

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION AND NIGERIA'S POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT: AN ASSESSMENT OF JAMA'ATUL IZALATUL BIDI'A
WA'IKAMATUS SUNNAH (JIBWIS)**

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ABSTRACT

In modern societies, non-governmental organizations are an important instrument of political development. This is particularly more pronounced in both developed and emerging democracies. These institutions influence state's decisions and policies. They also shape public opinion on a wide range of political, economic, and socio-cultural issues. The objectives of NGOs, often serve as the driving force for their engagement with the state and society, which in some ways influence the political development of their societies. In Nigeria, there are numerous and religious, which are very active in the country's political process. Religious NGOs are, however, seen as the platform that contributes to tensions rather than dialogue and stability in Nigeria's political development. This paper interrogates this assumption with a particular reference to the Jamátul Izalatul Bida'a Waikamatus Sunnah (JIBWIS). Methodologically, qualitative method was used in data collection and analysis.

Keywords: *Islamic Organizations, Political Development, JIBWIS*

Introduction:

In both developed and third world nations, institutions and organizations are very paramount in socio-economic and political development. Recently, religious organizations have increasingly partaken in developing societies and communities along the line of governmental programmes and activities. Their activities are mostly lined among others to address poverty, insecurity, illiteracy, conflicts, and create political awareness. The growing impacts of these institutions in communities and societies have called for the attention of governments, academicians, and policy-makers in Nigeria. Elements of the relationship between religion and politics are standard themes in political theory. Historians and Political Scientists have explored the role of religious institutions in stable democracies (Rosenblum, 2003).

The persisting influence of the institutions on the state's decisions and policies is of great concern. Their ability to shape public opinion on a wide range of political, economic, and socio-cultural issues has further compounded the strength of the organizations. Thus, Non-governmental organizations are diverse and structured along different lines as earlier mentioned. NGOs could thus be humanitarian, occupational, professional, cultural, or even religious. The objectives of NGOs, often serve as the driving force for their engagement with the state and society, which in some ways influence the political development of their societies. In Nigeria, there are numerous religious organizations, which are very active in the country's political process. Religious NGOs are, however, seen as the platform that contributes to tensions rather than dialogue and stability in Nigeria's political development to some extent.

The "*Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'ah Wa Ikamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS)* is considered as one of the biggest religious non-governmental organizations in Nigeria. It has very good representation virtually in all the states in the country. The organization is widely known for its involvement in the political processes particularly in the Northern part of the country. The participation of the organization in the political process is being considered by various religious groups and communities as controversial. Thus, despite its historical role and continuing involvement in the socio-political developments in northern Nigeria, the JIBWIS commonly known as the Izala movement has received little coverage outside Nigeria compared to the Tijjaniya, Qadiriyyah Movements, and notorious Boko Haram group.

Throughout the long history of the Muslim world, there have been numerous episodes in which rebellious and other religious groups influence their rulers in the name of Islam. Often it was individual spiritual leaders who mobilized the believers around specific grievances (Regeringsbeleid, 2006). Thus, growing numbers of religious actors like individual religious leaders, denominational structures, ad hoc commissions, delegations, interdenominational and multi-religious bodies have been involved in a variety of political processes during the past decades. Thus, this chapter cross-examines the JIBWIS an active NGO in contemporary Nigeria's political terrain, and the impact of its activities on Nigeria's political process and development. Methodologically, empirical data was collected using the qualitative method of inquiry. Specifically, In-depth interviews (IDIs) and secondary data were used as the major source of data for the chapter.

Nigeria's Political Development:

Political developments in African states in the post-independence period have prompted confusion and among scholars (Donald George Morrison, Robert Cameron Mitchell, John Naber Paden, 1989). Immediately after the independence of many African states, political development becomes center stage. Many elites raised hopes for leadership of their respective countries. The struggle for leadership led to series of political transformations among communities and societies. Institutions across have persistently been involved in the political processes through various means of development. Religious organizations are among the key institutions that facilitated the expansion of the political arena of different countries in Africa.

Nigeria is the largest democracy in Africa which experienced transitions from military regimes to democratic rules after the cessation of British rule in 1960. Thus, the process of political development often assorted to challenges on many occasions threatened the national unity of the country (Saka, 2014). The formal granting of independence opened a chapter in the history of political development in Nigeria. The common aspect of the political process is the recrimination between region and region (North, East, and West) would make the best of the gain of self-rule. This unhealthy competition brought about political tension at the early stage of independence (Ijere, 2014). Thus, Nigeria remains one of the developmental puzzles in Africa. This state of affairs largely reflects the disconnect between the abundance of Nigeria's natural and human resources and its extraordinarily reversed socio-economic and political development (Akanle, 2013). Its political and economic insight remains the key indicator of the political development of countries in the continent.

