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The rule of an autocrat, and I trust that he will not be too despotic, would be best.
Bell: 1909

1. Introduction

The hope and euphoria that accompanied independence in Africa was not merely an affirmation of the idea of self-determination and its promise. In a very concrete sense, independence and the postcolonial state were also seen as the messiahs that could deliver Africa from the shackles of underdevelopment. In both practical politics and in academic discourses, the raison d’art of the postcolonial state was initially cast in economic terms. The state the engine of economic growth which meant more and better roads, hospitals, schools, industries, and higher living standards. But, from the very beginning economic legitimation found expression through the drive for political legitimation, for the achievement of economic prosperity was seen and established in political terms. It was not only that the state was seen as the midwife of democracy, the vehicle of national unity, and the protector of the ‘egalitarianism and peaceful co-existence’ between groups said to be characteristic of pre-colonial Africa. More than this, political legitimation became the very basis for statehood. Through a highly statist and authoritarian project that insisted on national unity and egalitarianism, the state created and pushed forward an argument that has survived throughout postcolonial Africa that unity and homogeneity were to be the beginning and end of politics. Surely, the formation of the political community was so central that Nkrumah admonished colonized peoples across the world: “seek yea the political kingdom, and the economic shall follow.” The formation of power, and beyond it the state, was thus a cardinal priority for the post-independence state in Africa. Political development was a precondition for economic development. The state’s trajectory and legitimacy coincided, so that unity and blending together diverse groups and socio-political spaces generated by colonial territoriality became almost the only goal. This trajectory, and the consequent geography of power it created enforced a particular notion of statehood in which the state’s major responsibility was keeping internal order, something that translated soon enough into the extermination of opposition, one-party states, and military coups. This internal dimension is dialectically related to an external dimension constituted by the territorial and administrative boundaries created by the logic of colonization. The most dominant mechanism

1 Sir Gawain W. Bell, Minute, March 4 1909, National Archives Kaduna (hereinafter NAK) SNP/ 471/1909.
in the exercise of power according to this logic was violence; its main objective the organization and control of peasant production.

The central thesis of this paper as is of the whole dissertation, is that the dominance of violence in the formation and exercise of power in postcolonial societies in general, and in Northern Nigeria in particular could be explained in terms of the attempt by the state - conceived as a socio-historical complex the of relations of domination – to control peasant production and the resistance to this control. The state is a complex of social relations precisely because in the context of Africa, it can neither be understood in its modernity (recourse to the colonial encounter) nor in its traditionality (recourse to pre-colonial “egalitarianism”). It must be understood in historical time as a set of relations of exploitation and domination straddling two or more forms of productive systems all of whose major purpose is the extraction of peasant surplus. This paper is thus also a study in the formation and exercise of power as its expresses itself in the attempt by classes to have access or to prevent others from having access to resources. Violence is chosen for it is the ultimate expression of power, and the state its most dominant monopoly. More specifically, the study in general, and this paper in particular argues that the formation of the postcolonial state in northern Nigeria, contrary to the literature of the 1960s and 70s was a violent process, and that this violence was determined by the state’s attempt to control the peasantry, and the challenges to that control; that the control of the peasantry depended on the state’s coercive capacity defined in terms of the degree – quantitatively and qualitatively – of its repressive resource; that the most critical dimension in the deployment of violence in Northern Nigeria was the state’s qualitative resource defined in terms of its organizational reach, i. e. its mobilization and deployment of informal infrastructures of power at the local level in the form of Native authorities; that due to the state’s dependence on the organizational reach of local authorities in the control of the peasantry, violence tended to be localized, substantially rural based, and remote; that the state’s coercive capacity is constrained by the strength of opposing social classes, and particularly the deployment of violence is influenced by the fear of the mobilization of the peasantry. This potential fear increasingly became a reality with the intensification of anti-colonial movements in the late 1940s especially by the Northern Elements Progressive Union; and that the of commitment of these movements in their opposition to the postcolonial state was in the main determined by the personal histories and collective memories of struggles the movements generated, and that it was such histories and collective memories that provided ‘masterframes’ for a high level of organizational discipline. But this is just one aspect of the study.
Beyond these, is a theoretical and methodological issue. For central to the study is also
the idea that it is impossible to study the state in Africa without a sustained confrontation and
engagement with the dominant theoretical and methodological cobwebs that have befuddled its
analysis over the past several years. This study is therefore also theoretical. This paper touches
only a small aspect of the overall problem this study charts. It is divided into 6 sections, the
introduction inclusive. Section three examines the theory and methodology of understanding the
postcolonial state in Africa. Section four sets out a possible framework for understanding the
postcolonial state. Section five analyses the structure of local power and its deployment in
Northern Nigeria. Section six concludes the paper. The understanding of these sections
however depends on an analysis of the context of the socio-historical complex that is know as
the state from pre-colonial times. This is the task of section two.

2. Background and Introduction to the Research

The area that came to be known as Northern Nigeria is geographically located in the
Central Sudanic belt of West Africa. In pre-colonial times it was, and largely still is, a sparsely
populated tract of land lying between latitudes 10.5° to 13.5° North and longitudes 4° to 10°
East covering a total land mass of about 150,000 square miles. The inhabitants are called the
Hausa, and they at various times lived in small states and chiefdoms that paid tributes to larger
states such as Songhay, Kanem, and Bornu Empires to the west and east. The variety of these
states and the absence of information especially before the 10th century makes attempts to
reconstruct the general structure of the organization of power in pre-colonial Hausaland a
difficult task. Available evidence suggests that hamlets, villages and small chiefdoms organized
along traditional religious practices had developed by the early 1300s. Political centralization
was no doubt initially catalyzed, and subsequently propelled by extensive migration, long
distance trade, slave raiding, the growth of cities, Islam, and the development of the technology
of war. These forces in various combinations demonstrate the increasing movement towards
the centralization of power, at the base of which were at least two broad social processes:

first, the network of towns, villages and hamlets encompassing immigrant communities of
heterogeneous origin was welded into a political community under a class of kings(sarakuna).
And second, expanded commodity production, migration, and long distance trade integrated the
kingdoms, in varying degrees, into the bilad-al -Sudan. Both tendencies were predicated on
considerable descent and occupational diversity and on elaboration of central government

\[\text{2 M. G. Smith Historical and Cultural Conditions of Political Corruption Among the Hausa Comparative Studies in Society and History 4: 2 (1964), Pp.}\]
\[\text{3 Yusufu Bala Usman The Transformation of Katsina (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1979).}\]
functions, an important consequence of which was the expanded position which Islam came to occupy in social life.4

Thus by the 1300s, a combination of these forces has resulted in the emergence of city states and chiefdoms beyond the mere household. Thence, political authority was very clearly established in many parts of Hausaland, the most dominant examples of which are the states of Kano and Katsina.5

Northern Nigeria is heir to this tract of land, and borders present-day Republics of Chad and Cameroon to the northeast, Niger to the northwest, and Benin to the west. It is one of the three areas that were amalgamated into the British Protectorate of Nigeria in 1914.6 It is a predominantly agrarian society, and in live between 250-300 cultural groups, organized in numerous states and chiefdoms that were at various stages of political centralization. This centralized 19th century pre-colonial state structure is the culmination of the attempts at the centralization of the various Hausa states in the region that probably began as early as the 10th century. These states and cities straddled major trade routes between North Africa to the East and the coastal regions of what was to become Nigeria to the South. But these trade routes also traversed other states and kingdoms, making the trade linkages a complex system throughout the Sudanic belt. Trade was however not the only form of interaction between these states. Cultural and religious exchanges were significant forms of sociation. One of the most significant factors in the formation of states during this period is war. The slave economy of most of these states necessitated war for slave production was a principal source of the reproduction of the whole system. These processes expanded production, trade, cultural inter-linkages and urban growth. Gradually political authority became established, its nucleus being the birni or city.7 Such forces continued expanding and had, in various ways and across several centuries, combined and recombined in forming states, small and big.8 One of the biggest of such states was the Sokoto Caliphate that resulted from the Jihad of 1804.9

