Muslims in Yoruba society. Adegbite not only promoted this

idea within the MSS, he also expressed disappointment in the lack of unity among Muslims towards the propagation of Islam and their challenges in Nigeria. I would want to see Muslim more united…all must join hands towards the propagation of Allah's chosen religion. I was not particularly happy about lack of unity among Muslims. The solution to the problem lies not on the MSS alone but all Islamic organisations and individuals.596 The emphasis on unity was also defined in religious terms. For the Society, Islam is one religion and Muslim students, irrespective of the groups they belong to outside the schools, should see themselves as one community. This idea became the basis of the idea of 'One Muslim community' in the school system in Yorubaland and other parts of Nigeria. Until the 1980s, this idea ensured that Muslim students did not identify as distinct members of their organisations outside the schools, such as Ansar-Ud-deen and Ahmadiyya, but as one group. After promoting this idea in the MSS, as mentioned earlier, Adegbite facilitated the formation of an all Muslim organzations in Yorubaland named Western State Joint Muslim Organisation (WESJOMO) in 1972, and in Nigeria with the establishment of the NSCIA in 1973. The second objective of the MSS was "To encourage the studies of the Holy Qur'an and Arabic Language"598 in its envisioned Muslim students' community. Given the unavailability of their own religious education in most of their schools at the time, this objective was expected to increase their knowledge of Islam and to make up for the lack of Islamic curricula. Indeed, by encouraging the study of

Islamic texts in the Western school system, the MSS attempted to further move away from the method of learning under the alfa in a madrasa, a vision close to the organisations that preceded the Society such as Ansar-Ud-Deen and Ahmadiyya. Yet, this objective is quite phenomenal in the understanding of the encounter between Yoruba Muslims and Christians because it represents an attempt to transmit Islamic education even in Christian 595 MSSN UNILAG, "Embryonic Stage of Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria".MSSN UNILAG, "Embryonic Stage of Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria". schools. While this ensured that the transmission of knowledge of both religions takes place in shared spaces, it also gives rise to competing religious orientations within these spaces. The third objective of the Society was "To promote the social, moral, religions (sic) and intellectual standards of Muslim Students."599 With this, the Society aimed to ensure that social interaction among Muslim students conforms to Islamic values such as separation between boys and girls. According to Fathi Mabadeje, who became President of the MSS in 1962, the Society's concern was also to ensure that Muslim students understood Islamic morals early on "what Islam teach us about how to live well, how to be good citizens, how to dress appropriately." For him, the MSS was worried about the fashion in the society particularly the Christians who wear "bounfo (mini gown)" and wanted the Muslim students to despise such lifestyle. In addition, Muslim students were expected to understand how to perform the daily ṣalāt (prayer), ablutions and fast during Ramadan. With

regards to intellectual standards, the aim was to ensure that Muslim students perform better in school. The Society also aimed to encourage more Muslim children to enrol for Western education and learn the basic skills for modern professional life. I regard this third objective as a reflection of the MSS aim to encourage ethical formation among Muslim students. Drawing insights from Saba Mahmood work,I used ethical formation to refer to the process by which certain virtues and practices are learned and embodied by an agent. Mahmood focuses on this kind of ethical formation among Muslim women in Egypt and how it is linked to the politics of public life. But her study only sheds light on the religious virtues that are embodied. The case of the MSS, in contrast, illustrates that Muslims' ethical formation is also aimed at personifying the non-religious aspect of life, and, it confirms the argument in many studies on the multiple and complex representations of being Muslims. fourth objective of the Society was "To watch, discuss and safeguard the interests and rights of the Muslims (sic) Students." This objective shows that bringing Muslim students

## 4.3 ESTABLISHING MUSLIM PRACTICES IN 'CHRISTIAN-RUN' SCHOOLS

The activities of the Society were few in this period, and they often depended on the activism of its members and the willingness of the authorities in different schools to accommodate them. With more members, the Society could challenge