The history of Nigeria's political crises has been associated with intricacies ranging from ethnicity and religious background. The country's first coup in 1966 led by Aguiyi Ironsi was the beginning of a political dilemma. The coup was largely perceived to be based on religious and ethnic sentiments. The crises triggered by political conflicts and violence is commonplace in countries like Nigeria considering the bad root of its political development. The lingering crises stemming from political violence are explained by the fact that politics is perceived in Nigeria like in other developing countries as the sure path to wealth promotion of religious and ethnic backgrounds (Suberu, 1989). Nigerian leaders from 1960 to date have undermined democracy by seeking power fervently and using it without restraint. Diamond (1998) falls back upon the argument that ethnicity derived its salience from the willingness of politicians to play the tribal card

In their competition for the resources of class formation, the politicians of the First Republic channeled their conflict into Nigeria's main line of social division, ethnicity. Had it not existed, they would have seized upon some other cleavage at the mass level or invented one. In fact, to a considerable extent, the modern ethnic identifications that clashed in mortal combat were not primordial, but the constructions of cultural entrepreneurs who sought to ride them to political and class dominance (Nugent, 1989).

The interrelatedness of these trajectories is one of disjuncture, even when the developmental potentials of the nation are not in doubt. This gives an account of Nigeria's developmental flights in a way that shows how the crucial contradictions and exceptionally the country can suggest sustainable developmental pathways for it, with implications for Africa as a whole (Akanle, 2013). The trajectories are also inclined to the role of religious and social organizations that extremely partake in the political transformations in the country. The trending controversies associated with the political development in Nigeria are believed to have emanated from diverse and monocultural nature and religious formations in the country. These among

others called for the involvement of domestic and international organizations to redeem the crises. Thus, non-governmental institutions and organizations are fundamental structures in the history and future of Nigeria's political development. The institutions vary from one community to another. Their functions and duties are determined by the existing nature of the environments within.

Non-Governmental Institutions:

In developing countries, non-governmental organizations are most noticeable in the areas of human rights, humanitarian services, environment, community services, and rehabilitation of war victims. In the course of attainment of the objectives, the activities of NGOs are restricted and determined by regulations imposed beneath the political authorities. Thus, the success and operation of NGOs largely depend on the permissibility of the government (Yusuf, 2010). The fundamental nature of NGOs is self-mandating and not operating under the mandate of any state or international body has made their existence and work highly susceptible to criticism. The NGOs are accountable perhaps only to their donors and sponsors, whose interests may be prejudicial to the public interest (Emeka Adibe, & Obinne Obiefuna, 2012).

Donor support for NGOs, especially since the late 1980s, is connected to wider interest and faith in "civil society as a significant institutional device in processes of democratization and political development (Smith, 2010). Thus, the first mention of the term "NGO" is found in Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations, in the provisions devoted to the world organizations Economic and Social Council. The article stipulates that:

The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned (Ryfman, 2007).

Yet this in no way means that NGOs are organizations under international law. They remain essentially private legal entities, formed under and governed by the national laws of the countries in which they are established. A limited number of national laws even grant them specific recognition today within the wide non-profit world (Ryfman, 2007). Thus, globally, the proliferation of NGOs is commonly tied to the end of the Cold War and efforts to expand democracy and good governance among the Third World nations, particularly in the African continent. Amid donors interested in promoting political development through democratization in Africa and other side of Third World countries, NGOs have been seen as the main locomotives in the processes of political development (Smith, 2010). The about NGOs derives from a general sense of NGOs "doing good" unencumbered and untainted by the politics of government and the greed of the market (Smith, 2010). This is contrary to the trends in Nigeria. The NGOs gradually transformed into corrupt organizations.

The development of NGOs in Nigeria dates back to the period of colonial administration. Several organizations and groups that existed during the period, had their roots in Britain. Prominent NGOs that were active during this period included foundations and organizations that were established to ensure the provision of social and welfare services for the colonies. The popular organizations were inclined to religious institutions which engaged in Tijjaniyah and Evangelical activities in the country. The Jamatul Nasirul Islam, the Church Mission Society (CMS), Baptist International, and the Anglican Church Ministry are among the first NGOs in the country. The religious institutions were responsible for the formation of various schools, health facilities, psychiatric homes, leprosariums, and juvenile centers. During this period, NGOs were concerned purely with humanitarian and social services. Their involvement in the political process was restricted to the colonial orders (Yusuf, 2010).