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5 Yusufu Bala Usman Ibid.
6 The other two are the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.
7 Abdullahi Smith argues that the development of the birni signifies a shift in the balance of social and political authority from a largely segmentary form of social organization in which authority depends on kinship, to one that favors some level of centralized political authority that could guarantee not just the safety of lives, but also of markets and trade. This often means the construction of fortifications as well as some military force. See his Some Considerations Relating to the Formation of States in Hausaland. Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria 5:3 (1970). Pp. 329-346. See also Joseph Smaldone, Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate: Historical and Sociological Perspectives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
8 There have been debates on the origins of states in the West African Sudanic belt. Many of the debates focus on the emergence of specific states. Thus Abdullahi Smith focuses on the emergence of the Hausa states in his Some Considerations Relating to the Formation of States in Hausaland Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria 5:3 (1970). In this article Smith discusses the plausibility of the 'legends of origin' theory of state formation in Hausaland, and advances the view that it is more likely that increasing social differentiation resulting from trade, religion and war were the main forces in the formation of states in Hausaland. Abdoulaye Bathily was concerned more with state building.
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Before the Jihad however, and by about 1500 AD, a Hausa social and political system, the *saraauta* system, was discernible. This system rested on peasant production, in which the *gandu* (family unit) formed the basic unit. Outside the family, the *gandu* expands to take in *barori* (clients) and *bayi* (slaves). Household heads organized production and distributed surplus. Such production also took place outside the *gandu* in *gidaje* (households). *Gidaje* formed the nuclei of *garuruwa* (towns). Partly rural and urban, these towns were headed by *dagatai* (village heads) who in addition, controlled untilled land. Households related through *gayya* (cooperative labor) and *aro* (rent). At the risk of oversimplification, two dominant classes obtained. These are the *sarakuna* or ruling classes, and the *talakawa* or peasants and other subordinate classes. Labor rent, rent in kind, and money rents were the main mechanisms through which surplus was extracted. The state controlled land, for under Maliki Law, all land belongs to the state, and is held in trust by the Caliph. Private use of land bordering on ownership through generations of use however existed. This forms a crucial element in the network of relationships that ensured state violence and coercion over the peasantry. The state largely controlled peasant labor, organized security merchant capital, and relied heavily on a complex clientage and patronage system. The *talakawa* were enmeshed in a complex system of taxation paid in cash or kind based on an estimation of the value of productive activity and income. Special envoys of the emir, *jakadu*, collected taxes as well as re-enforced the emir’s authority in outlying districts. Slavery was a significant force in this complex of relations, and it played not only a dominant role in state building, but also in the provision of labour on the estates of the aristocracy. It was this complex structure of power and production that were overthrown by the Jihad of 1804.

patterns that cut across regional boundaries. He created a five-fold typology of the evolution and form of the West African state thus: a] the primary state, b] the military-merchant state (dominant between the 8-16th centuries), c] the predatory state (dominant between the 17-19th centuries) d] the colonial state, and e] the bureaucratic postcolonial state. This typology is however not only reminiscent of the arguments advanced in the hermitic hypothesis, it also limits state formation to a uni-dimensional, progressive movement. See his The West African State in Historical Perspective Between State and Civil Society in Africa: Perspectives on Development Eghosa Osaghae (Ed.) (Dakar: Codesria, 1994).

Mahmud Tukur The Historian, the Jurist and the Sokoto Jihad In The Essential Mahmud Tukur Tanimu Abubakar (Ed.) (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd., 1987).


The institution of slavery has been very significant in state building in Hausaland. Slaves served in various capacities before and after the Jihad. In several cases they constituted a significant part of the army and internal security. In the middle of the 1800s when changes in warfare technology began spreading, a major reconfiguration of power began, something that seemed to have consolidated the position of slaves vis-a-vis the nobility in some of the states. Thus in Daura, slaves continued to play a dominant role in matters of state, including the selection and deposition of emirs up to the early 20th century. On the question of the increasing role of slaves in the army, internal security, and state building, see Joseph Smallbone Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate: Historical and Sociological Perspectives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). See also Heidi Nast Islam, Gender, and Slavery in West Africa Circa 1500: A Spatial Archeology of the Kano Palace,
Debates on the basis and motive of the Jihad have raged and are for our purposes, not relevant here. Whichever position one takes as its basis or motive, the jihad movement was no doubt both a response and an attempt to replace the repressive *sarauta* system. The jihad centralized most of these states into the Sokoto Caliphate, thus reconstituting the structure of power in Hausaland. This reconstitution resulted into a central bureaucracy that maintained law and order, supervised public works, and levied and redistributed taxes in the form of *Zakat* (alms). Beyond this by far however, is that the jihad created a *political community* based on an Islamic ideology that questioned previous geographical, social and political boundaries even as it created new ones.\(^\text{16}\) By creating the basis for common linguistic, cultural, religious and territorial ties through, the Jihad established the foundations of a central state. The degree to which centralization was achieved in the Caliphate however needs be qualified. Since the territorial frontiers of the Caliphate were large and contained diverse social groups, and since it did not have a standing army,\(^\text{17}\) a highly centralized state structure was out of the question. More pointedly, these diverse social groups in many cases constituted very serious problems for the Caliphate. This is underscored by the wars the Caliphate had to fight almost throughout its existence. In addition, some of the emirates faced rebellions emanating from Mahdist and reformist tendencies. These problems restricted the degree of centralization. The more dominant pattern was a loose federation of emirates each controlled by an emir. Although their appointment initially required the approval of the Amir at the centre, emirs were to a certain extent free to conduct emirate administration so long as it conformed to Islamic law.\(^\text{18}\) However, though the Jihad was a political attempt to restructure Hausa society, many aspects of the old *sarauta* system soon crept back into the new state not long after the death of the principal Jihadists.\(^\text{19}\) The system nevertheless survived until British conquest in 1903.

The British took over the Caliphate state structure, attempted to transform Emirs into land owning classes by abolishing slavery, bureaucratized the state structure, introduced commodity production, streamlined taxation, and ensured that the pre-colonial hegemonic structures of power were sufficiently strong to enforce control over the peasantry. These

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\(^{17}\) Joseph Smallbone *Op. cit.* persuasively argues that the Caliphate was moving towards establishing a standing army in the mid-1800s, for the introduction of new technologies of war, and particularly guns had imposed a change in war strategies and tactics. Thus the emirates increasingly began relying on muskeeters instead of cavalry, though up to the British conquest, cavalry was a crucial arm of the army. It is therefore important to note that while no full fledged standing army existed, the introduction of new weaponry and the mobilizational capabilities of the Caliphate indicate a tendency towards centralization, though the nature and direction of such centralization was radically reconstituted by European conquest.

\(^{18}\) The Caliphate central administration did periodically intervene in Emirate administration, and in certain cases had Emirs deposed, although its interventions were in some cases disastrous, as for example in Kano.
measures resulted into support for the aristocracy such that by the beginning of nationalist and anti-colonial struggles in Northern Nigeria, two broad social forces, both of which are strongly rooted in pre-colonial class and power structure struggled for the emergent postcolonial state. Although the origin of this conflict was can be traced far back into history, it was clear that the immediate cause was the September 1951 victory of an opposition political party, the Northern Elements Progressive Union[NEPU]. This victory, more sweeping in Kano City, in many ways constituted a watershed in the political history of northern Nigeria. For one thing, it demonstrated the possibility of an “electoral overthrow” of the northern aristocracy on which the colonial and emergent postcolonial states came to depend. Deeper still however, it brought to the fore several conflicts -- class, ethnic, regional, religious and gender -- sharply into the struggle for state formation. These conflicts broadly reflect a struggle between two dominant social forces. On the one hand is a centralized pre-colonial state apparatus whose historical roots date back mainly to 1804, but whose power was reconstructed in more intrusive and penetrating ways by colonialism. On the other are peasants, artisans and other classes oppressed by the pre-colonial and colonial state apparatuses, but whose continued resistance was critical in the processes of the formation of the state. Two political parties represented these forces respectively: the Northern Peoples Congress [NPC] and the Northern Elements Progressive Union [NEPU]. The NPC was the establishment party whose major objective was the defense of tradition, though it was forced to concede to the reform of native authority administrations.

NEPU drew most of its support from peasants, artisans, petty traders, as well as from a section of the *ulema*. It was radical in its programmes, and was committed to the overthrow of the colonial state apparatuses. These were the dominant social forces in the struggle for the emergent postcolonial state.

The struggle between these social forces was however much more than just the periodic electoral competition for power. It was a struggle between on the one hand, an emergent *regional state* supported by the repressive apparatus of the colonial state, and an increasingly

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20 This victory was short-lived. NEPU's candidates were eliminated in subsequent rounds due to an electoral law that empowered Emirs to nominate candidates who in many cases lost in earlier electoral stages. Nevertheless, this shocked the state apparatuses, and may have been a catalyst in the decision of many traditional rulers to join the Northern Peoples Congress(NPC), Richard Sklar *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (London and Lagos: Nok Publishers International, 1963) and Billy Dudley *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria* (London: Frank Cass Publishers Ltd., 1968).

21 Native authority administrations wielded enormous powers, including those of making laws, raising taxes, and of policing. They were the most powerful instruments of local state presence and domination. This is why the imposition of colonial capitalism in northern Nigeria would have been impossible independent of the Caliphal state apparatus. Simply put, the Colonial State's ability to transform this system into an administrative and territorial homogeneity in the form of the Native Authority system depended on the Emirate or Sarauta system. As the main instruments for control over and extraction of peasant surplus, NAs were the sites of some of the most intense conflicts between state and society in northern Nigeria. The colonial state itself admits of some of the repressive activities of NAs. See for example I. R. Stanbrook's
radical array of forces represented by social groups and parties whose notions of state and nationhood went beyond narrow regional boundaries.\textsuperscript{22} It was at bottom a struggle against the colonial state and its traditional apparatuses. The struggle thus reflects a broad based contest over discourses and practices of nationhood, identity and development in the process of the formation / consolidation of a power base whose historical role was to ensure neocolonial dependence. It was a contest on preliminary and fundamental questions of the composition and shape of an emergent state. It was thus a struggle over the discourses and practices of power, as well as of nationhood and development. The consolidation of this power structure indicates a process of the articulation of several constitutive elements, the most critical of which were pre-colonial power structures, colonial state apparatuses, emergent nationalist and anti-colonial parties and movements, and of peasants. The articulation of these depended on processes of incorporation, co-optation, exclusion and violent suppression of practices and discourses whose notions of independence, nationhood and development varied with the state’s objectives as well as with its unfolding neocolonial role. This process meant denying and frequently violently suppressing difference or criticism, a position vividly captured by the NPC’s motto: “One North, One People Irrespective of Religion, Rank, or Tribe.”\textsuperscript{23} Thus early in the processes of the formation of the postcolonial state, it was clear that statehood and the discourses associated with it would be hotly contested, especially if some party declares, as did the NEPU that all political parties are but the expression of class interest, and as the interest of the talakawa is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class both white and black, the party seeking the emancipation of the talakawa must naturally be hostile to the party of the oppressors.\textsuperscript{24}

