"States of Emergency": Armed Youths and Mediations of Islam in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

On November 14, 2013, the U.S. Department of State labeled Boko Haram and a splinter group, Ansaru, operating in northern Nigeria, "foreign terrorist organizations" with links to al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This designation is debatable, since the groups are diffuse, with tendencies to split or engage other armed groups into violent actions, primarily focused on Nigerian national and state politics and the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes. This essay offers two analytic perspectives on "states of emergency" in Nigeria and the affective, violent forms of "justice" that armed young men employed during the 2000 implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes in Kano State, important contexts for analyses of militant groups such as Boko Haram or Ansaru. One analysis is meant to capture the expressive aspects of justice, and the other presumes a-priori realms of public experience and understanding that mediate the suffering and the cultural, religious, and political forms of justice Muslim youths draw upon to make sense of their plight. Based on eight years of ethnographic research in northern Nigeria, I suggest the uneasy reliance in Nigeria on secular *and* religious legalism *as well as* on extrajudicial violence to assure "justice" (re)enacts real-virtual experiences of authorized violence as "justice" in Nigeria's heavily mediated publics.

On November 14, 2013, the U.S. Department of State labeled Boko Haram and a splinter group, Ansaru, operating in northern Nigeria, "foreign terrorist organizations" with links to al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This designation is debatable, since the groups are diffuse, with tendencies to split or engage other armed groups into violent actions, primarily focused on Nigerian national and state politics and the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes (Adesoji, 2010; Last, 2009; Loimeier, 2012; Umar, 2012). In northern Nigeria, Muslim youths seeking economic and community footholds amidst high rates of inflation and political instability are frequently persuaded to fight over political differences, often framed as "ethnic," "religious," or "regional" conflicts, and to steal or traffic drugs, women, and arms (Casey, 2013). They may join *'yan daba*, urban ward gangs that incorporate Muslim youths of diverse ethnic backgrounds from across northern Nigeria, who, through hunting and warrior traditions, have historical links to anti-colonial Islamic religious politics (Casey, 2007, 2010a, 2010b; 'Dan Asabe, 1991). These youths, highly skilled in the uses of weaponry and *tauri* (ritual herbal medicines against piercings from weapons) have ambiguous roles in Muslim communities since they are employed by political and religious leaders to strong-arm public opinion. In 1999 and 2000, *'yan daba* in Kano City joined *'yan hisba*, the enforcing wing of the *shari'a* system, to agitate for the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes, threatening to "burn the city down" with smuggled petroleum if the Kano State governor refused to sign the codes into law (Casey, 2008). Once *shari'a* was implemented, however, *'yan hisba* focused on *'yan daba* as the main recipients of their preaching and surveillance. National, ethnic, and regional dimensions of religious ideology and practice became central discourses in a shift from the policing of "un-Islamic practices" to the profiling of "un-Islamic people," an ethnicization of Islam that conflated ethnicity with Islamic "authenticity," differentiating Muslims who supported the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes across Nigeria from those who sabotaged it (Casey, 2008). Predominately Hausa, *'yan hisba* focused on non-Hausa Muslims, such as Muslim Yoruba, the second largest ethnic group of Nigerian Muslims, as a powerful stumbling block to Islamic unity and reform, and in 2004, *'yan hisbah* and *'yan daba* used petrol bombs to kill and injure hundreds of persons in Kano whom they referred to as *arna* (unbelievers), *Kiristoci* (Christians), and *baki* (strangers).[1] Similarly, Boko Haram followers appear to focus on ethnic and regional dimensions of identity in differentiating Muslims they deem orthodox.

The emergence, in the early 2000s, of Boko Haram,[2] which in Hausa means "Western education is forbidden," and its launching of militant operations in 2009 continues a trajectory of violence toward identity-based groups, considered "enemies" of Islam—those who they deem to have diverged from a scriptural interpretation of the Sunna and, thus, to have blocked Islamic unity across Nigeria and the region. Muhammad Yusuf, former student in Kano of Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam, established Boko Haram after bitter disputes with Adam, who stressed the importance of Western secular education for Muslims who wanted to defeat Western imperialists, a belief widely held by the Wahhabi/Salafi-oriented Islamist group Izala (Brigaglia, 2012). Yusuf contended that Western education, brought by British colonial administrators, employment in Nigeria's secular government, and the Western educational system itself, with mixed gendered classrooms, were all *haram* (Umar, 2012). Such debates framed the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes across northern Nigeria, and as Adam's student, Yusuf participated in Kano religious politics before leaving Adam's tutelage in 2003, moving further east to Borno and Yobe States. On April 13, 2007, armed gunmen assassinated Sheihk Ja'afar Adam while he was preaching in the Dorayi Juma'at Mosque in Kano, and two years later, in

2009, Nigerian government troops killed Yusuf, after armed conflict with followers of Boko Haram. Abubakar Shekau became the group's main leader, and since then, Boko Haram followers, who function in fluid networks, factions, and cell-like structures, have attacked the United Nations building in Abuja, Nigerian government offices, and government employees such as police and immigration officers, Christians in churches and on federal university campuses, children in Western secular schools, and Muslims whom they feel have betrayed what they consider a full and strict, literal implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes. Boko Haram followers have also claimed responsibility for the armed robbery of banks and other economic targets, stealing money and property from those whom they have killed, which draws into question the motives and membership of Boko Haram and their alliances with other armed groups. Most recently, on April 14, 2014, government officials blamed Boko Haram for a bombing at a bus depot in Abuja that killed 71 people and for the abduction of 200 girls in a Borno school.