Figure I: Nature of NGOs and Activities

Source: <https://www.sketchbubble.com/> (Accessed on 14th July 2021).

Thus, with the attainment of independence in Nigeria, NGOs continued to play a vital role in political development. The period experienced rapid expansion in the activities of the organization explicitly in the political struggle among the different ethnicities and communities. The rise of human rights groups and pro-democracy organizations that specifically target and safeguard citizens including the rights for political freedom has become common. The emergence of the new approaches in the movement of NGOs was due to certain political development which characterized the period. For instance, from three (3) regions in 1960, the country was divided into twelve (12) states in 1967, nineteen (19) in 1975, twenty-one (21) in 1987, thirty (31) in 1990, and finally thirty-six (36) in 1996. This expansion has rose the tempo of political struggle and increase the involvement of NGOs in the political process. The agitation from the minority groups for more opportunities has equally persuaded the activities of the NGOs in the country (Yusuf, 2010).

Only a tiny fraction of Nigeria's population of about 200 million people earns a living in establishing NGOs. However, the proliferation of development-rated NGOs in Nigeria since the late 1980s has been striking extraordinarily and has hatched an equally remarkable expansion and intensification of popular complaints about corruption in this aspect (Smith, 2010). The expansion is associated with rising conflicts and diseases in the country. Nigeria is rated as a third nation among the countries hit by terrorism. The Boko Haram insurgency, armed banditry, and other related crises have further compounded the social and economic challenges that attract support from domestic and international organizations.

Islamic Organizations:

The literature on religion and political development portrays the ambiguity and diversity of religious organizations in African political development. Researches have examined religious organizations' engagement in national politics and development. Religious organizations offer vital, dynamic, and creative resources for peace and political development. Thus, religious communities made significant contributions

to political and conflict transformation in the past century and are mobilizing even more effectively in the modern world. From the anticolonial nonviolence movements of Mahatma Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan on the subcontinent in the 1920s to 1940s to the proliferation of denominational and interreligious efforts today, religiously-based political transformation and peace-building are increasingly important (Sampson, 2007).

Religious organizations may be as formal centralized and hierarchical as the case may be. Thus, religious institutions or organizations offer key evidence of religions as communal structures. In the modern world, religious organizations are considered as the formal interpreters of scriptures which are the fundamental sources of beliefs. The history of religions traces their origins, developments, and changes. The historical record of most of the major religions and their branching into families and denominations suggests a common pattern of political and community formation. This transformational record offers additional evidence of religions as tools for political development (Zeev Maoz and Errol A. Henderson, 2020). Muslim non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are mounting feature in sub-Saharan Africa countries with deep influence on the societies in which they operate. Their contributions are not only restricted to the private sphere but as well public range. Thus, Muslim NGOs are playing vigorous role in shaping the political structures. Their activities are tempted to questioning on different occasions (Weiss, 2020). In today’s politics religious institutions serves as comprehensive avenues for modulations of political processes. For instance, in Nigeria, Mosques, and Churches have become squares for meetings, election centers, and areas of political mobilizations.

In the last four decades, the field of political development and humanitarian aid have seen the emergence of an increasing number of Muslim NGOs. These are not the first institutions of political development in the history of Islam. In contemporary history, two trends have contributed to the emergence of Islamic organizations. First, the general increase in transnational NGOs since the Second World War, and, second, the so-called Islamic resurgence, providing the ideological fabric of which these organizations are made like the case of JIBWIS (Petersen, 2012). Thus, religious organizations have been accused of promoting individuals in a political contest whose political interests do not reflect the public interest. The major concern is that the sources of funds available to NGOs are donations which in many cases have conditions attached to them. On several occasions, the NGOs do not reflect what they profess (Emeka Adibe, & Obinne Obiefuna, 2012). More recently, in Nigeria, religious institutions have partaken in peace reconciliation with the bandits that led to the release of kidnapped hundreds of kidnapped persons in Nigeria. For instance, in Zamfara State, many Islamic clerics were involved in dialogue with the bandits as part of the strategy to end armed banditry in the State. Preaching was the instrumental technique used in rescuing the captives. errands to bandits (Classified Document).