Christian activities to establish its own. This began at King's College where the Society complained to the school authority about compelling Muslim students to participate in "Congregational Practice," a weekly song rehearsal held on Thursdays. The school authority considered the complaints and removed the attendance requirement for Muslims. Following this victory, the students moved towards challenging the daily conduct of morning Assembly with songs and readings from the Bible. As prefects were usually tasked with this responsibility, the initiative came from a Muslim prefect who was to read the text on a Friday. He informed other members of the Society in advance that he was going to read a text from the Qur'an rather than the Bible, which he did after he requested permission to do so that morning. Jibril Oyekan, who was a student in the College at the time, regarded his action as "something of a revolution" in the school. whilethe government later issued directives to encourage religious tolerance regarding assembly practice, Muslim students in many schools were encouraged by King's College to challenge their schools to conduct assemblies on Fridays with Islamic texts and prayers. This became the practice in many public schools to date. In schools where negotiation with the authorities was successful, the MSS also organised Muslim students to perform the daily ṣalāt, fast in the month of Ramadan and participate in the laylat al-qadr (night of destiny/power) session of that month. The Society also arranged picnics to celebrate Muslim festivals such as ʿĪd al-fiṭr at the end of Ramadan and mawlid al-nabī (birthday of the Prophet

Muhammad). At the end of school sessions, the Society conducted prayer sessions, especially for school leavers. Generally, the Society organised lectures and symposia to teach members on Islam up to the late 1950s and beyond this period. The lectures began to be held at Ansar-Ud-Deen school hall twice in a month for three years before the Society spread to other parts of Yorubaland where more lecture centres were created. The major topics were on how to perform the ṣalāt, ablution, fasting and ritual purity. The lectures usually began with memorisation and translation of Qur'anic verses. Providing support through extramural classes for those preparing for exams was another activity of the Society. In many of its programmes, the Society also had "Brain Trust." This is an intellectually stimulating game in which participants representing different schools pick an issue and discuss it within a given time. The topics chosen for the game included both religious and non-religious subjects.

## 4.4 THE MUSLIM STUDENTS' LIFE

The participation of Muslim students in lectures and other MSS' programmes represented a major practice in their social and religious lives. While little is known about the effects of these programmes in the first decade of the Society, the stories of some pioneer members suggest that everyday life as Muslims and knowledge of Islam of the majority were not 'radically' transformed in this period. Oyekan, for instance, believed that his understanding of Islam was developed later

when he had the opportunity to study in the United Kingdom (UK) with other Muslims from across the world in the 1960s: .

To an extent, the experience of students like Dawud Noibi, referred to in Chapter Three, suggests that many students may have struggled to transform what they had learnt about Islamic tradition into daily practice if they had access to such knowledge. Narrating his own experience in 1964 when he discovered that it was wrong for Muslims to prostrate for people, a sign of greeting in Yorubaland for males, Noibi explained that he could only make up his mind to put this knowledge into practise after a prolonged struggle in his mind. This was because "the older generation saw that it was rude to even say such a thing, let alone you refusing to prostrate before elders." 639 Based on this experience, I consider what it means to be a better Muslim among students in this period was not only dependent on the Islamic tradition but also on what was socially approved of based on local practices. Many Muslim students in the MSS were also engaged in a socially approved popular culture considered to be aspects of Ọlaju linked to the Christians. Among these were picnics and dance parties used to celebrate birthdays, Christmas and other events. However, Noibi explained that Muslims who attended such parties might be conscious of not taking alcohol

Many Muslim students also wore modest dress in this period. As the Mabadejes' suggested above regarding females, 'bounfo' dress was discouraged. But what was

considered modest dress for females, according to them, was “not necessarily covering their heads or covering their faces.”641 Like the females, the dress of the male students also varied. The pictorial record of the Society below shows they wore agbada (loose-fitting garment), shirts, suits, and trousers reaching there ankle