Scholars of Boko Haram focus on its formation in relation to theological disputes and public preaching, tracing the genealogies of Islamic militant sects that are similar to Boko Haram, most notably the followers of Maitatsine, in order to place them within a substantial history of reformist movements in northern Nigeria (Adesoji 2010; Last 2009; Loimeier 2012; Umar 2012). Others point to class divisions and poverty (Amuwo 2013) or to the nexus of economic disparities in Nigerian society, party politics, and the ambivalence of vocal Islamic leaders, who, though not actively engaged in insurrection, have done nothing to stop it (Adesoji 2010, 95). It is important to consider, however, the operations of Boko Haram and other armed groups in relation to the intersections of global, Nigerian national, and regional shifts in security, finance, and media that occurred in the 1990s, and the media refractions of violence against Muslims that make northern Nigerian Muslims feel increasingly vulnerable.

Over the course of ethnographic study, begun in 1991, I worked with doctors and healers of Wahhabi/Salafi, Sufi, and Bori orientations, and I was alerted to the recognition and treatment of *rashin lafiya* (those in ill health) in Kano's medically and religiously diverse communities. These settings allowed me to meet Nigerians of all sectors of society, including youths who had experienced and meted out physical and metaphysical forms of violence. From 2000 through 2002, and again in 2004, my research shifted to the politics of neoliberal capitalism and religious orthodoxies in northern Nigerian patron-client networks, particularly with *'yan daba* (urban ward gang members), *'yan banga* (political vanguard), *'yan farauta* (hunters), *'yan tauri* (people protected through ritual magic against weaponry), and *'yan hisba* (*shari'a* law enforcers). The young people of these groups were heavily involved in national and state politics, and many took part in large-scale identity-based violence. This ethnographic work brought into focus the accumulations of "affective" concepts and enactments of "justice" that armed young men drew upon to justify their violence in "states of emergency," ironically mirroring and meant to "stand in" for government (Casey 2008, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2013; Clarke 2009; Comaroff & Comaroff 2004, 2006; Mbembe 2001).

In this essay, I tentatively offer two analytic perspectives on "states of emergency" and the affective, violent forms of "justice" that armed young men employed during the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes in Kano State, which I consider important contexts for analyses of militant groups such as Boko Haram or Ansaru. One analysis is meant to capture the expressive aspects of justice, and the other presumes a-priori realms of public experience and understanding that mediate the suffering and the cultural, religious, and political forms of justice Muslim youths draw upon to make sense of their plight. My argument does not excuse or justify

violence or attempt to explain the motivations for diffuse groups operating under the Boko Haram or Ansaru name, but rather, it engages the everydayness of concepts of "justice," strong desires for a "just" society, and the use of violence to enforce "justice" when legal mechanisms and governance has failed. My research suggests the uneasy reliance in Nigeria on secular *and* religious legalism *as well as* on extrajudicial violence to assure "justice" (re) enacts real-virtual experiences of authorized violence as "justice" in Nigeria's heavily mediated publics. My research also asks, given the temporal and spatial dimensions of Nigeria's publics, and the centralization and dispersal of authority in the 1990s and early 2000s, what are the meanings of "justice" for Muslim youths in northern Nigeria? How does "affective justice," operating in policy, law, popular justice mechanisms, political, economic networks, and reforming publics, enter into imaginaries and actions of "democracy" or *shari'a* as a democratic system? How do concepts of justice relate to the anti-democratic positions of Boko Haram and Ansaru?

Generation and Justice

"We were made to be criminals, not because of what we have done, but because of what we stand for."—graffiti by "Justice," a *daba* leader in Kano

Murray Last (2005, p. 37) has identified four periods during which Muslim youths have come to power in northern Nigeria within the last two hundred years: "with the Sokoto jihad of 1804-1808, at the time of the British colonial takeover ca. 1900-10, in the 1950s, with the advent of party politics in the run-up to independence, and recently, when local government councils and the enforcement of *shari'a* law started being largely run by "the young."' In Kano State, traditional youth groups within *'yan farauta* (hunters) and *'yan tauri*, a warrior class from the colonial era, emphasize bravery and skill with weaponry and *tauri* ritual protection. During colonial occupation, joining these groups was banned, but the groups continued illicitly as forms of youth development, entertainment, and economic survival. The roles of the youths belonging to these groups changed during the 1950s with the emergence of partisan politics in northern Nigeria ('Dan Asabe 1991). The leaders of an opposition party, faced with harassment and arbitrary arrests by the Native Authority policemen, recruited hunters as body guards (*'yan banga*). Other parties followed suit, and fighting between *'yan banga* of different parties became routine. In 1966, the army took over and banned all partisan politics, eliminating most *'yan banga* activities in the process. By 1978, the ban lifted, emerging parties once again recruited *'yan banga* from *'yan farauta* and ward *'yan daba*, and conflicts resurfaced ('Dan Asabe 1991). The religious politics that preceded the 1999-2000 implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes, similar to these earlier periods, drew upon the strength of youths—particularly *'yan hisbah* and *'yan daba*, who were initially united in their fight against elitism and political corruption.