Approaches and Strategies for NGOs Activities:

Like other formal institutions in a State NGOs are usually formed under certain objectives and guidelines. They designed and formed approaches inconformity with existing state rules and purposes to achieve. The four approaches are more common in the activities of NGOs in Third World countries. They are thus:

Table I: Approaches Commonly Adopted in Third-World Countries

S/N	Approach	Who takes the Initiate?	What is the task of the NGO?	Who pays?
i.	Programme Approach	The NGO	To execute its programme	Co-financing (NGO & Government)
ii.	Project Approach	The NGO	To execute its projects after approval	Cofinancing (NGO & Government)
iii.	Window Approach	The NGO	To execute its projects within a governmental framework	Cofinancing of 100% Government

iv.	Quango Approach	The Government	To execute projects identified by the government	100% Government financing
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Source: Humanity Development Library. <http://www.nzdl.org/cgi-bin/library?>

There is no single approach that is unique to all objectives and operations of NGOs. NGOs deploy multiple approaches to achieve their objectives. These may broadly be classified as bottom-up and top-down approaches. While a bottom-up approach emphasizes local decision making, community participation, and grassroots mobilization/movements, the top-down approach focuses on lobbying and bargaining with the decision-making authorities such as government agencies, building up pressures through various campaign mechanisms, advocacy activities. Religious organizations are adopting religious methodologies in achieving their target objectives.

Theoretical Viewpoints:

The theoretical framework is very essential in understanding the context of NGOs in political development. The position of religious organizations in political processes has been captured in various assumptions of working models of political science, theology, sociology, and international relation. Thus, the complex role that religion has played in the political history of the world has had only a few traces in both ancient and modern theories of world politics. The Classic International Relations (IR) theories-writings by historians, philosophers, military strategies, legal scholars, and economists focus only marginally on the role of religion in political development in the world (Zeev Maoz and Errol A. Henderson, 2020). An exception to this view in 19th Century political philosophy is Karl Marx's treatment of religion as an instrument that both the traditional elites and the bourgeoisie in industrialized states use to sustain the class structure and the submissiveness of the proletariat (Zeev Maoz and Errol A. Henderson, 2020).

Thus, theories of political development abstracted from the long historical experience of Europe could scarcely be expected, in these circumstances, to apply to the new notions of African problems or crises involving the establishment of a unified sense of national identity, the legitimation of constitutional and political arrangements, the integration of culturally, diverse populations and incorporation in meaningful political participation, and the development of welfare policies for the re-distribution of wealth and resources came "not in single spies but battalions" (Donald George Morrison, Robert Cameron Mitchell, John Naber Paden, 1989). Many models as earlier mentioned above integrate religious influence into the political development of countries in the world. Religious institutions are inseparable politics of several nations. Theories that attempt to explain the link among others are; Instrumentalism, Social Movement Theory.

Much has been written and said of late of the moral depravity of an instrumentalist of philosophy (Schneider, 1921). Instrumentalism is a theory in the Machiavellian tradition, that focuses on the uses of symbols, ideas, identities, or incentives as a tool for political mobilization. Instrumentalism is rationalistic. Its central assumption is that political leaders have well-defined goals and pursue optional strategies to accomplish those goals. The use of religious symbols, ideas, and organizations is seen in this context. This theory relies on two fundamental assumptions. First, political elites seek to ascend into an office and, once there, retain their post. Second, to accomplish their goals, they have to put together and sustain a "winning coalition", a group of people who support them and are capable of defeating any opposition that stands in their way. This theory is also called the political survival theory (Zeev Maoz and Errol A. Henderson, 2020).

The instrumentalist theory is used in analyzing the perspective of religious movements and nature in the political development of Nigeria in the context of this chapter. Another aspect adopted was religious homogeneity/heterogeneity which reflects the distribution of religious beliefs and practices in a given society. Thus, the basic assumption is that inhomogeneous societies, religion is more likely to become a visible marker of national identity. Religious adherence may be viewed as a principal determinant of individual loyalty to the community. In religiously heterogeneous societies, religion can be a powerful divisive force. Religious diversity creates loyalties to subgroups. There is potential friction among groups

when religious loyalty suspends other loyalties (Zeev Maoz and Errol A. Henderson, 2020). For instance, in countries like the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Wahhabi Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, religion plays a prominent role in domestic and international politics and societies. However, Brazil and Ecuador are examples of homogeneous societies that have separated religion from the state. The Nigerian situation is very complex and controversial on the role of religious organizations in political processes.

JIBWIS in Political Expansion (Development not expansion) in Nigeria:

The Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'ah Wa Ikamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS) commonly known as Izala was established in 1978 in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria by Sheik Ismaila Idris ibn Zakariyya. The organization has received the attention of several researchers within the context of Islamic political thought and political development in West Africa and as well Islamic Reform Movement, Sufism, and the anti-Suffism struggle over the position in the religious spheres (Idris, 2012).