To belong to MSSN is to be feared by those in power” But beyond promoting the development plan of government, the MSSN relationship with the state was also tense between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, which informed the statement by Oladosu723 used as a title of this sub-section. The tension between the MSSN and the government was first reflected in the national debates over the proposal to establish a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal and Sharia Courts in regions like Yorubaland in 1976.724 The proposed courts were in line with the military government’s plan to fashion a new constitution for Nigeria as part of the post-war reconstruction and transition to a new system of government following the collapse of the colonial parliamentary government in 1967. While the government’s plan was aimed at promoting the religious diversity of Nigerians in the proposed constitution, debates over the Sharia courts, as Clarke and Linden argue, became part of the long-standing questions between Muslims and Christians over religious freedom in schools, the ethos of Nigeria’s constitution, judiciary and legislature, and the symbolic matters like religious holidays and the structure of the working week.725 The MSSN also contributed to this debate. In

the North, the branch of the Society at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria called for the decolonization of Nigeria's constitution which it argued was based on the English Common Law. In Yorubaland, the MSSN worked with its leaders such as Chief Moshood Kashimawo Abiola (1937-1998), 726 Dawud Noibi and Lateef Adegbite through the organisation called NAJOMO (from WESJOMO, mentioned earlier) to request the establishment of Sharia Courts for Muslims in Lagos, Oyo, and Ondo states.727 For Adegbite, the introduction of these Courts was not only a matter of religious freedom and pluralism of Nigeria, but also about the right of Muslims to be administered under divine laws.728 Although the government's proposal for the Sharia Courts was rejected following stiff opposition from Christians as well as a few Muslims, the MSSN continued to agitate for it in 1984 and 1999.729 The failure to allow the establishment of the Sharia courts in the late 1970s gave rise to more concerns especially among Yoruba Muslims that the government has always been unfair to them in relation to Christians and Muslims in the North. These concerns, therefore, contributed to the public reaction of the MSSN to other issues of Christian-Muslim encounters in educational institutions from the late 1970s. Unlike the colonial experience, the incidence of requesting Muslims to change their names to Christian names had reduced in this period, but other challenges like the shortage of Muslim teachers, reading Bible and singing songs of praise at the Assembly continued. The MSSN's grievance in this period was strong because it considered some actions of government and school

authorities as “oppressive” to Muslim students. They included allegations of deliberate refusal to recruit Islamic Studies teachers, distribution of free Bibles to secondary schools with public funds and the upgrade of Christian mission schools to colleges of education; whereas, Islamic studies were not allowed to be taught in these colleges. These allegations were madeworse by Christian leaders who were believed to support such actions.730 It should be pointed out that the MSSN’s desire for Islamic studies was not limited to primary and secondary schools, it was also expressed by Muslim students undergoing studies like Law in various universities by the 1980s.731 At different international seminars supported by IIFSO and WAMY in the 1970s, MSSN expressed concerns on the need to promote Islamic Studies in the Western schools that discouraged it.732 These concerns were very strong in Oyo state which had a significant number of Muslims.733 In 1979, the MSSN in the state had an opportunity to engage the government on these concerns. This came after Abdur-Raheem Adebayo Shittu,734 its former president at the University of Ife (now OAU), was said to have been ridiculed and called “a religious fanatic”735 at the Oyo State House of Assembly over his suggestion that the state provides for the training of Islamic Studies teachers through a crash programme.736 The MSSN considered Shittu’s failure to convince the government as part of the official bias against Muslims in the state. This got the sympathy of its National President, Kamil Oloso, and Muslim lecturers at the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, UI. Before

then, these lecturers had informal discussions with colleagues outside the university on how to unite Muslim youth organisations in the state for their common interests. The failure of Shittu to convince members of the State's Assembly, therefore, provided them with an opportunity to put this into action. Together with the MSSN, they formed the Council of Muslim Youth Organisations of Oyo State (COMYO) at the university on March 30, 1980. Although COMYO's activism was mostly restricted to Oyo state at inception, it had the sympathy of Muslims in other states.