Re-configurations in global finance, security, and media communications, and post-military transitions to "democracy" in the 1990s opened new possibilities for Nigerian national and state neoliberal and religious reforms to policy and law. However, as authorities at federal and state levels seized upon the signs, resources, and publics they wished to restructure, they created new power centers in the gaps between the legal and illegal, the legal and ethical, the religious and the secular, and the state and the non-state with oscillations of democratic and autocratic authority (Casey, 2008, 20009, 2013; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2004). Heavily mediated images and events of 9/11 and its aftermath—of the World Trade Center bombings and the reprisal U.S. bombings in Afghanistan and Iraq—amplified "affective" forms of justice as political publics engaged global and Nigerian national media refractions of injustice and

violence. Media refract, channel, and repeat "affective information," fracturing and instantiating the appearance of continuity and of the temporal, spatial, and affective referents between authorizing political centers and publics.

Mediations of (in) justice prior to the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes attached temporal and spatial referents to Islamic reformism through print, broadcast, and Internet-based depictions of the political struggles of Nigerians such as Shehu Usman 'dan Fodio, Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, Mallam Isma'il Idris, and Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, as well as such scholars as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab from 18th century Arabia and Ibn Taymiyya (d.14th century), Sudan's Hasan al-Turabi, and Iranians such as Ayatollah Murtadha Mutahhari, protégé of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. These key figures inspired young Muslims across Nigeria "to establish the rule of the oppressed" (Sanusi, 2006) in local-global reformist protests and networks to produce political change.

Persistent conflicts about whether to sanction the religious history and mystical traditions that predated the Islamic jihad became the norm. Litigation between *'yan Bori* (adherents of a syncretism of animism and Islam) became common, focusing on the "genuineness" and "originality" of *'yan Bori* and their capacity to represent Hausa "traditional culture." There were complex patterns of conflict, for *Bori*, as a traditional culture, was tolerated and protected by the Sufi emirate yet condemned by Wahhabi/Salafi and reformist Sufi Muslims. Factional fighting among Muslims found momentum during the late 1970s and 1980s from the well-known Qur'anic scholar Abubakar Gumi. Gumi took inspiration from Muhammad Ibn al-Wahhab, an eighteenth century scholar who eschewed all *bida* (innovation) and called for a return to the pure teachings of the Prophet while encouraging a more liberal use of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) (Hunwick 1997, p. 33). Gumi fought most explicitly against Sufism. According to Gumi, Sufi orders did not exist at the time of Muhammad the Prophet, and the Prophet did not conceal any part of the revelation during his lifetime to be delivered to those who came after him (Westerlund, 1997, p. 310). He condemned the worship of saints and spirits, the use of charms or amulets, and the use of drums in mosques, all of which are considered *shirk* (associating partners such as humans or *jinn* with Allah through the use of magic) or *bida* (innovation).

Wahhabi/Salafi inspired scholar-healers considered *'yan Bori* to be "fallen Muslims" or descendants of Sufis who broke away from mainstream Muslim sects during the 14th century over the use magic. Salafi Muslims suggested that *'yan Bori* misinterpreted the ideas and practices of the Prophet Sulayman by claiming that he had used magic himself, thereby legitimizing its use.[3] Such conflicts placed the definitions and uses of *bida* and *shirk* at the heart of factional fighting and concepts of blasphemy.

'Yan daba, *'yan tauri*, and *mafarauta* (hunters), who were typically Sufi or *'yan Bori*, formed alliances with *'yan* Bori and had ambivalent, if not hostile feelings about Wahhabi/ Salafi- inspired *'yan Izala*, the popular name of Gumi's followers. A *'dan tauri* said:

> Now, *mafarauta* (hunters), *'yan* Izala, and a businessman will all seek to find *tauri* medicine. Before, *'yan* Izala condemned these practices, but now it is a lie. During the Kaduna crisis, there was one *'dan Izala* who really fought. He sent a car asking for *tauri* medicine, but nobody sent it to them. They used to condemn the practices of wearing amulets and drinking *rubutu*. They said these are all blasphemy, but, Allah says, 'Stand up, and I will help you.'[4]

Factional fighting between *'yan Izala*, Sufis, and *'yan Bori* intensified with the 1992 death of Abubakar Gumi and the splintering of his movement, *Izala*, into several movements with varying

tolerances for a secular state (Hunwick 1997; Kane 2003; Loimeier 1997, 2012; Umar 1993, 2012).

The Muslim Students' Society (MSS) members, many of whom had previous *Izala* affiliations, advocated Muslim unity by promoting austerity and feminism in their anti-elite rebuke of Sufi leadership. The Muslim Students' Society split into the pro-Saudi, *Wahhabi/ Salafi*-inspired *Da'wa*, or missionary movement (Brigaglia, 2012), which provided free education, social services, and spirit exorcisms (Casey 2008), converting humans and spirits from Sufism to *Salafism*, and the pro-Iranian *Umma* (Ibrahim 1991), which took a firm stance on the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes and the establishment of an Islamic state. The *Umma* split again into the *Hodabiya*, which favored some accommodation with a secular state, and *'yan Shia*, who, inspired by the *mujahidin* struggle in Afghanistan and Islamic state formation in Iran, preached no compromise with the secular state (Hunwick 1997, p. 39). Western-educated Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, was an early opponent of the idea of re-implementing *shari'a* criminal codes in Kano. But, the U.S. George W. Bush administration's "war on terrorism" and international criticism of the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes angered El-Zakzaky, who began appearing frequently in Nigerian and global media to speak out against the U.S. Bush administration's "war on terrorism" as a "war on Muslims." His followers referred to former President Olusegun Obasanjo as "the U.S.'s boy," complicit with the U.S. in the war on Muslims, and they began to keep track of the numbers of Muslims in federal and military service whom Obasanjo had "retired" (Casey 2008, 2009).