The movement is largely connected to Salafiyah's ideas and strategy which is to remind Muslim ummah of the oneness of God (Arabic: Tawhid) and reject all practices related to Shirk. Thus, Salafists question the relevance of Sufism and its basis in Islam. Sheik Gumi, the spiritual leader of the Izala Movement, was inspired by the writings of Salafists' forefathers like Muhammad 'Abduh, Rashid Rida, Sayyid Qutb amongst others. His interpretation of the Qur'an is to be understood within that same tradition and goes beyond the tradition of the four Islamic schools of Law (Malikiyya, Hanafiyyah, Hanbaliyyah, Shafiyyah). Gumi's strongly influenced by the language used by Salafiyah leaders (Umar M. , 2001). Presently, many Islamic Organizations in Nigeria follow Salafis Ideology.

They play the role of enlightenment and mobilization. The JIBWIS specifically:

has a large number of followers throughout the federation ranging from local, states, and national level with strong mandate of da'awa preaching and Islamic propagation with their centres at schools, mosques and preaching grounds. These points serve also as channels or medium through which other related issues, information is communicated from to grass root (Aliyu, 2021).

Like any other organization, the JIBWIS has been formed under series of controversies. The person of Abubakar Gumi overshadowed Sheik Isma'il Idris, the real founder of the Izala Movement in Jos. Till today, many Nigerian Muslims and non-Muslims regard that Sheik Abubakar Mahmud Gumi as the main founder of the movement. This among others establishes division in the Izala group. The divisions were mostly on innumerable opinions and interpretations on religious and political matters concerning the group and its involvement in the political process and development of the country.

Formation and Objectives JIBWIS:

Before, the advent of JIBWIS popularly known as the Izala movement in 1978, there were other forms of Islamic organizations in the country, among others are Muslims Students Society of Nigeria, the Fityanul Islam, the Jama'atul Nasir Islam whose were established to shake off the prevailing un-Islamic practices among the Nigerian communities explicitly in the Northern part of the country. The efforts of the organizations seemed ineffective among the growing vibrant Islamic youths which led to the formation of the Izala Movement with the zeal to purify Muslim communities in line with the teaching of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The advent of the movement concurred with the apex of Shayk Abubakar Mahmud Gummi for decades of untiring religious propagation (Ibrahim, 2016). In the initial stage, the movement was perceived as ungodly among Muslim ummah (Suffist Communities) who have seen it as an innovation out of the religion of Islam.

Under the umbrella of Daawa session, JIBWIS normally visits non-Muslim towns and villages to preach and enlighten them about Islam. They also extend some philanthropic and humanitarian gesture to them such as food items, cloth, medical services and some essential commodities to cater for their needs. A giant stride was made in fostering peace, unity and progress in Jos, Plateau State by Sheik Sani Yahaya Jingir between Muslims and non-Muslims which resulted to success of Governor, Samuel Lalong in 2019 general elections. This victory was largely achieved with immense contribution of Muslims and in return were rewarded with the appointment of Muslim Commissioner contrary to the previous tradition where Muslims couldn't be awarded even a councillorship slot in the state (Ahmad, 2021).

The central objective of the movement is da'wa which consists of educating communities on religious issues and guiding them to follow the right way to becoming pious. The movement insists on education

considering it as the key to success in all life endeavors. The group establishes schools and mosques to provide its adherents with education. The Izala propagates an ideal community without social vices. It encourages acquiring knowledge about Islam, the Arabic language, and Western education. At a certain point, the organization demands the application of Islamic Law in all ramifications of life. The organization has cleared objective to defend Islamic interests at all costs (Amara, Uncertainty, Innovation, and the Quest for Order in Africa). Recently, the organizational objectives were modified to include political participation and struggle. This was necessitated by the central role of democracy and other forms of political development played in our larger communities as it affects Muslim ummah.