**Islam as a way of life"**

Compared to her first decade in Nigeria, Lemu argued that there was a dramatic change in the practices of Muslim students in Nigeria from 1976. She noticed that many of them began to get their knowledge of Islam from a variety of sources which included books in English, magazines, newspaper articles, as well as teachers who gave both informed and less informed sermons on radio and television. Gradually, they also became less tolerant and less trusting of non-Muslims. Most importantly, they had a change in their understanding "that Islam is not just prayers, fasting and memorization of the Qur'an. They have a much broader idea of the implication of Islam as a way of life, together with its social, economic and political teachings."771 While I agree that there was a new understanding of Islam as a way of life in the MSSN, I consider this knowledge to

be reflected in the everyday practices of only a few members. The wholescale adoption of the sunna of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions (discussed in the next chapter), which was central to this meaning of Islam was seldomly practised by most members. A pointer to this argument is from the personal experience of Habibah Oladosu, a lecturer at UI who became a member of the MSSN in 1985. She described the outlook of members of the Society during the IVC of that year thus, One may assume that not having access to Islamic literature (which played a key role in the reform in the Society, as will be shown in the next chapter) might have informed the decision of many students not to adopt the sunna. However, I would link their decision to the understanding of the Islamic practices among the majority of Yoruba Muslims. I remember even in the late 1980s that the majority of alfas usually differentiated between what was considered voluntary and involuntary practices in Islam. The majority of sunna practices were defined as voluntary and not doing them, according to these alfas, did not make a Muslim less good or less complete in faith. Based on this orientation to Islam, those who emphasised some aspects of sunna in their social life such as the Alfa Bamidele led Zumratul-Mumeen were derisively called names like alaṣeju (who do more than is required) by many Yoruba Muslims. In addition to condemning Western education, which I referred to in Chapter Three, women in this group wear the elaborate veil that covered them from head to toe called burqa' (also referred to as purdah in Yorubaland), while men keep their

beards and wore turbans. A similargroup was the Tabligh Jama'at who faced criticism on its practice of travelling for several days away from home on da'wa. It is worth mentioning that while most alfas were not strictly against embracing this notion of sunna, they considered them unsuited to Yorubaland. Thus, up to the early 1980s, the general view in the MSSN, according to Oladosu, was also "that there was no chance for the propagation of foreign dawah methodologies and opinions which were considered not suitable for a terrain such as ours." Based on this experience, I argue that what is understood as Islam as a way of life by many students does not necessarily mean adopting every practice that is considered Islamic as a compass for everyday life without subjecting them to a debate based on their compatibility within the local context. Because of this understanding in the MSSN, most female students could only put on the scarf that was common among Yoruba Muslim women; a piece of fabric of different colours loosely wrapped over the head and chest. The majority could not wear the ḥijāb up to 1990 except for a few like Sururah Bello (nee Waheed) at OAU, Ife.774 Noibi, who left UI as Imam in this period also noted that: I recall that before I left Nigeria for Britain in 1990, I can hardly remember that there was a single student who was a female wearing ḥijāb. They were very few in the University of Ibadan and we had to actually struggled to get some professors and lecturers to allow the few who would wear simple ḥijāb to attend the classes. Furthermore, local socio-cultural practices could not be divorced from the practices of many Muslim students in this

period. According to some of my respondents, many students relied on charms from the alfa or Ifá priest for personal protection and success in exams rather than prayers from Qur'anic texts. Courtship before marriage, a practice which was later discouraged, was also common among members of the Society, and, it was common for many female students to be impregnated before marriage, as this was the social expectation from many in-laws to test their fertility. Before such marriage, many parents also consulted either the alfa or Ifá priests for guidance.Even if this consultation was contested later, engaging in it was not considered to make a person less Muslim by many Yoruba Muslim.