Intra-Muslim conflicts emerged over control of mosques and public space, public preaching, accusations that Sufi imams were partial to the wealthy, and in response to new reformist publications, audiocassettes, and televised and Internet doctrinal and legal disputes (Casey 2008, 2009; Falola 1998; Umar 2012). *'Yan Izala*, in conflict with Sufi adherents, unequivocally presented Muslim authenticity and political morality as best realized through compliance with *shari'a* law, based on the laws of belief and conduct spelled out in the Qur'an and the Hadith, reports of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (Gumi with Tsiga 1992, p. 165). Mohammad Sani Umar (2001, p. 133) notes, "The *Wahhabi/Salafi* espousal of this overwhelming emphasis on the centrality of *shari'a* in Islamic beliefs and practices is comparable to the legal positivism that pervades modernity." Stressing other aspects of modern life—the promotion of social justice and equality, a preference for bureaucratic rules over charismatic authority, universal education, including the education of women, and the provision of social services and amenities—*'yan Izala* converted thousands of Nigerian Muslims to their form of Islamic orthodoxy. The intellectualism of the *Izala* leadership, along with vast funding from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq (prior to the 2003 U.S. War in Iraq) contributed to a rapid explosion of *Izala* publications, radio and television programs, and cassettes, which competed with media from other parts of Nigeria and the world.

With the death of Sheik Gumi in 1992, conflicts within Izala for leadership and direction led to its splintering, largely over the issues of Western education and political authority and power, with second generation Izala taking up preaching and teaching for ideological and economic reasons (Ben Amara, 2011; Kane, 2003; Loimeier, 2012; Umar, 2012). Increasingly, Izala who considered *boko* (Western education) to be haram began to conflate identity, security, and morality in public preaching and media representations of evil, wherein images and acts of terror, seen and unseen, became weapons of violence and justifications for their use (Casey 2008). Impassioned discussions about the effects of *shari'a* law upon Muslims and non-

Muslims, human rights, the constitutionality of *shari'a* criminal codes, and the impact of these codes upon Nigeria as a nation-state led to frequent violence between Christians and Muslims, with more subtle contact avoidances between Muslims. Muslims quickly developed languages, sets of codes, and acts that were meant to signify their participation in democracies, local, national, and global, a framing necessary for their assertion that the implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes as state law was constitutional. This framework, however, also angered Muslim reformists, who insisted that *shari'a* law was not compatible with democracy, the position Abubakar Shekau now asserts in Boko Haram videotapes.

'Yan daba and almajarai

In Kano, *'yan daba* and the young men who were recruited as *hisbah* for the 2000 implementation of *shari'a* criminal codes were age-mates who had grown up with one another in the same neighborhoods. As children, most attended primary school, with Qu'ranic or the broader curriculum of *Islamiyya* taught in school in the afternoons and evenings. *Almajarai*, or youths who come to Kano to study the Qur'an from villages across northern Nigeria, took up scholarship and residence at a neighborhood mosque, where, under the tutelage of a local *malam*, they learned to recite the Qur'an. After studying the Qur'an each morning, *almajarai* were required to beg for food, receiving collective care and admonishment from older children and adults in the neighborhood. Muslim children were taught to control or restrain their consumption of food, their amount of sleep, excessive talking, and emotional expression. Children learned to minimize talk and the expression of their emotions for many different reasons, including *kunya* (shame, shyness; modesty; sense of propriety)—particularly when interacting with people of higher social standing and of a different gender—*ilimi* (religious prohibitions or directives), *tsoro* (fear; nervousness), and *ladabi* (good manners; respect; deference). When children failed to show restraint, respect, or the proper amount of fear, they were teased, verbally abused, or beaten; as such, similar to Christians, Muslim youths learned sociality in association with control and some form of pain (Casey, 2006; Last, 2000).

'Yan daba, whose ranks rose from between fourteen per neighborhood in 1991 ('Dan Asabe, 1991) to between 50 and 200 in the early 2000s, were the main caretakers of younger male siblings and *almajarai*. Like younger siblings, *almajarai* served as errand boys while playing along the borders of local joints. Through *'yan daba* caretaking, *almajarai* formed the main pool of youths from which *'yan daba* recruited. *Almajarai* moral aesthetics developed through ambiguous attachments to social rituals and daily life at the mosque and to those of *'yan daba* and the *daba* neighborhood street economy.

'Yan daba recruits spoke about getting even with people who had "downgraded" or "underrated" them. Insults and injuries were taken as reenactments of earlier acts, variably related to personal experience and cultural or political abstractions that nonetheless excused violence. Forceful acts of domination were accompanied by outbursts of ribaldry and derision that seemed to mock and mimic officialdom, while creating new forms of officialdom altogether (Mbembe 2001, 102). A *'yan daba*, dressed lavishly in a Muslim-style *riga* (dress), smoking a joint reminiscent of Cheech and Chong, slapped an *almajiri* to the ground for forgetting to say his prayers. Once again, the crowd cheered and laughed. Through the systematic application of pain, *'yan daba* produced fear that "reinforces certain moral values within society" ('Dan Asabe, 1991, p. 99).