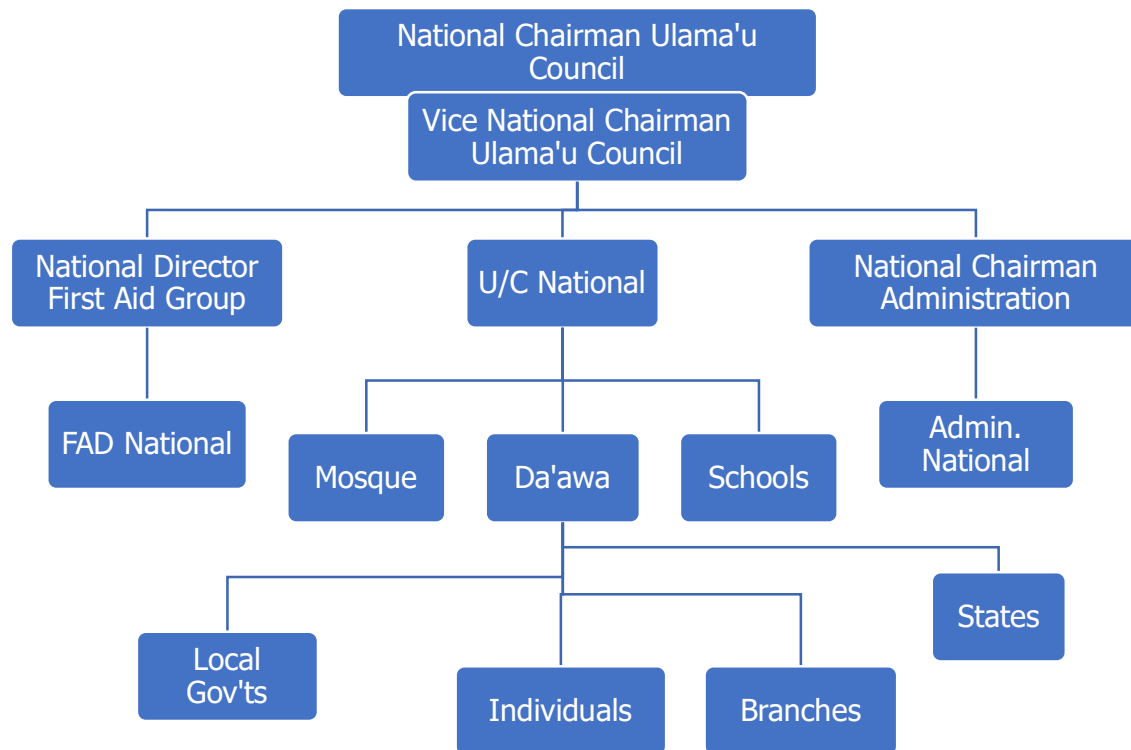
I was somewhat worried that most members of the new association were young men and women, who combined their learning with a lot of vigor and enthusiasm. I feared that they might not be very patient in their preaching, especially with older scholars in the society, many of whom had been brought up in a centuries-old tariqa tradition (Loimeier, Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria, 1997).

The proclamation by Sheik Gumi became a reality in the tussle and acceptance of the group ideologies-teachings by a wider populace and communities for decades. The Izala group was formed in 1978 but it was officially registered as an Islamic organization on 11th December 1985 almost a decade after the formation. The organization went through so many transformations, since its inception.

Existing Structures and Divisions:

Like any organization, JIBWIS has a formal structure that indicates the administrative composition of the system. The operational structures are designed to reflect the objectives of the organization. The JIBWIS developed threefold structures since the early years of its establishment. Despite the split of the group into two major branches, the organization kept its three-dimensional setting. The council is divided into three separate divisions namely: Council of Ulama; Council of Administration; and First Aid Group. The three bodies of JIBWIS are related to each other and the principal objective is to fulfill the needs of the organization. The works are widely coordinated by the Council of the Ulamas as indicated in **Figure II** below:

FigureII: The Sketch showing the Administrative Setup of the Izala Organizations



Source:(Amara, Shaykh Ismaila Idris (1937-2000), the Founder of the Izala Movement in Nigeria, 2012)

In most northern Nigerian states Izala is separated according to two centers: Jos and Kaduna. The Jos-faction with its headquarters in the Sarkin Mangu neighborhood of Jos is operating under the tradition and doctrine of the founder, Sheikh Idris. The Kaduna-faction is made of those who opposed him and chose to deviate from his path. The division commenced in the mid-1980s (Modibbo, 2012). It was related to ideological differences in the movement. As a result, a separation at the level of institutions took place. Both major factions kept the initial constitution of the organization. They usually become united in the fight against *bidi'a* and other forms of activities of Sufism.

Political Mandates and Activities of the Izala Movement:

Islamic religious groups have become one of the veritable tools of political development in contemporary Nigerian democracy. Thus, in the political process and development, the Izala movement has become the most influential and powerful movement in political reform than any other Muslim group in the country. Despite the growing evidence of the role of religious groups in political development, there is little literature on the JIBWIS role in the political spectrum of Nigeria. Recently, the general elections have become an avenue for the contest between dominant Muslim citizens in the North and Christian citizens foremost in the South part of the country. Following the restoration of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, the Izala group began to actively participate in politics and governance (Wakili, March 2009). The contribution and impact of JIBWIS politically cannot be over emphasized as they mobilize their people through the enlightenment process at grassroots level. Towards achieving this political objective, a media station called Sunnah TV was established with other mediums of mobilization through sermons and preaching grounds (Kanoma, 2021).