**Dress**

To a large extent, the change in dress of MSSN members has been the most visible expression of their new ways of being Muslim in public since the 1980s. The styles of dress that represent this change are the men's kaftan and the women's veil as shown in figure 3 below. But there are variations in this mode of dressing. Among the male students, there are those who regularly wear the kaftan with an embroidered cap from Northern Nigeria. Some students wear clothes such as t-shirts with trousers. Many students also wear the 'traditional' bùbá (blouse) with the slouched caps made from the hand-woven fabric referred to as aṣọ oke (lit. a cloth from upcountry). While many Yoruba consider this men's blouse to represent the 'authentic' Yoruba identity, its origin tells a different story. This

cloth, as suggested by Peel, is of Northern Nigerian Muslim origin. Like their clothes, the size of the trousers of members of MSSN also varied. Their trousers include those whose leg openings are below the ankle, those that are slightly above the ankle and those that are raised far above the ankle. However, sometimes the length of the trousers does not correspond with what a student wears every day. A student may have trousers that are of these three lengths worn on different days. According to some members of the Society, a student can choose any of these lengths because there is evidence for all of them in Islamic texts. However, this argument is inconsistent with the Salafis and Tablighis who frequently wear trousers that are far above their ankles. There are also a wide variety of styles in the dress of female students. Some of them wear trousers/skirts and shirts with turban hats/ḥijāb and keep scarves in their bags which they use when they pray in the mosque or attend MSSN events. These students are categorised by some members of the MSSN as "scarfites," often as a criticism that they are less "suunatic," to differentiate them from those who used the veil. Outside the MSSN, however, they are identified with terms such as sọji Alhaja (enlightened/civilised Muslim woman), especially among non-Muslims. The two categories are a telling example of the varying social acceptance of the veil between the MSSN and the larger society. But those who use the veil, similarly categorised based on the type they used, do not regularly wear them. Their veils are in different sizes, colours and styles such as the niqāb (a face veil that leaves the area around the eyes open),

the jilbāb (a veil that covers the body from head to toe leaving the hands and face open), the khimār (a long, cape-like veil which may hang down to the waist or knee), the burqa‘ (a veil that covers the body and face with a mesh for the eyes) and the al-amira (a two-piece veil which include a close-fitting cap). Many of those who use these veils also wear either socks or gloves or both. Fig. 3a: The diverse style of Muslim students' dress.

It is also important to point out that the categorisation of these female students into the type of veil they used is not fixed because many of them often switched from one type of headcovering/veil to another. There are "scarfites" who also use the jilbāb and the khimār only when they pray, either at home or in public. Many of them do this due to concerns that those wearing veils in public are looked upon as "religious extremists." Anifa Oyekola, a student of Osun State University, Osogbo who is of the view that veiling is not easy to adopt, explained that many female Muslims do this because they have to "please Allah" when they pray and "please themselves" when they are not praying. In this regard, the veil is only seen as an object meant for religious spaces rather than the public sphere. Besides, many female students switch their style of veiling due to peer pressure and what is socially acceptable. The contrasting dressing of two friends I interacted with named Rashida Hammed and Jelila Hassan, both students of the University of Lagos, illustrates this point. Rashida wore the jilbāb, while her friend Jelila wore

the turban hat and kept a scarf in her bag. But before then, Jelila used to wear the khimār while Rashida had changed from a turban ḥijāb to the jilbāb before dropping it for some time and taking it up again. They both explained thattheir use of the veil was consistent when they were in the circle of veiling Muslims, while they had been discouraged from using it in the circle of non-veiling Muslims, as well as Christians who often contest the use of the veil.