'Yan daba spoke of attractions to power, physical and metaphysical, and the fear they would generate through their associations with *daba*. Recruits said they were impressed with *'yan daba* fighting, a form that uses two sticks, enabling users to beat opponents who are larger or stronger. They said they were impressed with the money and clothes *'yan daba* flaunted, their party lifestyles, and with the girls they dated. One recruit said he became impressed with the collective nature of *daba* hemp smoking because "people are afraid of *'yan daba* who are high, so they don't follow or meet them with useless talk." *Daba* recruits feared older members, who used *tauri* medicines and performed the ritual acts and prohibitions that made them seemingly invulnerable. Older *'yan daba* enjoyed frightening married women into staying home. The felt and expressed qualities of fear and respect emerged as an entanglement with what Mbembe (2001, p. 102) refers to as the "banality of power," part of which is a "distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion, as well as by distinctive ways identities are multiplied, transformed, and put into circulation."

'Yan daba self-identified with neighborhoods, hanging out in particular joints, but they shifted among modes of violent opposition to other neighborhoods, tolerant separation, and eclecticism. They identified with *'yan farauta,* particularly men from 'Yadda 'Kwari and Kura, whom they considered expert hunters, *tauri* ritualists, and fighters. Nonetheless, this relationship was tenuous, and in some cases, another source of *'yan daba* marginalization. For instance, a *mafarauci* (hunter) from 'Yadda 'Kwari described *daba* as

> …an acquired habit, not a profession or tradition…. Stealing, drinking, smoking hemp, and general anti-social behavior is not the culture or subculture of hunters…. What is paining us is that these groups of *'yan tauri* and *'yan daba*, even in the eyes of the law and the Emir, they see them as hunters, which is not so. To us, *'yan daba* are hooligans.[5]

While predominately Muslim Hausa, *'yan daba* also incorporated youths of other ethnic and religious backgrounds. *'Yan daba* often took non-Hausa words, like scorpion or pusher, or words combining Hausa with references to people elsewhere, such as kayaman (regge man) or Takur Sahib (person who has a leader in India) as street names. *'Yan daba* adopted a style of dress they associated with "Westside niggers," or Los Angeles-based rappers. In their sunglasses, chains, and baggy jeans, *'yan daba* showed a broad interest in youth cultures from around the world, questioning me, through whirls of Indian hemp, about the impact of rappers like Tupac Shakur and the revolutionary politics of his Black Panther mother.

'Yan daba served as the vanguard, or bodyguards, for local political and religious leaders, earning the major part of their incomes from politically motivated thuggery, but they were also involved in non-political, non-religious criminality, selling Indian hemp and smuggled petroleum, pharmaceuticals, and used clothes. *'Yan daba* who participated in violence were typically the leaders of a *daba* and the inner core of members, who have *zuciya* (heart) for their *dabas* and for particular political and religious leaders. This inner core of *'yan daba* differentiated themselves from the majority of *'yan daba*, who restricted their *daba* involvement to business. Business-oriented *'yan daba* supported the inner core by paying them a portion of their earnings for protection. When attacked, however, business-oriented *'yan daba* often joined those with *zuciya* to defend their neighborhood and businesses.

Though *'yan daba* had played an integral part in forcing Kano State Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso to implement *shari'a* criminal codes, and *'*y*an daba* and *hisbah* considered *shari'a* law to be a democratic form of governance, *'*y*an daba* and *hisbah* differed in the emotional attachments they had to democratic values. *Hisba* tended to equate *shari'a* with a democracy of

majority rules, while *'yan daba* emphasized social justice and individual human rights. For instance, a member of *hisbah* said:

> We are a democracy. We are the majority. And, the Islamic injunction is superior to any other injunction. So they say it's a government of the people, for the people, by the people—Abraham Lincoln, American President…since this is a democracy, we can use it (*shari'a*) as a political weapon, to make sure that someone who is conscious of *shari'a* is elected.[6]

By contrast, a response I commonly heard among *'yan daba* is reflected by the statement:

> We are all Muslims. *Shari'a* will help us to know each other better. In this way, crimes will be reduced, and the rich and poor will be the same under the law.[7]

'Yan daba described their hopes for jobs and schooling, for health care, and for personal reforms in behaviors such as their use of alcohol (i.e. forms of idealism reflected in wider discourses of support for *shari'a* criminal codes). However, alongside these public narratives of support for *shari'a*, *'yan daba* activities revealed mistrust, feelings of betrayal, and anger. A *'dan daba* who was a strong supporter of *shari'a* said:

> We can stop our activities perhaps…, but you should remember that if a person is just killed without committing any offense, do you think if the *shari'a* doesn't do anything about it that we will let the matter rest? To me, you cannot give advice to *'yan daba* after such a thing…. The *shari'a* says if you kill a man, you should be killed too. So why should you kill and not be killed?[8]

Media and violence

The 1999 presidential election of Olusegun Obasanjo and de-militarization, the lack of effective police and state security forces, and a sharp increase in armed robberies further exacerbated political conflicts, fueling the formations of what the Nigerian media referred to as "vigilantes," "tribal" or "ethnic militias," or "religious armies" (Pratten & Sen 2007). Among such formations, the predominately Igbo Bakassi Boys in eastern Nigeria, the militant wing of the Yoruba Odua'a People's Congress (OPC) in the south and southwest (Akinyele, 2001), and *'yan daba* in northern Nigeria reflected, produced, and acted out physical and metaphysical insecurities as identity politics, refracting geographical affiliation, language, ethnicity, and religion into fetishized cultural codes of belonging. Global and national religious networks, Muslim and Christian, placed additional pressure on refractions of Nigerian identities by linking charity with evangelism, spirit exorcisms, and conversions, which produced additional insecurities at physical and metaphysical levels.