The active involvement was initiated in attendance of religious institutions established by some civilian governors from the north at the early stage of their elections in 1999. Thus, the link between the Izala movement and politics was most obvious in Zamfara state when the 1st civilian Governor Ahmed Sani (Yariman Bakura) who is the first among northern states' governors to introduce Shari'a legal system in 1999 was believed to be persuaded by the movement (Loimeier, Boko Haram: The Development of a Military Religious Movement in Nigeria, 2012). The influence was to more ground for Muslims in political development in the country. Though, the implementation of Sharia has caused lots of steers among the Nigerian populace on its eligibility and position in the constitution. The Izala group has copiously participated in the struggle. The group saw it as an avenue to widen its influence in the context of Nigerian politics. The persistent *Daawa* and pressures mounted on other northern governors by the group led to the adoption of the Sharia legal system in Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Kebbi as well as Kaduna state.

Nonadherence to principles and full implementations of the legal system by some northern governors face the wrath of the group. For instance, in Kano State, Dr. Ibrahim Datti Ahmad and Ja'afar Mahmud Adam were highly active in the political process. The scholars accused the then Kano State Governor Dr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso (1999-2003) of being too timid in respect of Shari'a panel laws. The allegation was perceived to be the major factor that led to his failure in an attempt to get a second term bid in office in 2003. The group massively supported Ibrahim Shekarau, that eventually won the Governorship election in Kano under the platform of the All-Nigerian People's Party (ANPP) (Saka 2007).

Izala is the only Muslims religious organization that heavily engages in active political mobilization and awareness not only in presidential elections but also in the entire aspect of governance in Nigeria. It is a very good strategy for making people more aware of democracy and its practices (Umar, 2019).

The Izala scholars usually expressed their opinions on the elections. Like other stakeholders and commentators, some of them condemned the elections as a sham and others supported it defending the positions and circumstances. For instance, members of the Izala group who monitored the elections in parts of Niger State rejected the announced results because they did not reflect the people's wishes (Umar, 2019). However, despite the many serious lapses witnessed, some leading ulama, like Dr. Ahmad Gumi, Sheik Jafar Mahmud Adam, and Sheikh Safiyanu Abdullahi on several occasions called on Nigerians to accept

the results in good faith without any recourse to violence, and urged that the way forward was for all Nigerians to “pray for the newly elected leaders to be God-fearing in the discharge of their responsibilities” and strive hard to address the observed problems in the conduct of the elections (Modibbo, 2012). This called has been widely considered to be progressive in the promotion of peaceful coexistence of the country. Islamic scholars from the group usually expressed their opinions on the elections via sermons, preaching sessions, public lectures, and seminars in mosques, schools, and media. They mobilized people (Modibbo, 2012). on who to elect into various posts. The following indicates views on Islamic clerics in the 2007 general elections:

However, in all the states where the Sharia has been implemented, the Izala group is constructively and positively engaged in the process of governance in various ways in the country. For instance, the members of the JIBWIS were appointed as Commissioners, Special Assistants and Advisers, Chairmen, and members of Boards/Commissions. The appointed are in respect of institutions charged with the responsibility and overseeing the implementation of Shari’a legal system in respective states such as Shariah Research and Implementation Commission, Zakat and Endowment Board, Hisbah Commission, Ministry Religious Affairs, Shari’a Implementation Committee amongst others. Furthermore, the experience the Izala group gained in the struggle for the restoration of the Shari’ah for decades gradually resulted in their increasing involvement and active participation in the current democratic political process (Wakili, March 2009). This has remained the tradition in Zamfara State since the implementation of Shari’a in 2000. Even in the last 2019 general elections, the Izala group was known to be very agile in mobilizing the public on the importance of voting credible candidates for the betterment of society.

Peace and conflict resolution that involves dialogue with bandits have become a new development among the group’s political activities which attracts the attention of many political experts. Recently, the Islamic cleric Dr. Ahmad Mahmud Gumi has been at the forefront in this respect. He ventured into the forests of Zamfara, Kaduna, and Niger states to hold discussions with bandits. Gumi believes that negotiation was the only option that could bring peace to the country, particularly in the Northern part of the country (Daily-Trust, March 02, 2021). He emphasized that the use of force would never end the insecurity challenge and on several occasions called on the government at all levels to dialogue with both bandits and the insurgents.