These struggles can neither narrowly be interpreted as acts of ethnic violence, or even broadly as the lack of institutional fit between newly emergent institutions and congruent sustaining values.\textsuperscript{25} On the contrary, these struggles show a deeper structural conflict characteristic of the formation of states in which contest for power between classes takes various

\textsuperscript{22} Although the NPC was initially concerned more with establishing its control in northern Nigeria to forestall a possible second, ‘southern re-colonization’ of the region, it soon became clear to the party that the struggle for regional control is inextricably tied with the struggle for the control of the national state. Its relationship with the northern opposition, especially NEPU and UMBC, therefore became increasingly defined in terms of the oppositions’ pan Nigerian position on the one hand, and on the other its regionalist position. It is thus correct to characterize the NPC as regional in policy and outlook since its overall project is the defense of its perception of northern Nigeria and its interests. In addition to this, the regional constitution made it impossible for parties to control the national state without first controlling their regions. Thus the struggle for the national state was for all practical purposes fought in the regions.

\textsuperscript{23} Constitution of the Northern Peoples Congress (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1951).

\textsuperscript{24} NEPU (1950). The Sawaba Declaration: Northern Elements Progressive Union Declaration of Principles. The party’s seven point declaration is one of the most significant and radical documents in the history of organised resistance in northern Nigeria. It for the first time signaled an open and systematized challenge to the foundation and apparatuses of the colonial, and later postcolonial states, particularly customary power and the native authority system. The term talakawa refers specifically to the commoner and oppressed classes.

forms – economic (struggle for the control of surplus and its producers), political (electoral competition) and ideological (religion, ethnicity, or discourses of nationalism). State formation in northern Nigeria was a contest over the control of the state and of the discourses through which the notion of the state is expressed. This contest in particular indicates how a specific form of postcolonial society and state were constructed, how specific groups and identities were incorporated or excluded from it, how specific forms of resistance against such political exclusivism arose, and the mechanisms through which such exclusionary politics and resistance were acted and re-enacted.

3. Understanding the Postcolonial State in Africa

Conventionally, studies have either assumed Northern Nigeria a monolithic entity, or have analyzed cases of violence in the exercise of power (e.g. Kano riots, 1953; Gusau riots, 1957; Tiv Division riots, 1960 and 1964) as discrete historical events unconnected to state formation. While a few studies focus on the processes and mechanisms of nation building, these are in the main biographies, studies of political parties, or a discrete analysis of state sponsored “violence squads,” such as the Jam’iyyar Mahaukata. Common to all these studies is the failure to confront the historical basis of violent events, their linkage to state formation, and the state’s role in them. A fictional representation of the North as monolithic de-linked the processes of nation-state formation from questions of state. The representation of the North as monolithic in fact partly represents a particular conception of “state” and “developmentalism” that identifies and embodies “state” both in the ruling party and in its leadership. Both appear as the embodiment of wisdom that makes them the only alternatives to development, the guardians of the state, as well as its authoritative spokespersons. Criticisms and expressions of difference constitute subversion, and are ruthlessly dealt with as such. The political content of the nationalist and anti-colonial movements in Northern Nigeria were depoliticised and presented as a series of discrete ethnic clashes that now constitute “sources of instability.” State activity towards incorporation or exclusion appear either as the state’s various attempts at

28 Richard Sklar Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963). Billy Dudley Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria (London: Frank Cass, 1968). The Jam’iyyar Mahaukata literally means the Party of Madmen. But it is not a party in the sense of an organisation seeking for, among other things, political power. Rather it is a youth organization found across northern Nigerian cities with some royal connections organised as the unofficial strong arm wing of the NPC meant to counter the growing NEPU influence especially after 1951. An Interim Intelligence Report by the Divisional Officer in charge of Bida Division dated October 27 1953 indicates the group’s existence across northern cities, its objective being the harassment of NEPU. It has violently attacked NEPU on several occasions, sometimes with the backing of the Native Authority Police, WJHC B/ BOX 1/ P.2/ N0.36. See also Alkassum Abba Ibid., Pp. 96-98.
forging stability (which translates into cultural and political unitarism), or as simple violations of juridical rights that were in any case, necessary aspects of “new democracies”. Questions of state formation, particularly those of state violence, resistance to both the colonial and postcolonial states, and the linkages between these became submerged under the imperative of “national unity.” Neither the violent suppression of opposition discourses and groups, or the way such violence assumed a dominance in the organization of rule or, indeed, the relation of these to state formation constituted serious analytic concerns. By advancing these characterizations of “development” and “statehood,” and by intellectualizing them in these terms, early studies on postcolonial state not only buried the conflicts and violence attendant in its formation became legitimating ideologies for many a post-independence regimes.

The unproblematized conception of state formation as a linear progression towards modernity in which the colonial encounter was a democratic given contradicts the reality of the processes of state building at least in Northern Nigeria. The violent suppression of opposition, the diverse forms of resistance such violence generated, and the historical trajectories of both in the context of northern Nigeria remain largely un-addressed. Even radical studies on Northern Nigeria have surprisingly been silent on the nature of postcolonial power and the violence with which this power was constituted and reconstituted. Limiting themselves either to global capital movements and the incorporation of pre-colonial societies into the world market, or the way capitalism and its colonial variants transformed production processes as to adversely society’s ability to reproduce itself, radical works on Northern Nigeria neglected the “political,” and more specifically the structure and exercise of power. Understanding the relations of power and the formation of the state in particular is however indispensable for the analysis of postcolonial society in general. Given the cultural and religious diversity of northern Nigeria and the contestations generated in the struggle for “statehood,” a focus on the processes of the violent incorporation and exclusion of discourses and classes in the process of the state’s formation is an important aspect for understanding the postcolonial state. These issues raise structurally deeper questions than studies of ethnicity, violation of juridical liberties, capital movements on a world scale, or even the transformation of agrarian society. Such studies have in addition neglected resistance to state violence, and when violence is studied, it usually is violence against the state. Although these are important considerations, their significance lies in their relation to the larger processes of state formation. And both have historically been exclusionary and violent, primarily because they represent patterns of the organization and reorganization of the relations of domination. The analysis of these questions requires a theory and method that are sensitive to
the shifts and movements in the organization and exercise of power historically from pre-colonial to postcolonial times. This means that an analysis of the state in Africa is imperative if one is to understand the patterns and processes of its development.

The concept of the state is one of the most controversial and hotly debated terms in the social sciences. Its definition, origin, and study are influenced by ideological positions. More often than not, its analysis has drawn heated debates even within a single ideological position. In general however, the state is considered an organization or field of power through and in which relationships between social forces in society are articulated. It is distinguished from other organizations in its monopoly over the use and control of the means of violence. It is the only organization that is politically centralized, and in whom violence is concentrated. Two ideological positions have dominated theorizing about the origin of the state. The first is the liberal approach. Liberal theory of the state in general assumes that the state arises as a result of an agreement between individuals to form a political community due to the fragility and insecurity of life, were they to stay on their own. This approach takes root from the theories of social contract.\(^\text{29}\) Modern liberal approaches emphasise the idea of individual freedom and responsibility as crucial defining factors in state’s constitution. The state is conceptualised as a body whose rule is legitimated by the consent from the individuals that constitute it. This consent derives from the freedom of individuals to choose their government and its officials through periodic elections. Although it retains a monopoly of the use of force, such force is considered legitimate and rational. Its legitimacy derives from an individual’s acceptance of membership into a political community. By thus agreeing, individuals empowered the state to maintain order. This arrangement is rational, and its rationality arises from its instrumentality, that is, from the recognition by individuals that constrained freedom within a state is far more beneficial than unconstrained freedom without one. But the use of such power is not arbitrary since power is a complex system of checks and balances in the structure of government in particular, and in the political system in general. Liberal theory emphasises a conception of the state that is instrumental, that is to say a conception that views it purely in terms of the functions it performs in the maintenance of law and order in society.

The problem with this notion of the state is that it heavily restricts the analysis to a concern with government and with its functions. The state is examined not as a total field of power and domination, but as an arena where freedom, consent, and participation reign. That these are determined by class positions, and that the exercise of power only appears as if it were

\(^{29}\) Michael Watts, Robert Shenton

\(^{30}\) The prominent social contract theorists are Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau.
in the public interest are questions that can not be raised or answered from this framework. The state is reified, i.e. it is presented as possessing a life of its own. Focus is either on the structure of government or on the political system conceptualised in terms of inputs and outputs. This became the major framework for the study of state formation or political development and violence in developing societies. Because the liberal theory has focused so much on government and on the political system, its understanding and analysis of the ‘political’ is so general as to be analytically unhelpful. It is this conception that has dominated the analysis of the ‘political’ in developing societies in general and of Northern Nigeria in particular.