Also, with regards to the size/type of veil, some students consider the jilbāb to meet the criteria of modesty while others think it is the khimār. An example is Rashida Hammed, mentioned above, who is of the view that she prefers the jilbāb, which she uses because it does not reveal her body shape that the rules of modesty demand. Some students also consider the use of both the niqāb and the burqa‘ as the “peak” of veiling, suggesting that these two types of the veil are the best among the rest. Interestingly, this view is also shared by Rashida Hammed while comparing her own jilbāb with the niqāb of her friend, Shukuro Jimoh, during a group discussion. Although Shukuro (who considers herself to have reached the “peak” in terms of veiling) left midway during the discussion, Rashida was full of admiration and respect for her for defying all sorts of oppositions and discriminations against it in the Yoruba society.

While the MSSN leaves the option open for female Muslims to choose the type/size of veil they want, the choice also depends on what is recommended by

the Muslim organisations which they belong outside the school. The khimār, for instance, is mostly used by female students who are linked to the TMC and Al-Mu'minaat (The Believing Women's) Organisation. Students who identify with different Salafi movements also tend to use niqāb and burqa'. But the recommendation of the type of veil to adopt has stimulated the reactions of many students, including those who are in the MSSN, who contend that the decision to veil must be preceded by a deep knowledge of the concept of veiling and why Muslim women are required to do so. These students are of the view that the knowledge of veiling will not only help women to make informed decisions on the type of veil they want to use but also prevent switching from one type of veil to another.This buttresses the emphasis in the MSSN on the gradual embodiment of knowledge rather than being required to do so at once.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

## 5.1 SUMMARY

My central in this study is that there has been a change in the way Islam is portrayed and articulated by a significant number of Yoruba Muslims since the colonial period. I also posit that the MSSN played a significant role in mediating this change. In this concluding part of the study, I reflect on the role of the MSSN in different aspects of this change and the implications of the change in Yoruba society and Nigeria in general. Also, I point out the key findings in this study, how this study relates to the existing literature on Islam in Africa and the contributions made by this study to such literature. Focusing on the MSSN in Southwest Nigeria, this study has demonstrated that what it means to be a good Muslim has changed for a significant number of Yoruba Muslim elite from the colonial period. Using the concept of Islam as a discursive tradition, the study assumes that the definition of a good Muslim in the MSSN is not given, instead, it is constructed and subject to fluctuation in different social and historical settings. In reality, for many Muslims, the foundational texts of Islam (the Qur'an and the Hadith) serve as the basis for defining who a good Muslim is. However, these texts do not speak for themselves, but are mediated by human agents who translate them and thereby specify what being Muslim represent within a social context. The change in the

notion of a proper Muslim for the Western educated Yoruba Muslims has therefore been produced by the effort of many actors which include Noibi, Adegbite, Oyekan, Thanni, Oladosu and Olaiya in the MSSN to translate these texts at various points in time. A key point that is emphasised in this study is that the shift in the notion of a good Muslim for MSSN members is an aspect of a wider religious change in Yoruba Muslim society, particularly from the nineteenth century. This religious change has manifested in new and different types of religious organisations, diverse pedagogy of Islamic education and variation in the interpretation of Islamic texts and traditions. A rise in multiple forms of ritual practices, religious ethics, dress, and sociality are also part of this change. Thus, while the main argument of this study is that the MSSN contributed to the religious change of Yoruba Muslim, it also contends that the history of the Society and the experience of its members constitute a major aspect of this change. The study draws attention to the centrality of various factors that shaped the outcome of this religious change such as the cultural practices of the Yoruba, colonization, Christianization, transnational Islamic movements, technology, education and the politics of the nation-state. More importantly, the study argues that these factors also have an impact on the definition of Islam and what a good Muslim represented at different points in time. A major example of this is the reinterpretation of 'knowledge,' based on Islamic texts, in the light of the introduction of 'Western education' to make the latter acceptable for Muslims.