Many journalists considered the O'odu'a People's Congress (OPC), the Bakassi Boys, and *'yan daba* to be mercenaries navigating a fragmented political space, but these groups, wittingly or not, were tied to larger political and cultural associations. For instance, the lead story in the Muslim-funded *Weekly Trust* (August 4-10, 2000) described *'yan daba* as a future Islamic Army:

> The *'Yan daba*, a reserve army of unemployed youths, have acted in ways that suggest that they can metamorphose into a tribal army someday. In 1999, when Hausa residents of Sagamu town in Ogun State had a clash with their Yoruba hosts, it was the *'Yan daba* group that organized a reprisal attack against Yoruba residents in Kano. (p. 1-2)

In the 2000s, media stories like this one progressively denuded local incidents and disputes of their particulars of context, aggregating such stories by narrowing their detail. Affective

dimensions of violence were further complicated by ethnic and religious exclusions, ideas about a collective predestiny, and whether violence, under today's circumstances, is an appropriate form of *jihad* (holy war). A *'dan daba* described the complexities of religious affiliation as *'yan daba* mobilized for violence, saying:

> ...[I]f there's a fight between Muslim Brothers and Tijaniyya or between Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya, it's the *'yan daba* within these groups that will fight, but if there's a fight between Muslims and non-Muslims, all *'yan daba* will get involved in the fight, to help their Muslim brothers in the name of Muslim brotherhood, to fight in the name of Islam.[9]

While at a conscious level, *'yan daba* articulated ethnic and religious unity, not all or even most of Kano's *'yan daba* participated in the reprisal killings of Yoruba. As with other large-scale conflicts, *'yan daba* who lived in the most ethnically mixed neighborhoods of Kano were responsible for the killings.

In northern Nigeria, Hausa ethnicity and the Muslim religion are conflated because of the predominance of Muslim Hausa. By contrast, about half of all Yoruba are Muslim, such that the categories of ethnicity and religion function more readily as independent sources of identification. In an interview about Muslim Yoruba killing Muslim Hausa in Lagos (*Weekly Trust*, October 20-26, 2000), the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs was quoted as saying:

> ...We have too many nominal Muslims in the south who are ignorant of their religion.... *They can be* used by some other people who think that *shari'a* is a monster which they must attack.

Similarly, Muslim scholar Ado-Kurawa (2000, p. 273) describes the denigration of southern Muslims as a ploy by Christian Yoruba to separate the north and south:

> For several years, the fanatical Christian Yoruba tribalists have led a propaganda campaign against northern Muslims, the idea being to isolate and demonize northern Muslims, thereby making them ready targets for extermination by all other Nigerians. (p. 273)

According to Ado-Kurawa (2000), the Christian Yoruba-controlled media, backed by Christian imperialists, are the main force behind the anti-*shari'a* propaganda. With the 2003 Bush administration's War in Iraq, anti-American media reports became increasingly common; the authors of these reports argued the need for *shari'a* as a way for Muslims to separate— physically, psychically, economically—from "infidels," especially Nigerian Christians and imperialists, but also from "marginal" Muslims, who break spiritual-political unity, increasing enmity between Muslims of different ethnic and regional backgrounds. Muslim journalists highlighted the arrogance and brutality of the U.S. bombings in Iraq, holding Americans responsible for untold deaths and destruction. They recounted the plight of Palestinians and the need for Muslims to fight against social injustice. Osama bin Laden stickers began to adorn Kano buses, while hundreds of youths joined the *hisba* and wider networks of separatist Muslims.

When asked what would happen if the OPC came to Kano, a *'dan tauri*, heading a group of *'yan daba* said:

> They would be finished. If our leaders or the authorities give us the go ahead, Lagos is not far. We can go in buses or trailers to meet them…. They have guns, but I swear the guns will not work (because of *tauri* herbal medicine and ritual practice)…. Can you recall how many hours we were in Kaduna? Didn't they have different types of guns? The infidels were going to kill people, but Kanawa (people of Kano) took away the

guns.[10]

Memory and the crises of representation

Residents of Kano were quick to tell me about the horrors of the Kaduna crisis in 2000, which left hundreds dead and literally split the city into a Muslim north and Christian south. They related it to remembrances of an incident in 1999, when Yoruba residents of Sagamu, a town in the southwestern part of Nigeria, killed their Hausa friends and neighbors, many of whom were from Kano.

On August 6, 1999, the Muslim-backed *Weekly Trust* reported:
> The battleground was the Sabo area of Sagamu, where the Hausas live. Scores of houses and the mosque in this area were razed to the ground. The Hausa community in this Yoruba town was besieged by Yoruba warriors for days, with machetes and dane guns, with results not difficult to imagine.

Residents in Kano asked me if I had heard that Muslim Hausa *'yan daba* carried out reprisal attacks in Kano, killing their Yoruba friends and neighbors.