In contrast, Marxist political theory approaches the state as an organised coercive power of one class over another. The state is an organ of class rule, an instrument of class domination. Contrary to liberal political approaches, the state is neither a neutral nor an objective organ working for the public interest. While Marxist theory concedes that the state can in certain instances act in the public interest, it points to a fundamental issue of how the state’s presentation of its activities as ‘public’ obscures a much deeper private interest. It protects the private interests of capital, and that the notion of consent, freedom, and equality are merely ideological forms that obscure a much more fundamental aspect of the exploitation of dominated classes. Violence is the basis of class rule, and it is limited not just to the repressive activity of state agencies. The appearance of violence as physical force on the political level simultaneously masks a more endemic economic and generalised violence. Here, violence is thus not simply a question of force and its deployment by state apparatuses; it is rather a kind of power concentrated in the hands of the state, the most obvious expression of which is its open dimension. At the same time, where such power is not openly violent, it is generalised as consent representing the public interest. In this way, only the physical aspect of state violence is obvious; less obvious, but by far more widespread and hidden, are broader forms that present themselves as consent in the form of “individual freedom” and “state neutrality.” Violence is thus inverted, and appears as generalised consent drawing legitimacy from and working for the preservation of social order.

Violence is thus understood as the expression of the total power of the ruling classes, a part of which is manifested through the state in the form of open force. The state here simultaneously embodies within it elements of both violence and consent. Politics in general and the state in particular contain both elements. The state is able to seek consent in one context and deploy violence in another precisely because of this. Both elements are intertwined, for the
state is both a social power and an organism of class coercion.³¹ The state is thus indeed coercive, but it also possesses a dimension of consent without which domination can not be secured. The state as Hoffman³² notes:

stands as the servant of the private in the name of the public. It is an instrument of the particular, to be sure, given the fact that the slavery of civil society provides the natural foundation on which the modern state rests. But it is more than this. It is the instrument of the particular expressed as the general, the servant of individual interests presenting themselves in universal terms. If such ‘theology’ seems absurd, it is an absurdity, which…embodies ‘the whole inverted logic of modern society,’ in which the ‘general interest’ of the community sanctifies and legitimates the ‘disunity’ among ‘men.’ Paradox reigns, therefore: the general will is invoked in order to confer absolute value on individual caprice; society is invoked in order to render social interests sacred and intangible, the cause of equality among men is defended, so that the cause of inequality among men (private property) can be acknowledged as fundamental and absolute. Everything is upside down (emphasis in original).

Violence and consent in capitalist society are thus at the centre of the state and politics. On the one hand, there is the concentration of violence and its means in the state presented as a ‘neutral’ ‘public’ force acting in the ‘common good.’ This is the consent aspect, and it operates on the political level as the abuse of individual rights and freedoms. Violence appears as physical because this is its most obvious aspects. But it is also political, or more appropriately ideological. In its ideological form, it is public and official, organized and ‘legitimate, and therefore claims to act on behalf of the interests of the society as a whole. In its presentation as legitimate, fundamental relations of violence are masked. It is therefore much more than the liberal notions of the deployment of ‘physical force’ whether reference is made to the state or not. Politics involves a ‘physical force with an ideological character, a coercion that commands consent, and thus there is no class domination unless there is domination on behalf of a class. It is under such conditions that an institution presents particular interests in general terms.³³ Politics is thus the concentrated expression of both coercion and consent in which a distinction exists between political and state coercion

political coercion is a process which extends beyond state coercion since it embraces the activities of those striving to win and not merely sustain state power. Winning state power therefore, consummates the wider struggles of pressure groups, parties and movements and denotes the successful exercise of that ‘general, socially coercive force’ which Marx considered essential to politics. The party in its struggle to seize power exercises political coercion in embryonic form.³⁴
Within this framework, the nature and scale of violence is closely related to the degree to which dominant classes have imposed or are able to impose their control over society, and ultimately, to the nature of that society at a specific historical period. Since violence is the most concentrated expression of the power of the ruling classes, it is found in all societies, and the difference in its deployment lies in specific historical contexts. In the main however, the transition from one form of class rule to the other is always violent. The processes of the replacement of one form of class rule with another generates violence as the old ruling classes attempt to hold on to power and privileges whose material bases have changed or have radically shifted. It follows that where ruling ideas and institutions show a close fit with class relations, low levels of violence within society are to be expected. This general position would also apply to specific conflicts between classes. Such conflicts arise in consequence of either a class’s occupation of a position inconsistent with its actual material base, or a class’s position is threatened as a result of changes in material production. In the first instance, new classes whose political position is incommensurate with their economic position could attempt to gain more political influence in order to defend their economic power. Conversely, a class’ seizure of political power may make it strive to strengthen its hold on to that power. In the second instance, a class’ political position is threatened by changes in material production and it seeks ways either to: protect its own power, or transform itself in such a way as to adapt to the emergent material conditions. This second position appears the most concrete basis for the analysis of state violence in northern Nigeria.

The aristocracy established since the 14th century that was further consolidated after the Jihad of 1804 reached its peak from the middle to the last quarter of the 1800s. As from the 1890s, it began to show signs of decay that culminated in its collapse with the imposition of British rule in 1903. Colonial conquest reordered and radically reshuffled the basis of the power of the ruling classes. In the first place, it attacked the basis of the power of the ruling classes by abolishing slavery. Although several scholars have noted that the abolition of slavery was only partial, the point to note is the reorganization of the old Caliphal ruling classes on the basis of a new logic which the legal abolition of slavery created. This formed the grounds on which the colonial state took other measures, such as those on land. In any case, it served as a basis for the transformation of the old ruling classes from a slave owing to a land owing class. This transformation not only required the legal requisition of labour and its forcible channeling to work on the estates of emirs, it also turned emirs into salaried employees of the colonial state. Underlying this process is the rationalization of the old Caliphate’s taxation, administration and judicial system, and therefore the expansion of commodity production.
These indicate that the articulation of the old hegemonic structures with colonial capitalism reflect two broad and unfolding processes intricately connected to class and ultimately state formation. The construction of the colonial state is not to be equated simply with the imposition of colonial rule. It is also at the same time a fundamental reconstitution and redefinition of the ancien régime in which what it lost in prestige and legitimacy is more than made up for by the more penetrating and coercive powers it secured through native administrations. In its early phases, the transformation involved the military conquest and co-optation of the aristocracy, a phase that lasted up to about 1939. In the period since 1939 however, colonial response to, and anticipation of growing nationalist agitation introduced important changes.

These changes include the co-optation of some parts of the aristocracy, traditional elite and merchants that now came to form the elements of an emerging class. This class subsequently became the political representatives of northern Nigeria. The political and to a limited extent ideological structures of the old Sokoto Caliphate were reconstructed and placed over other communities and peoples. This emergent class formed the basis of conservative modernization, and was at the forefront of the neo-colonial arrangement at independence. Furthermore, the aristocracy faced a crisis: to modernize and accommodate the emergent elite, thus embracing modernization, or be made irrelevant in the emerging political dispensation. The colonial state realized the danger of this and began extensive reform processes on local or native administration. This involves “a co-optation of the leadership elements of the rural and urban constituencies into established oligarchical structures. The African version of ‘passive revolution’ thus involves the promotion of the social and economic change through the ‘reciprocal assimilation’ of elites in both the public and private sectors, in town and countryside.”

In addition to:

“reciprocal assimilation,” co-optation has “sites” and “procedures.” Both “reflect the structure of the civil and political societies, giving rise to a wide spectrum of “multifunctional alliances,” some of them rooted in the pre-colonial historicity of the societies concerned.” Both processes are however marked by some degree of incompleteness in which assimilation of certain groups does not take place. Reciprocal assimilation has procedures, and these involve the strategies of political entrepreneurs. “The parameters within which these unfold are demarcated by L état rizheme, that is by the subterranean networks of family ties and factions, of patrons and clients, of big men and small boys, of Mafiosi and courtiers. At stake here is la politique du ventre - belly politics. The gastric metaphor takes us beyond the familiar ‘I chop, you chop’ syndrome;

it denotes a certain ethos which transcends the avarice of the corrupt. It draws attention to the distributive mechanisms through which the wealth of the few is shared with others.”  

The goal of these measures is the control and extraction of peasant surplus. There is an intricate relationship between the mechanisms of extraction at the economic level and those of domination at the political level. The analysis of the mechanisms of extraction depend on the identification of the classes and groups from whom surplus is pumped, and in Northern Nigeria, as in many other pre-capitalist societies, the peasantry is the most significant producer of surplus on which the state depends. The extraction of the surplus produced by the peasantry has been the most important goal of successive states in the Sudanic belt throughout its history. More than this however, there is a need to examine specific processes of the articulation of pre-colonial and colonial structures of power.

In examining the articulation of the ruling classes and of the wider Northern Nigerian society to the capitalist production process, there is a need to look at the minimum pre-requisite conditions for the dissolution of pre-capitalist modes. Since the subordination of indigenous pre-capitalist classes take several routes and combinations. The most prominent is violence, but there are instances where subordination was non-violent. The nature of articulation is dependent upon specific historical conditions. In general, the subordination of pre-capitalist forms of production to capitalism depends on the creation of certain necessary conditions for wage labour. In Northern Nigeria, the subordination of pre-capitalist forms and classes took the form of a mixture of violence and reciprocal assimilation due to a number of factors. These include the development and expansion of free labour through land alienation, the dissolution of the organic unity between owner-producer, petty land ownership / communal landed property, and of the unity between agriculture and craft manufacture.  