The contrasting characters of the colonial and post-colonial governments that determined the shift in the orientation of the MSSN is another case study. Also, there are factors like the internet and social media which transformed the ways Islamic knowledge is produced and circulated and thereby challenging the old pedagogy and epistemology of Islamic education. Based on these various factors, I argue in this study that the definition of Islam in any social context and how it is lived are products of complex and interwoven processes. This confirms Peel's argument that religious change among the Yoruba is not necessarily a unidirectional development or a phenomenon that manifested in a single form but an elaborate one that is noticed in many aspects of social life. The varied local dimensions of transnational Islamic movements that are contributing to religious change in Muslim societies of Africa today is another point to consider in this study. The examples of these movements among the Muslim students in Nigeria are IIFSO, the Muslim Brotherhood, and WAMY.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

While this study has demonstrated that Muslim students in Nigeria have contributed to the development of transnational Islamic movements in contemporary Africa, it also challenged how many studies have portrayed the rise of these movements and their interpretation of Islam in the country. The existing

studies on Islam in Nigeria give the impression that many young Muslims and professionals in Northern Nigeria have largely contributed to the formation and promotion of reformist traditions of Islam that is emphasised by these movements with little or nothing to say about the role of Yoruba Muslims in Southern Nigeria. For instance, studies by Kane and Loimeier have looked at the Yan Izala movement and the activities of figures like Shaykh Gumi and his relationship with Saudi Arabia. Thurston's work also focused on the contribution of the students who studied in Saudi Arabia to the rise of Salafism in Nigeria. The implication of focusing exclusively on actors in this region is that contemporary expressions of Islam in Nigeria would seem to have only occurred in the North. However, by looking at the role of actors like Oyekan, Solaja and Thanni in the MSSN, this present study demonstrates that Yoruba Muslims were also actively involved in the rise of these movements and that new ways of being Muslims in modern Nigeria have also flourished in the South, some of which moved to the North. Thus, for a comprehensive study of contemporary forms of Islam in Nigeria, it is important to take the Muslims in Yorubaland into consideration. The involvement of these Yoruba Muslim students gives us some key insights into why the lives and social experiences of the category of Muslims referred to as 'youth' can be understood as part of the religious and social changes in post-colonial Muslim societies in Africa. A significant number of Muslim youths in these societies are showing new identities which manifest in many aspects of their life such as dress,

use of social media, sport, music culture, Islamic education and associational activities.In Niger, Masquelier has given an example of such Muslim youth who are reconciling hip-hop culture with their faith in Islam.

A few cases that are similar to this in the MSSN are the use of customised shirt and the reconciliation of the traditional oral poetry with Islam. Notwithstanding the fact that they represent new ways of being Muslim, the formation of the identities of Muslim youth is also interwoven in different layers of politics as Asef Bayat and Linda Herrera suggest. The Muslim youth, according to Bayat and Herrera, are salient in the politics and cultures of many societies where Islam is often placed in opposition to neoliberal policies, globalisation, imperialism and Western civilisation. Furthermore, Soares and Masquelier contend that in the aftermath of the September 11 attack on the United States, the character of Muslim youth has also manifested in the whole politics of Islam, defined by "the landscape of geopolitical conflicts and loyalties, new media, global markets, consumption patterns, and cultural forms." The major examples of such politics as this study demonstrates are the involvement of Muslim students in the struggle to encourage the teaching of Islam in Christian and public schools, the MSSN agitation for Sharia as well as the support of Muslim political and religious leaders for MSSN activities in their encounter with Christians. Another dimension of their social experiences in Nigeria today is in the reconstruction of the concept

of ‘youth.’ One of the main findings of this study is that the MSSN has contested the notion of ‘youth’ with the argument that the term is inadequate for conceptualising the In general, while the study argues that the MSSN contribution to religious change involves a range of interlinked processes that fluctuated at different points in time, it nevertheless shows that what is known about many aspects of these processes remain sketchy especially in the period between 1954 and the late 1990s. For instance, little is still known about the other factors that led to the constitutional review of the MSSN by the 1980s which culminated in the adoption of the kalima as a motto. Also, there is scant information on the activities of the MSSN and the everyday life of members of the Society up to the 1990s.