Media reports of the Yoruba and Hausa conflicts in Sagamu preceded the arrival of a truck carrying the bodies of victims back to their families in Kano. The emotional recollections of what happened failed to tally with southern news reports, which *'yan daba* felt were deliberate misinterpretations of the conflict meant to pin the blame on Muslim Hausa. One *'dan daba* said, "We wouldn't have felt as much if it had been just the news, but when we saw the bodies, our emotions were high." A *'dan tauri* said:
> After the fighting, they put the casualties and our dead people in a truck and brought the bodies here. It made the temper of our people rise, and they decided to take revenge on the Yorubas who are settled here…in the night, at Kurna Quarters. There are many Yorubas there, and before, they were living in peace, but those people who were brought caused the enmity, and people attacked them (Yoruba) and killed a lot of them and burned their houses.[11]

Some *'yan daba* attempted to minimize their emotion. *'Yan daba* said that expressing emotion is considered a weakness that would leave them open to harm at physical and metaphysical levels. Others tried to isolate themselves to prevent themselves from expressing emotion that would cause further harm. Still others gathered together to attack Yoruba, many of whom they had known since childhood. Adults in Kano expressed increasing fear of what they referred to as "'yan daba* rampages," but there was also a community expectation that *'yan daba* would defend Muslim Hausa against "outsiders," so *'yan daba* experienced both admonishment and encouragement for their aggressiveness and violence. This ambiguity contributed to misreadings of fear and respect and/or to conflations of fear and respect, which *'yan daba* tended to interpret as respect.

"States of Emergency"

Before *shari'a* was introduced, it's supporters, including the majority of *'yan daba*, had been hopeful, even idealistic about *shari'a*, suggesting that its implementation was the only way to restore public security and faith in any Nigerian system of governance. However, after its implementation, *'yan daba* became increasingly marginalized, and a split within the *shari'a* Implementation Committee emerged between Muslims who insisted upon the enforcement of

shari'a criminal codes prior to the establishment of jobs, social services, and provisions for people like *'yan daba* and those who believed that it was impossible for the poor, marginalized, or otherwise disadvantaged to obey *shari'a* law in its entirety without these amenities. This division deepened through the politically motivated enforcement of *shari'a* law; *Shari'a* law was applied to particular groups of people at times integral to the implementation of *shari'a* law; as such, the fairness of its application across social sectors became an immediate point of contention.

The Governor, Dr. Rabiu Kwankwaso, delayed the implementation of *shari'a* law, hoping to have jobs, social services, and other amenities in place before the date of implementation, but he was preempted by *'yan daba* agitation. The deputy governor, Dr. Abdullahi Ganduje, a strong supporter of the *shari'a* implementation, needed *'yan daba* to press the issue with Dr. Kwankwaso, so he turned a blind eye to *'yan daba* hawking blackmarket petroleum, stating, "This is an issue that has come out of scarcity," while favoring the prosecution of all other offences.

By March of 2001, Dr. Ganduje announced an Islamic "state of emergency," referring to the inability of *shari'a*, as it was being practiced in Kano State, to stop "prostitution" and the sale and consumption of alcohol. He led *hisba* on a series of raids to local hotels, restaurants, and "cool spots," where the *hisba* abused patrons, destroying millions of dollars' worth of alcohol. Because Christians owned most of these businesses, these raids bankrupted some, scaring others into a mass exodus of Christians and Muslims who feared increased violence. Establishments stayed indefinitely closed or operated odd hours or with armed guards patrolling the gates. Jokes about "dying for a drink" became a permanent fixture as humor rose to meet increased levels of anxiety. Rumors about the arming of Muslims and Christians came more frequently. In response, Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, the Nigerian Head of State, called Dr. Ganduje to Abuja, stating in public that the deputy governor had endangered Nigerian state security, thus, reframing Kano's "state of emergency" as a national "state of emergency." Debates about the constitutionality of *shari'a* law continued to be assessed by lawyers and the National Assembly, so at the time, the deputy governor of Kano State went home with a mere warning.

The deputy governor's "state of emergency," spawned other forms of Islamic state-preserving "states of emergency." In the summer of 2002, secondary school students were having an end of school party. They were dancing and playing music when *hisba* knocked loudly on the door and began preaching to them about the evils of "mixing" with the opposite sex. According to *hisba* who were present, the students listened respectfully to their preaching yet refused to end their party. *Hisba* left the house, gathered additional *hisba* from a nearby village, and returned to the neighborhood. A few *hisba* tried, once again, to "persuade" the youths to end their party, but they refused. Minutes later, a *hisba* yelled "Allahu Akbar," raising the "passions" of other *hisba*, who rushed down a hill, broke the door to the house, and entered to fight the students. According to students, *hisba* beat them with sticks, stole their watches, and cameras, and broke all the furniture in the house.

A member of *hisba* involved in this raid denied that *hisba* had stolen property but said it was necessary for *hisba* to declare the party an "emergency condition" because "a party is something that happens only from time to time, so you have to make your move." He differentiated this from other crimes like gambling that are daily "habits" that the *hisba* could address on any given day.

When asked about an incident of *hisba* burning down a Christian owned hotel that had been in operation on a daily basis for several years, he said:

They (*hisba*) made a mistake. Any human can make a mistake…. But this *hisba* militant group is here to stay. We have to confront the evildoers. The *hisba* exist and have 100% support from God. Most of the vices committed by poor people…are because of the poor leadership in America, England, and Switzerland. Why did they allow our leaders to go and take our money there?[12]

Hisba also performed an "emergency" destruction of a village house used for spirit possession rituals by a Sarkin Bori living in Kumbotso, a town just outside of Kano. A *hisba* said, "I heard they clashed, and the Bori people slashed some of them with knives, but it is said that Bori has been stopped." Days later, in a village near Kumbotso, the late Umar Sanda, a Sarkin Bori renowned for his healing of *mahaukata* (mad people), held a ritual involving spiritual power called *Kashe Kabewa* (smashing the pumpkin). Several hundred people were attending the ritual, many of whom were *mafarauta*, *'yan tauri*, and *'yan Bori*; as such, even though *hisba* arrived armed in convoys of buses, which served as evidence of financial backing from political or religious elites, they were put down by Umar Sanda's supporters and driven out of the village.