However, this general pattern differs in specific contexts. First, pre-capitalist societies were at various stages of development at the time of colonial conquest. Thus while some commodity production and exchange relations have expanded and advanced to a high level, in others exchange relations are weak. In addition, some have highly centralized state structures with elaborate bureaucracies. This affects the nature of the formation of power and its exercise. Second the processes, agents, and agencies through which pre-capitalist societies were incorporated into the capitalist market differ, and such differences have implications on the nature and character of both the state and politics. Third, the relationship, and more appropriately the articulation between the pre-colonial and colonial hegemonic structures is an

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37 Karl Marx Pre-Capitalist Social Formations
outcome of struggles between classes on the ground in specific contexts, and the nature and intensity of violence in such contexts depend on what kind of threats both the new and the old ruling classes perceive. Thus in the case of Northern Nigeria, incorporation into the world market was a triangular process of dissolution, preservation and transformation in which merchant capital, colonial administrators, indigenous ruling classes, and peasants engaged in a struggle to gain, defend, or increase their power. In this situation, incorporation did not displace existing “fields” and patterns of domination. On the contrary, the survival of colonial capitalism and the colonial state were inextricably bound to the survival of the ruling classes. Certain aspects of traditional hegemonic structures had to thus be preserved even as a modern state structure took shape. The traditional ruling classes and the hegemonic structures did respond to the colonial encounter, but they were neither wholly obliterated, nor were they outrightly strengthened. Through various processes, traditional hegemonic structures and colonialism established the limits of mediation in which each appropriated from the other what best served its purposes. In the final analysis this mediation no doubt strengthened pre-colonial hegemonic structures, the achievement of which was effected through customary power and more specifically, through Native Authority Administrations. It is this these local sources of highly concentrated power that became the main conduits for violence in the struggle over the control of peasant production. It is also worth noting however that the domination and violence of native authorities and emirs was not total. The numerous battles and contestations between peasants on the one hand and the aristocracy and colonialism on the other is testimony to the incompleteness of such domination.

4. Towards a Critical Model

The analysis of the dominance of violence in the formation and exercise of power in postcolonial societies, and more specifically the state’s ability to control the peasantry raises serious questions about the informal, organizational capacity of the state at the local level. This is a phenomena not confined to Northern Nigeria alone, and the general question is how do large political units such as ancient empires and kingdoms manage to exact control over the large and geographically far flung peasantry in the absence of formal repressive structures such as armies and the police? The contention is that this depends on the organizational structures of the state at the local level. This argument is explore in greater detail in the full work, but outlines of it are as follows. The existence of a centralized pre-colonial state structure in Northern Nigeria provided colonialism with the infrastructure and local apparatus for the control of the peasantry
through the expansion of commodity production. We will return to this issue later, but suffice to point out here a number of issues.

The first is that colonization created two types of political community, or, more accurately it attempted to graft one form of political community over another. On the one hand is a type of political community in which notions of inclusive citizenship, rights, duties and obligations, contractual relations etc obtain. This is the realm of first the colony, and then of the post-colonial state. It inherits the authoritarian and violent legacies of the colonial state and uses them to rule. On the other is a type of political community in which the notions of exclusive citizenship, of membership in religious organizations, ethnic affiliation or some other particularistic relation holds sway. Here servility and obedience rather than rights and duties, and a sense of a return to pre-colonial state forms hold sway. Both types of political community existed in the colony. Both reflect two general patterns of the extraction of wealth from peasants in colonies, and both therefore imply different forms of power and its exercise. What are these two forms of power?

The second is that two forms of power corresponding to these forms of political community arose. On the one hand, is a form of power that depends on economic compulsion. Here, the extraction of surplus depends on economic compulsion, and individuals are not usually shackled by re-colonial forms of power and domination. On the other is a form of power whose exercise depends mainly on force. Here, the extraction of surplus depends on extra-economic force, rather than on economic compulsion. Colonialism applied both methods differentially to enforce: taxation, commodity production, and labour conscription. Since the control of peasant production is central to the survival of the colonial state, a challenge or threat to a state’s control over the peasantry will be regarded as a subversion of the state. this then constitutes a challenge to the state which it had to meet. The resources with which the state meets these challenges to its power I call coercive capacity.

Coercive capacity has two dimensions: a qualitative dimension and a quantitative dimension. By quantitative dimension I make reference to the men, materiel, and technical ability. By qualitative I refer to its infrastructure of power, to non-formal organizational capacity to impose its will without seeming to be present. Coercive capacity is determined by the size of territory and population. Finally, it is determined by the balance of social forces. Which means the strength of opposition social classes in relation to the strength of the state at any one historical time. From the foregoing, we can then say that:

\[
CC = \frac{Rr}{Tp} + Cs
\]
where $R_r$ equals men / material; as well as the state’s organizational reach;
$T_p$ equals the country’s territory and population; and
$C_s$ equals the strength of opposing social classes which determines threat levels for the state.

In societies where domination and the exercise of power is particularly dependent on extra-economic force, men and material count less in terms of the capacity for violence than organizational reach. The analysis of the organizational reach of the state in Northern Nigeria begins from a discussion of the Native Authority Administrations. NAs were the local colonial infrastructure for the deployment of violence and for the control of the peasantry. At the head of NAs were Emirs who had complete powers, handled all aspects of the life of individuals in their territorial jurisdiction, and in particular organized and collected taxation, cash crop production, conscript labour and other works or levies which the colonial state does periodically impose. NAs are hierarchical organizations with a strict order of authority from the emir down to the ward head, and at each level of the hierarchy the official is held responsible for the collection of a specific tax, the provision of specific labourers, or some other thing. This hierarchical structure as shown is of course not simply a colonial creation, but has been a part of the Caliphal state structure prior to colonialism. What colonialism did was to appropriate this structure, and make it much stronger and potent than it used to be. This became the policy of indirect rule whose main point is to rule the colonized through their own pre-colonial hegemonic structures while ensuring the maximum exploitation of their resources. This policy was so successful that the Training Manual of Junior Officers in the Methods of Indirect Rule of November 23, 1928 noted that:

The most striking testimony to indirect rule is that after only 11 years of really effective administration when the war began in 1914, and during the whole period of the war when the country was denuded of troops, there was not one attempt by the Chiefs to regain by force what they had lost.

This structure came under heavy stress as from the end of the 1930s in response to nationalist and anti-colonial movements. The general problem facing the colonial state was the extraction of resources and since the largest producers were peasants, control over the peasantry was of utmost priority. That control began with the economic measures taken by the colonial state: cash crop production, forced labour regimes, regulation of migration, taxation and control of land. But the enforcement of these measures, and ultimately the control of the peasantry could not have been successful without the appropriation of pre-colonial hegemonic structures.
Since the control of peasant production is central to colonial capitalism, the preservation and transformation of pre-colonial hegemonic structures was essential.\textsuperscript{40} More substantively, the colonial state needed to fashion out a political system that guaranteed the extraction of surplus through the expansion of commodity production while expending as little resources as possible. The development, rationalization, and codification\textsuperscript{41} of customary law as well as the reorganization of taxation were some of the more obvious measures in this attempt. This codification was limited not just to customary law. It extended to critical aspects of pre-colonial patterns of domination, notably in: the collection and administration of taxation, the administration of justice,\textsuperscript{42} and in the construction of new territorialities.\textsuperscript{43} The promulgation of a series of proclamations between 1900 and 1910 established the basic framework for a new structure of rule. Some of these include: those abolishing slavery; those establishing the supreme, provincial and native courts; those establishing judicial and Emirs’ Councils; that prohibiting the acquisition of land by foreigners without the government’s consent; those prohibiting private possession of firearms and liquor; and those on taxation, labour conscription and cash crop production. In and through these, the colonial state sought to establish the most efficient, fastest, and cost-effective mechanisms for extracting resources, with an organizational structure capable of backing the whole process with force. Materially, this depended on the transformation of the old ruling class from a slave owning to a land owning class, on the expansion of commodity production, and on taxation. These measures were in turn expressed in the growing effort at commoditization, markedly demonstrated in cash cropping, labour regimes, and in taxation. Ideologically, the expansion of commodity production and the control of peasant production required the articulation of the old Caliphal hegemonic structures with the new colonial logic. The “sarauta” system as permeated by the colonial logic became the ideological expression of the new economic order. The most dominant expression of this new

\textsuperscript{38} See Appendices 1 and 2 for chart of the organizational structure of the NA and Provincial Administration.


\textsuperscript{41} Codification is here used in the broad sense to include the recognition of unwritten tradition as part of the legal compendium of colonized territories.

\textsuperscript{42} Op. cit.