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATION

This study shows that the MSSN encouraged Muslims participation in politics, but what is known about the relationship between the Society and the governing elite is insufficient. Also, there is inadequate information about the various kinds of relationships between the MSSN and the larger Yoruba Muslims and the clerics in particular. The knowledge of these other aspects of 337 the Society’s history will contribute to an understanding of the other dynamics in the religious change of many Yoruba Muslim elite. Despite these lacunas, this study has drawn attention to some of the key processes involved in this change. In all, the study demonstrates that the Yoruba Muslim elite were able to negotiate their religious

lives in a post-independence Nigeria that has experienced a great deal of socio-economic and political changes. It shows that how they negotiate these changes inspired their new ways of being Muslim which reflect what Otayek and Soares have identified as Islam mondain (or 'Islam in the present world') in the Muslim societies of Africa today.

Their experiences are thus an illustration of the way they developed different ways of being Muslim that go together with modernity. In another vein, this study broadly suggests that from the colonial era the importance of religion in the Nigerian public sphere did not disappear with the onset of secular/modern institutions and policies ranging from Western schooling to the introduction of nation-state system, neo-liberalism and communication technologies. In fact, the example of the school system lagely managed by missionaries gives the impression that religious values are integrated into many aspects of these secular institutions, making it a salient factor in the private and public life of most Nigerian elite. Little is still known about the religious experience of these elite, and it will be interesting in future research to understand why religion has been at the centre of their private and public life despite being integrated into secular institutions. With the worldwide attention on Nigeria and the often shocking misrepresentation of Islam in the country by the media especially following the breakdown of security caused by the violent Boko Haram movement in the

Northeast region since 2009, this study provides a better and thorough insight into the understanding of Islam and Muslims in contemporary Nigeria. Using the example of MSSN not only in Yoruba land but also in Northern Nigeria, it shows that Muslims relation with Christians in the country is not only about violence. In many communities, members of both faiths frequently borrow from each other, marry among themselves and convert to each other's religion. The representation of both faiths is also balanced in many public establishments and governance, albeit this is mostly happening where the population of Muslims and Christians is almost equal. Furthermore, Islam is widely contested among the Muslims in Nigeria, and, often, the contest is linked with intergroup and national politics. By implication, it will be erroneous to take the argument of some groups or a religious authority as the correct interpretation of the religion in the country.

Meaning of Islam for many Muslims and their practices are neither static nor closed to innovation. The impact of new epistemological perspective, Western schooling and the internet are examples of the factors shaping this change today. Another aspect of the contemporary expression of Islam in Nigeria is in the activism of Muslim women. In many communities, women have established their own religious movements, enrolled in Western schools, acquired professional skills, participated in religious knowledge production and remained visible in public life. This study illustrates that Muslim movements like the MSSN have

generally facilitated this public life for many women. There can be no doubt that understanding the  Muslims in Nigeria from these broad-ranging perspectives is not only fruitful, it is also helpful to unravel the extent to which Islam and the different orientations of the religion among them have actually influenced interreligious conflicts as well as politics and social encounters in the post-independence era.

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Musa Abdul, the Classical Caliphate Islam Institution, Lagos Islamic publications Bureau, 1988, p. 36 Salafis a technical term to denote the practices of the early orthodox Muslims, especially the first three generations of Muslims.

The word Egbe is a Yoruba word which means society. This society as far as we know existed in Abeokuta and Ile-Ife. Abdul – Rahman 1.

Doi Islam in Nigeria, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Limited 1984, p. 279.

History has it that when Queen Elisabeth visited Nigeria, she decided to pay a courtesy call to the then Alake of Egbaland who had gathered all his chiefs to receive the august visitor.

Unfortunately for the Alake who dressed in the traditional outfit of a Yoruba king with a beaded crown in contrast to the “Oba Imale” who dressed in soldier – like uniform unto which the Queen was quite familiar, the Queen mistook

him for the Oba Imaleand thus accorded him all the honour and dignity that was due to the Alake as the paramount ruler.

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