His efforts have led to the release of the number of victims of kidnapping. Under the auspices of the group, the Islamic clerics were able to organize series of meetings with different Fulanis communities in an attempt to find lasting solutions to lingering farmers-herdsmen conflicts, armed banditry, kidnapping among others. This effort paves the way for many northern governors to offer amnesty to repentant bandits. For instance, Governor Matawalle of Zamfara offered amnesty to Auwalun Daudawa, notorious bandits who led his gang to abduct over 300 schoolboys from Government Science Secondary School Kankara, Kastina State (Blueprint, February 27, 2021). Thus, through the dialogue, Sheik Gummi identified the major cause of the banditry in Nigeria. According to his findings, poor government policies sought to allocate huge lands to farmers and clear a vast amount of forest and grazing reserves. These have eventually resulted in the displacement of many Fulanis’ hamlets and blockage of their routes (Daily-Trust, March 02, 2021). The Cleric offered the best alternative measures to the government, which believes that the government should focus on peacebuilding and peace sustenance mechanisms to avoid re-eruption of such cases after successful management. Although, many saw his efforts as personal not interest of the community of JIBWIS (Daily-Trust, March 02, 2021).

In educational development, the group is among key Islamic organizations that believe in the promotion of Islamic knowledge alongside western education. The Izala group has successfully established a range of schools across northern Nigeria. Currently, the JIBWIS is constructing an Islamic University in Shinkafi, Zamfara State. Equally, Jigawa State had allocated 65 hectares of land to the group for the establishment of an Islamic University in Jigawa State. The Universities are expected to offer an assortment of courses that would help in areas of economic and political development in the country.

Thus, Izala Schools have modeled after the school Arabic studies that originated from the Northern provinces Law Schools. Most of the graduates of Higher Islamic Studies constitute a modern Islamic elite, fluent in Arabic and versed in Islamic studies, with some fluency in English. Northern Nigerian Muslims to

receive modern education up to university level. Some of the graduates of Izala schools have now completed university education and are in various careers of service, mainly teaching judiciary, and leadership of non-governmental and religious organizations. Izala schools represent novel developments in the history of education and political development in northern Nigeria (Umar M. S., 2001). By integrating Islamic and western education, Izal schools have neutralized the longstanding resistance to western education in Hausa-Fulani communities.

Technical aid and social support remained the key instrument used by JIBWIS in the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. The Group has a history of partaken in assortments of aid activities ranging from management disasters, diseases outbreaks, humanitarian services, health campaigns, orphanage services among others. The activities are virtually available at all the branches of JIBWIS in the country. Through, the platform needs are being offered assistance to uplift their livelihood. The programmes are mostly funded by JIBWIS, individuals, the Government, NGOs, and philanthropists. This is one of the important segments of socio-economic development in the country.

Finally, the tale of the religious conflict suggests a strong connection between religion and political development. Leaders of communities, whether they were kings, warlords, presidents, or prime ministers often used religion to promote their interests. Since religion was such a central driver in the formation and sustainability of communities, it played an important role in domestic and international political development. For instance, religious and political leaders such as Ahmadu Bello and Abubakar Gumi the spiritual spearhead of JIBWIS have been highly successful in their endeavors of reform and their efforts to create a modern yet still, Muslim, northern Nigeria, their policies of political reform have been contested by representatives of the religious and political establishment. A paradigmatic example of such a radical anti-modern movement was Maitatsine, a group that surfaced in several violent clashes with the Nigerian army between 1980 and 1987 (Loimeier, Boko Haram: The Development of a Military Religious Movement in Nigeria, 2012).

Another fundamental challenge is relation with other Muslim groups and non-Muslim. The Izala was able to create a very cordial relationship with non-Muslim particularly in communities that have different cultures and norms. For instance, in Plateau State, which is not a Shari'a State, Izala for instance succeeded in changing the times of public administration and schools on Fridays to allow Muslims to go perform their prayers. Since colonial times only Sunday is a work-free day in Nigeria. Despite the efforts of the group, many perceived the relationship with other religious groups as unhealthy.

Conclusion:

Every nation is concerned with political development because it is dynamic. Concern over political development is the necessary measure of the modern African nations. Thus, **Izala movemevement** is becoming more complex and controversial in the current political development in Nigeria. Their participation, in general, has created compounding problems that are associated with regionalism and tribalism. The introduction of Muslim-Christian tickets influenced by religious organizations on political platforms has continued to be intricate. Since 2000, the amazing variety and increasing fragmentation of the religious-political spectrum have become even more complicated due to the formation of several ultra-radical groups.

Thus, the chapter concludes that since religious organizations were such central drivers in the formation and sustainability of communities, they played an important role in domestic and international political processes. The linkages between religious institutions and political development are at the center of some of the most profound controversies in the contemporary study of political development, particularly in the Third World nations (DFID, 2009). Many preachers have justified the overriding influence of traditional institutions over religious organizations. For instance, in Kano State, neither the Christians nor the Izala group recognize the spiritual authority of the Emir, and both have been excluded from the State Government on so many occasions in the past.

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