\textsuperscript{43} The term “territoriality” is used to refer not just to a geographical space, but to a wider “field of power” in which multiple layers of consent and resistance coexist. The term denotes the convergence of various fields of power and the fusion and fission that characterizes such convergence. For this particular usage, see Jean Francoise Bayart’s The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly (London and New York: Longman, 1993), Pp. 260-272. The construction of new territorialities was one way through which colonialism imposed overall control over pre-colonial societies, even as these societies were internally fragmented. Thus the delimiting of international boundaries by colonial powers merged diverse peoples who prior to colonial rule may have had no relations, and separated many more that lived together. There is also the case of the construction of internal administrative boundaries within colonies that followed a similar fragmentary pattern. Both measures created not only geographical, but also social, cultural and political spaces. Such spaces were far from being immobile, but were constantly shifting, and concrete struggles were fought to define and redefine them. Yet, analysis of colonialism often glosses over the imposition of some groups over others or the uprooting of whole social groups and identities, as well as the subsequent patterns of power and conflict these generated. See for example, Sa’ad Abubakar’s Peoples of the Upper Benue Basin and the Bauchi Plateau Before 1800 in Groundwork of
h egemonic structure was the Native Authority Administrations (NAs). NAs were not only the most potent conduits through which colonial, and later postcolonial power was organized and expressed; they in addition constituted the state in all its coercive ramifications especially at the local level. The presentation of NAs as part of the ‘traditional’ state apparatus in many ways beclouds their inherent violence. As administrative units at the local level, the NAs are a modification of the old legal/administrative structure for the control of slave and peasant labour under the “sarauta” system. The violence of this system as represented in local administration can best be visualized in the way traditional rulers extracted and controlled peasant labour and resources before colonization. NAs are the repositories of colonial and later postcolonial power, for embedded in their very constitution are four of the most significant moments of the state’s coercive powers: legislative, executive, juridical, and administrative. This fusion of powers was necessary because ‘there are many advantages in a country like northern Nigeria in combining judicial and executive functions in one official. It gives him a very necessary prestige among the natives for whose administration he is responsible; while the fact that he is in close touch with the people and the political situation gives him advantage in investigating cases which can not be possessed by an official whose duties are solely judicial.’

Native authorities passed laws, administered justice, collected taxes, organized forced labor and cash crop production, as well as maintained law and order. At the head of this structure were emirs as sole authorities, even though they had councils.

This concentration of powers reflects on the political and legal levels a movement towards the consolidation of the colonial state through a complex process of the preservation and destruction of pre-colonial hegemonic structures. With this fusion, emir’s powers were strengthened, they became more directly accountable to the British, were more reliant on colonial power, and therefore less legitimate in the eyes of their peoples. The emir confronts, and was seen by the people as a tax collector, an organizer of conscript labour and cash crop production, and generally as an enforcer of the colonial system. The extraction of peasant produce, resources, and labour thus requires a greater degree of violence and force than it did prior to colonialism. Native authority administrations thus became the most powerful organizational units through which the peasantry was subordinated and its surplus extracted. They became the mechanisms for the incorporation and violent exclusion of actual and potential threats to that control. In addition to spatial and social fragmentation, taxation was streamlined.


first through the creation of NA treasuries in 1911, and then through the codification of some
taxes such as accession duty, land, and livestock tax. The effect of these measures is the
‘rationalization’ of traditional hegemonic structures now backed not only by the coercive
apparatus of the colonial state, but also by an expanded territoriality in which formerly
autonomous identities and ideas began to contest within delimited social, spatial, and political
frontiers. It was these issues that became the grounds for the struggle between the two social
forces over the control of the emergent state as from 1947.

5. Local State Power and the Threats to the State in Northern Nigeria

The development of nationalism and electoral politics in Northern Nigeria has to be
analyzed against the background of the general colonial strategy of the control of peasant
production. The first of these forces is the oppression and injustice of Native Authorities that
has historically a central feature of emirate rule even before colonial conquest. The second is
the impact of colonialism in terms of its expansion of the powers of Native Authorities and
Emirs, as well as of its “protection” of Northern Nigeria from what it deemed were influences
contrary to the “Northern way of life.” Both dovetailed into the colonial strategy expressed in
the development of material and legal conditions for the extraction and appropriation of peasant
surplus. As the largest class of producers, the peasantry became the target of the state’s coercive
measures, since it was the only way to ensure a steady supply of produce, the collection of taxes,
and labour on both colonial projects and on the estates of emirs. Both became the most critical
issues around which the major political contenders and contentions revolved in Northern Nigeria
as from the late 1930s.

The development of nationalism in northern Nigeria started a little bit later than it did in
parts of Southern Nigeria. The reasons for this are historical as much as they are contemporary.
To begin with, Southern Nigeria has had an earlier and more intensive contact with Europeans
and with western education than the North. More interesting from the point of view of colonial
control however, is that the state here took a deliberate policy of “shielding” northern Nigeria
from the influences of ‘missionaries.’ The acknowledged reason was its potential for
destabilizing the ruling aristocracy on which the colonial state depended. More accurately
however, the spread of western Education is also likely to awaken nationalism with the more
dangerous prospect of its potential for rural mass mobilization as happened in other colonies

__46__ Such examples are widespread in northern Nigeria. Thus the establishment of the dominion of the Caliphate over most pockets of resistance within its borders and along its frontiers was enhanced only with colonial conquest. See Sa’ad Abubakar Op. cit.
particularly in Asia. Only later, and in particular from the late 1930s, was the expansion of education taken seriously, and even then the state opted for a more or less controlled experiment so as to buy time to work out a neocolonial arrangement. Thus both government and missionary investment in education was low, because of the potential threat of an educated elite to colonialism.\textsuperscript{47} Once the decision was taken to rely on the chiefs and emirs in the North, then it became a matter of policy to support and sustain their power in whatever way possible. The protection of the power of the emirs was uppermost in British policy, particularly with the beginning of the annual meeting of emirs and chiefs that made them the only organized indigenous group in northern Nigeria as early as 1932.\textsuperscript{48} The development of newspapers was for example affected by the requirement for the protection of the interests of the emirs. When the \textit{Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo} went into production on a fortnightly basis in 1939, Emirs insisted that any articles the paper may publish be first checked for any critical opinion against NAs. In addition to this, the colonial government also actively monitored, and in many cases disciplined those who held radical opinions in the north. This is most clearly demonstrated in its efforts to prevent what it called the ‘permeation’ of radical southern opinions into Northern Nigeria. This was officially the beginning of a more serious attention to the activities of radical groups and associations, and therefore of the development of more intensive apparatuses of surveillance.\textsuperscript{49} But the attention of emirs was also on the evolution of the new political dispensation, for they saw in political parties a potentially serious problem. The objective of the colonial state in Northern Nigeria was thus to insulate Northern Nigeria not from Christians, for it did not worry in any way about what impact religion would have.\textsuperscript{50}

The origins of these were some intellectual and cultural associations organized in response to the movement for independence. The Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) was until 1951, a cultural organization and the outcome of a merger of various cultural associations. Among these were the Jam’iyyar Mutanen Arewa A Yau, Jam’iyyar Jama’ar Arewa, the Bauchi General Improvement Union, the Sokoto Youth Social Circle, and the Citizens Association of Kano. The objectives of the NPC as set out in its inaugural meeting in 1949 included: combating ignorance, idleness and injustice; abolishing the Northern House of Chiefs; allowing female membership in the congress; and the peaceful reform of the Native Authorities. Two critical issues in the constitution of the NPC give an indication of its position on nationalism and


\textsuperscript{48} Within this arrangement, emirs were in a better placed position than any other interest group in Northern Nigeria for a long time, at least not until 1947 with the formation of political parties. Even then, they still wielded enormous influence on the regional government influence up till the early 1950s.

\textsuperscript{49} See Notes on the Reorganization of the NA Police and the creation of its surveillance section.
its relation to the rest of Nigeria. Articles 4, 5, and 7 critically underline not only a regionalist position in terms of inter-regional relations, but also of the superiority of political and territorial arrangements as constructed by colonialism. The maintenance of northern unity as constructed by the colonial logic was a central plank in the NPC, and the following articles express this most emphatically.

to study and to try to preserve the traditions which bound culture to the past, while reforming these traditions to render them capable of meeting modern conditions…to educate the Northerners of their civic and political responsibilities, to organize them to accept the leadership of the Northern Peoples Congress, and to support its candidates for the elections to the Regional and Central Legislatures and to Local Councils… To inculcate in the minds of all Northerners a genuine love for the Northern Region and all that is northern, and a special reverence for Religion, Laws, and Order and the preservation of good customs and traditions, and the feeling that the sorrow of ones northerner shall be the sorrow of all and that the happiness of one is also the happiness of all.

The close affinity between the NPC and emirs is rooted not just in its manifesto. The NPC is the most organized form of the ideological expression of the old hegemonic structure of the ‘sarauta system,’ and this is clearly demonstrated in its membership. The NPC’s officials and many of its members were drawn from the Native Authorities or those in the service of the colonial government. Thus in its outlook, programmes, membership, and ideology, the NPC was committed to the defense of ‘northern interests.’ These interests depend on two basic notions. The first is the unity of the north against southern Nigeria as defined by the colonial demarcation of boundaries and its legacies. This boundary consists of three geographical ‘blocs’ on a continuum from fairly homogeneous to more heterogeneous political entities, and these include the old Sokoto Caliphate, Bornu, the Jukun Kingdom, and the several smaller kingdoms that were at various levels of political centralization. The second is the distinction between the core north and the outer north. Both of these had serious implications on the processes of state formation. The rationale of the colonial state is based on these distinctions. It is also the structure against which the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) fought, and for which it was persecuted until the collapse of the First Republic on January 15th 1966.