New bodily sensations, perceptions, and thinking emerged as people identified unknown or dangerous others ("infidels," "migrants," "aliens," or people who, because of visual or somatic contact avoidance, participated in making one another "enemies"). On May 11, 2004, *'yan daba* and *'yan hisba* in Kano and its metropolis brutally murdered their neighbors and fellow residents, calling them *arna* (unbelievers), *Kiristoci* (Christians), and *baki* (strangers). The crisis followed several months of communal violence in Plateau State, which Muslim residents of Kano felt had been condoned through the inaction of the Christian Governor of Plateau State, Joshua Dariye, and the Christian President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo. Local media such as the radio and newspapers detailed horrifying experiences of Muslim Hausa victims who had returned to Kano, along with the bodies of their dead relatives. There were passionate and vivid international components—protests over the killing of Palestinian leaders by the Israeli Army and the brutal treatment of prisoners in Iraq by the U.S. Army—that culminated in a public burning of the effigies of Ariel Sharon and George Bush. The language of Muslims and Christians ("indigenes" and "strangers") used to describe the identities of victims and killers, the spiritual and material power associated therewith, and the spatial patterning of the violence led to a conflation of identity, morality, and security, with Nigerian Christians held responsible for the actions of Plateau residents and the Nigerian, United States, and Israeli Presidents. Such conflations of identity, morality, and security and "states of emergency" employed by *'yan daba* and *'yan hisba* to justify their identity-based violence are similar to those we hear from the leaders of Boko Haram and Ansaru today.

Counter-Offensives Multiplied

On May 14, 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a "state of emergency" to fight Boko Haram in the states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. The Nigerian Armed Forces hit hard, with massive assaults not only on Boko Haram bases and strongholds, killing fighters, but also women and children. This heavy-handed approach, reinforced by the U.S. State Department's "terrorist designations," is widely criticized by human rights organizations, and it is more likely to encourage recruits into armed conflict than to resolve large-scale identity-based violence. It is a mirroring and escalation of violence that Abubakar Shekau uses in video images of government

killings to suggest that the federal government is colluding with states such as Plateau in attempts to "ethnically cleanse" Muslims. In videography, Shekau calls not only on Nigerian Muslims but also on Muslims from Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Syria to join his jihad. Public anger about foreign government and multinational corporate influence in Nigerian national and state politics and about the pressures and bribes that came with neoliberal deregulations of capital in the 1990s finds resonance with mediations of inequities and injustices across the Middle East and North Africa. Such heavily mediated, "affective" responses to global (in) justices perpetrated by nation-states and multinational corporations that consolidate financial and military power to control energy, food, and water resources weigh heavily on Nigerians, prompting concern about petroleum security and political access to oil "revenue sharing" through state governments (Apter, 2005; Guyer & Denzer, 2013). Muslims in Nigeria and elsewhere who consider the U.S. "war on terrorism" to be a "war on Muslims" and a "war for oil" may consider recruitment into anti-American Islamist groups such as Boko Haram. With a broken judicial system, no prosecutions of violence against identity-based groups, and government killings of civilians, many young Nigerians find alignments with armed patron-client networks and voting blocks to be a form of security and struggle for justice (Casey 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013). The uneasy reliance in Nigeria on secular *and* religious legalism *as well as* on extrajudicial violence to assure "justice" (re) enacts real-virtual experiences of authorized violence as "justice," resulting in endless states of emergency.

Acknowledgements

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[1] The majority of residents living in Kano identify themselves as Muslim Hausa or Muslim Hausa-Fulani. Current use of the term, Hausa, extends beyond ethnicity to describe cultural and language communities on both sides of the Niger/Nigeria border.

[2] Boko Haram is the popular name for *Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-da'wa wal-Jihād (The Congregation of the People of the Sunna for Proselytism and Jihad)*, established by Muhammad Yusuf in the early 2000s.

[3] In 1995, Wahhabi scholar-healers began mass exorcisms of Muslims they believed to be spirit-possessed. They used Abu Philips' translation of *Ibn Taymeeyah's Essay on The Jinn (Demons)* as a guide to their work.

[4] Interview with a *'dan tauri* on November 5, 2000, in 'Kura, a town situated between the cities of Kaduna and Kano.

[5] Interview with a hunter in 'Yadda 'Kwari on October 26, 2000.

[6] Interview with *'dan hisba* in Kano on August 12, 2001.

[7] Interview with *'dan daba* in Kano on October 13, 2001.

[8] Interview with *'dan daba* in Kano on February 23, 2000.

[9] Interview with *'dan daba* in Kano on January 29, 2001.

[10] Interview with a hunter on November, 5, 2000, in a town between Kano and Kaduna, with Lagos further south.

[11] Interview with a 'dan tauri in Kano, on October 20, 2000.

[12] Interview with a *'dan hisba* in Kano on August 3, 2001.

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