The stage for the conflict between the colonial administration on the one hand and traditional rulers on the other was in fact set earlier in the century. Of particular relevance here are the activities of a liberal, nationalistic and anti-colonial press based especially in Lagos, but also along the coastal capital cities of West Africa. First of all, the press was predominantly

51 Richard Sklar Op. cit. the principal occupations of 62% of the members of the NPC National Executive were provided by the Native Authority bureaucracies, and 65% of the members of the NPC executive in eight principal emirates of the North were officials or clerical employees of the NAs. In Sokoto and Adamawa, the NPC executive was scarcely more than a committee of the NA
concerned with articulating opposition to colonial rule. Of particular relevance in this is the *West African Pilot* whose attacks against colonialism continued to alarm the colonial administration. The main issues under focus deal with the oppression of the peasantry, labour conscription, imposition of unfair taxation, and the role of the aristocracy. What was alarming to the colonial state was not simply the articles, but that some of these articles were written by Northerners. These issues became more alarming to the colonial state after the NCNC tour early in 1946. It was apparent that the colonial state initially underestimated the impact of the NCNC tour but started taking resurgent anti-colonialism very seriously, as indicated in a secret memorandum to all Residents from the Secretary, Northern Provinces dated July 17th, 1946.

his Excellency is seriously concerned at the deterioration which has taken place in the general political situation during the past few months. There can, in his Excellency’s opinion, be no doubt that the tour of the delegation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons has been much more successful than was anticipated. While the avowed intention of the delegation is to enlist financial and moral support for their campaign against the four “iniquitous” Ordinances [these were the Land Acquisition, Minerals, Crown Lands, and Deposition of Chiefs Ordinances], it has become increasingly clear that the delegation’s real object is to stir trouble wherever the opportunity offers. The effect of the long continued press campaign directed towards racial antagonism and anti-Imperialism has prepared the ground for such agitation, and hence there is reason to believe that a large number of literates, particularly those of the younger generation, has been influenced by this propaganda. It is also obvious the returning Ex-servicemen, particularly in the Eastern Provinces, are a potential danger to security. In these circumstances, it is of particular importance that His Excellency should be kept fully informed of developments and I am therefore to request that monthly reports should be submitted of any incidents or trends which are considered worthy of notice…The Area commander will be kept fully informed of developments by this office but I am to ask that Chief Commissioners should keep local military commanders informed with regard to any local developments.

However, forces within the North were also at work in articulating an anti-colonial vision much more than the colonial state admitted. For following closely behind the NCNC tour was the formation in Kano of the Northern Elements Progressive Association (NEPA) in 1947, an organization that the colonial state alleges had close ties with the Zikist Movement. The attitude of the colonial state to NEPA was initially cautious for fear that suppression is more likely to be counter-productive. Thus when Abubakar Zukogi who became its Field Secretary applied for registering the Association in Bida in 1947, the Acting Resident Niger Province notes:

the emir, after consulting District Officer Bida and myself, decided that to offer blank opposition would be impolitic, and that to suppress entirely would be impossible, even dangerous. The last thing to do is to create underground movements gratuitously. Among other things, it makes

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52 See Abubakar Zukogi File with clips of articles in West African Pilot and the Daily Comet. The colonial state jailed Zukogi for sedition as a result of one of his articles in the Pilot.
members only the more sure of their importance and heroism. The course selected was therefore to encourage members to come out into the open. Thus on the one side, any grievances could be allowed frank expression, while on the other, sound guidance could be given and fallacies publicly exploded as occasion demanded.53

In Bauchi, an intelligence report to the Secretary Northern Provinces on NEPA’s meetings held on September 30th 1947 noted that the association was “ostensibly an educational movement with a laudable self-help motive that has an appeal to the educated Northerner.” The report warned that the Association has an “undercurrent of Zikist thought throughout the meetings which it is trying to soft-pedal until all its cells or branches have been formed” adding that “it is quite cleverly done and...will take in a good many unsuspecting people.” Yet NEPA was not yet considered a serious threat by the colonial state.54 But the measure of the seriousness of the organization in fighting oppression is indicated in the very issues it raised through its Abubakar Zukogi in its Bauchi meetings. These include the backwardness of the North especially in terms of education; role of middle men in undercutting farmers by buying produce at very low prices; underpayment for produce and low wages by companies such as the United Africa Company, the undemocratic nature of indirect rule, and the corruption of Native Authorities.55 The first indication of seriousness of NEPA and the emergent anti-colonial movement in general came from Niger Province, and the liberal policy of the colonial state was completely reversed in consequence of NEPA’s role in coordinating opposition against tax and crop policies in Bida Native Authority. Briefly this revolved around the heavy and selective taxation demanded by the Bida NA, as well as its insistence that farmers grow jute plants for jute bags. NEPA successfully raised the point that both the policies and their implementation were unjust, and they particular pointed to the extortionate regime of the District Head of Bida, Mallam Aliyu Nai’bi. The Etsu Nupe was forced to set up an inquiry which found Nai’bi guilty in what has come to be know in colonial circles as the Nai’bi incident. This incident as well as similar challenges elsewhere forced a reversal of the policy of caution towards the emergent anti-colonial movement. Hence, shortly thereafter, the substantive Resident of Niger Province in a letter to the Secretary, Northern Provinces dated December 5th, 1948 completely reversed the decision of the Acting Resident of by noting that:

I do not think that too much reliance should be put in the principle that subversive organizations must not be suppressed for fear that their activities will thereby be driven underground, and fanned by persecution. It may hold true for the United Kingdom and in the Southern Provinces where a different social outlook may justify a more liberal attitude towards revolt. But the social

53 WJHCB/SOK/2/5/5/5
54 Arewa House Archives (hereinafter AHA) /SNP/42295.
55 Ibid., Pp.76-83.
system in the Emirates is such that unless substantive activities are stopped by the Native Authorities, the view will be taken that they are encouraged by the Government. Repression will not send them underground in the sense that they will be able to carry on without the knowledge of the Native Authorities.\footnote{Op. cit.}

In addition to NEPA, there were also other significant developments that disturbed the colonial state. One of these is the establishment of the newspaper \textit{Daily Comet} in Kano that devoted its energies to attacking the injustice and oppression of Native Authorities. Across the Northern Provinces, Residents had to emphasize to subordinates the seriousness of these activities, as expressed most clearly in another secret letter of the Resident Niger Province to District Officers of February 17\textsuperscript{th} 1947.

The object of this memorandum is to impress upon all administrative officers the fact, already strongly emphasized by His Honour, that the political side of the their activities has, since the war, \textit{assumed an importance never before exceeded even in the early years of the British occupation}. For an officer to report that nothing at all of political significance has occurred during the month is almost tantamount to a confession that this side of his duties has been neglected…as is obvious to all of us, we have reached a major turning point in the history of the country. On the one hand we wish to further a vast scheme of development to the accomplishment of constitutional changes of outstanding importance, on the other we find ourselves faced with a state of political and industrial unrest never before approached. Until an answer can be found to the latter problem we cannot hope to maintain the life of the country at a reasonable level still less develop it into something better (emphasis mine).

To all practical purpose, the colonial state interpreted the period immediately after World War II in Northern Nigeria as a state of war that constitutes a greater threat that initial conquest. This growing articulation of opposition to the colonial state however had neither coherence nor an organizational structure. NEPA was disbanded, and its members dismissed from government and NA service shortly thereafter. Until 1950 therefore, opposition to colonial rule remained less formally structured. It depended more on individual challenges, and even at that fairly incoherent. That changed with the formation of NEPU in 1950.

The establishment of NEPU in Kano on August 8\textsuperscript{th} 1950 had a tremendous impact in spurring and coordinating anti-colonial and anti Native authority opposition. Several currents were responsible for this, one of which was a series of complaints with the management of the Zaria and Kano railways of which two central problems at stake. The first was the practices of railway officials in weighing and transporting peasant produce from the north to the Southern parts of Nigeria. Peasant produce was often overweighed in order to extract more transport dues,
and in a number of instances peasants’ produce had been confiscated without justification.\textsuperscript{57} The second was the wages paid to railway porters. The person responsible for popularizing these was Abdullahi Dan Jaji. In addition to these issues, Musa Kaula drew attention to the oppressive regime of the United Africa Company in the purchase of cotton, groundnuts and hides and skins from peasants, and in particular the low prices at which commodities were purchased. Magaji Danbatta, and more specifically Abba Mai Kwaru drew attention to the oppression of peasants by the aristocracy. He attacked traditional ruler for oppressing peasants, and linked this oppression with the active support they received from the colonial administration. The most visible form of this oppression raised was the being the confiscation of farmlands and houses, labour conscription on both colonial projects and on the estates of the aristocracy. Mudi Spikin came, and began a series of poems against the colonial state, and especially against the aristocracy that were to become critical weapons in the ideological battle between NEPU and NPC. These individuals were instrumental in putting up these issues for discussion among social circles especially among the youth in northern cities especially in Kano, Zaria, Jos, and Katsina.

At this stage however there was no formal organization or structure through which these ideas could be articulated. The organization came in August 1950, and it was Bello Ijumu who suggested setting up an organization through which to mobilize people and articulate the social condition of peasants and generally talakawa under colonial rule. This development should however be seen in close relation to developments at the Jos convention of the NPC during which the party shed its radical members, and thus Aminu Kano and the more radical members in the NPC left the party in 1950.\textsuperscript{58} Its objectives, programmes, ideology and membership were radically different from the NPC’s. It membership was drawn mainly from teachers, itinerant traders, artisans, peasants, and other classes. Its programme could not be further from NPC’s. NEPU wanted a radical transformation of northern Nigerian society, and such transformation must begin by the destruction of its foundations: the ‘sarauta system.’ In the seven-point Sawaba Declaration it issued in 1950, the destruction of the ‘sarauta system’ was the highlight of its quest for the emancipation of commoners in Northern Nigeria and for building a pan-Nigerian postcolonial state. For NEPU this system is the main mechanism through which the

\textsuperscript{57} Alhaji Shuaibu Ibrahim Danjuma, Aged 69, Interviewed in Zaria on January 3rd, 1999. This account is similar to that given by Alhaji Lawan Danbazau, strong NEPU member and its Legal Secretary until its dissolution in 1966. The account was given in his book Tarihin Gwagwarmayar NEPU da PRP ( 1982).

\textsuperscript{58} Accounts such as those of Whitaker and Dudley seem to make much of the threat by the Sokoto delegation to pull out of the NPC if Aminu Kano was given any position of substance in the Executive Committee of the Party. Though Aminu Kano is known to the Sokoto Establishment as a radical during his teaching years at the Maru Teacher’s College. This factor counts less in significance than the irreconcilable differences between the radical and more right wing adherents of the party that was increasingly becoming apparent in the
repression of peasants as well as the extraction of their produce was organized and executed. Thus the seven-point declaration notes that the goal of political activity was the economic development and total emancipation of the talakawa. NEPU further observes that:

the shocking state of social order as at present existing in Northern Nigeria is due to nothing but the family compact rule of the so-called Native Administration in their present autocratic form. That owing to this unscrupulous and vicious system of administration by the family compact rulers and which has been established and fully supported by the British imperialist government, there is today in our society an antagonism of interest, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between the members of that vicious circle of Native Administration on the one hand and the ordinary Talakawa on the other…that this antagonism can be abolished only by the reform of the present autocratic political institutions into democratic institutions and placing their democratic control in the hands of the Talakawa for whom alone they exist…that at present, the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation exist only to conserve the privilege of this selfish minority group, the Talakawa must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of Government - both nationally and locally - in order that this machinery of government, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation, and the overthrow of the bureaucracy and autocratic privilege.

NEPU’s programme was comprehensive, and it was against not just native administrations and the autocratic rule of emirs and a privileged few. Its articulation of the anti-colonial struggle in anti-imperialist, pan-Nigerian and nationalist terms meant it was also against regionalism, and the political isolation of the north that was imposed by the spatial fragmentation of the country by colonization at least this was the general interpretation given to its actions.. And it is precisely on the myth of Northern Nigerian exclusiveness that colonial power continued to reproduce itself. Furthermore, by declaring itself against regionalism and autocratic power, NEPU for the first time posed a very serious threat to the whole colonial project. This threat became even more serious in view of NEPU’s efforts to build alliances within and between regions.

In response to the growing strength of NEPU and its perceived threat to pre-colonial power structures, the colonial government began a programme that could ensure the preservation of the whole system rather that risk its collapse. This was not a remote spectre. This was fairly the same situation that was developing in Ghana, and the British did not want a repeat performance. This reform programme consisted of four policy initiatives. The first involved disciplining ultra-conservative emirs through their deposition as happened with the Emir of

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various attempt by the party to court the aristocracy. Indeed differences between the two wings have been festering for some time, and only came to a head during the convention.  

Second and closely related is the reform of NA administrations that was initiated by the NPC in the motion tabled by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in the Northern House of Assembly in 1950, what many conservatives saw as the most openly radical right-wing challenge to the power of Emirs since colonial conquest. The third policy initiative was the expansion of the administrative and surveillance capacity of the state in gathering and providing Emirs, NAs, and other local authorities intelligence about opposition groups both in the North and in the South. Thus the training of the NA police and judiciary was intensified, the interpretation of Islamic law into Common law was hastened, and new structures of monitoring and controls were instituted. Finally, the colonial state began a smear campaign against all ‘potential threats’ to traditional rule through ‘framing.’ Indeed this tool was to become so effective that NEPU activists are seen as no better than ‘dogs,’ and certainly as infidels in certain quarters in northern Nigeria even as late as today. Thus in a secret memo to all Residents in 1954, the Secretary to the Northern Nigerian Government laid down the processes for dealing with the growing opposition in the following terms:

Native Authorities should be made aware of the best means of tackling the problem, and be given background information, in their capacities as Native Authorities, as to the personalities and past histories of these peripatetic pests, an appreciable proportion of whom have criminal records. It should, in this way, be possible to build up a technique whereby this growing menace can be met. This can not be done by judicial process alone (emphasis added).

The threat NEPU was perceived as constitution was not just the issue of a struggle between it and traditional rulers. From NEPU’s point of view, it was fundamentally a struggle between the forces of oppression and injustice on the one hand, and those of liberation on the other. The full extent of the oppression of NEPU by the state apparatuses at the local level would probably never be completely documented. Throughout Northern Nigeria and especially in Kano, Katsina,

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60 The colonial state had to do this, for in the 1950’s, many prominent members of the conservative NPC were pushing for reforms. Thus to forestall the possibility of this group and the NEPU closing ranks to fight a common enemy, the state had to dethrone some of the emirs. See Alhaji Mahmoud Yakubu Coercing Old Guard Emirs in Northern Nigeria: The Abdication of Yakubu III of Bauchi, 1954 African Affairs 92 (1993), Pp. 593-604. Yahaya argues to the contrary that these depositions were meant to streamline and rationalize NA administration, something which Sherwood-Smith vigorously pursued. But surely, one must acknowledge the fact that the objective of these reforms was not a question of raising the efficiency of NA administrations, but of putting them in a greater shape to assume power and to defuse the challenge to the emirate system which anti-colonial struggles posed.

61 Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau (Herein after WJHCB) SOKCLASS 1/ BOX 1/ P.12/ No. C 337.

62 A frame is defined as an ‘interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the “world out there” by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within ones present or past environment.’ Snow and Robert Benford Master Frames and Cycles of Protest in Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (Eds.) Frontiers of Social Movement Theory (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) p. 137. Both states and social movements develop frames to define in or define out certain experiences and persons in order to justify a given course of action. The quotation in note 35 above is a classic example of the framing of NEPU and others opposed to traditional rule and the colonial state as “peripatetic pests” and “criminals.” See also Sidney Tarrow Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and J. Craig Jenkins and Bert Klandermans (Eds.) The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements, Volume 3 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

63 WJHCB/CLASS 1/ BOX 1/ P/2/ No. 36.

64 WJHCB/CLASS 1/ BOX 1/ P/2/ No. 5.
Sokoto, Zaria, Bornu and Niger Provinces, the suppression of NEPU in response to its struggle against the oppression of peasants was both a political and religious duty by the local state apparatuses.

Colonization expanded and deepened the structures of surveillance and the control of the peasantry through the system of Native Administrations. The control of the peasantry through NAs has been discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, and need not be recounted here. The main issue though, is the violence of Native Authorities in their attempt to keep the peasantry under control, most notably through both direct action and indirectly through organizations that have the potential for mobilizing it. The persecution of NEPU activists was one such action, and was seen as a kind of duty for two basic reasons. On the one hand NEPU’s opposition to traditional rulers was, and in some places still is considered sacrilegious. The legitimacy of Caliphal power structure derives in part from the argument of the ruling classes that their forbears founded the Caliphate and ruled this part of Nigeria up to the colonial conquest.65 This rule has been based on Islam, and the argument is that what constitutes Northern Nigeria today is so precisely due to the efforts of the Jihadists. The Caliphal ruling classes therefore consider themselves as heirs to a tradition of state building that stretches as far back as 1804. Any challenge to this is taken as opposition against not just the Caliphate and its leaders, but also against Islam in general.

6. Conclusion

Control over peasant production was the most dominant issue in the formation of the postcolonial state in Northern Nigeria. Processes of that control were worked out in the articulation between pre-colonial hegemonic structures and colonialism in such a way that violence became more pronounced through the local state apparatuses of the Native Administrations, than through formal repressive apparatuses of the colonial state. There were concrete constrains for this. One is the sheer territorial breadth of the area, the existence of a centralized pre-colonial state apparatus, and the history of peasant resistance in the form of Mahdist organizations and movements. Control of the peasantry depended on certain structures, the foundations of which were the transformation of the ruling class into the highly bureaucratized structure that became the local arm of the colonial state structure.66 Such a measure no doubt required strengthening certain elements of the pre-colonial state, and the various laws and ordinances were part of the process of the establishment of this structure. For

65 John N. Paden
the colonial state, any threat to its control over peasant production constitutes a serious security issue. Challenges to its control of peasant production started when nationalist and anti-colonial movements began mobilizing the peasantry to assert itself against the oppression of the pre-colonial state structures to which it is aligned. The state’s response to this challenge to its authority depended on the deployment of the local state apparatuses that had the organizational reach to control the lives of most rural people. Violence as a consequence was pronounced more in the rural than in the urban areas. The whole structure was thus designed to construct customary power: a system of power in which local emirs or chiefs became the direct instruments of control over the peasantry.

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