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Chapter One -Profile

Introduction

British colonial rule grouped a tremendous diversity of cultures and ethnic groups within a set of national borders known as Nigeria. In spite of the efforts of successive post-independence governments to foster a sense of national identity, it remains a work in progress.¹ After lurching from one military-led government to the next, Nigerians have chosen their leaders through elections since 1999. But the country continues to confront problems on how to equitably divide the revenues from its one resource, oil, which is found in just one small corner of the country.



Area

Nigeria is larger than Texas. It shares land borders with the Republic of Benin 773 km (480 mi), Chad 87 km (54 mi), and Cameroon 1,690 km (1050 mi), Niger 1,497 km (930 mi), and borders the Gulf of Guinea, 774 km (480 mi).

A hot, humid coastal belt of mangrove swamp that is as wide as 96 km (60 mi) in some places abuts an 80 to 160 km (50 to 100 mi) expanse of tropical rain forest and oil palm. A higher, drier central plateau region characterized by open woodland and savanna forms the third band. Semi-desert conditions distinguish the dry, hot far north.

Topography

The range in the physical topography of Nigeria is limited. The highest elevations are found along the eastern border of the country, where Vogul Peak, located south of the Benue River, rises to 2,040 m (6,693 ft) above sea level. The Jos plateau, which is located near the center of the country, also has two of Nigeria's highest elevation points; Sphere Hill rises to 1,780 m (5,839 ft) and Wadi Hill rises to 1,698 m (5,570 ft).² Many smaller hills appear "from the ground like mushrooms."³ The plateau also acts as a watershed from which streams flow to Lake Chad and then to the Niger and Benue rivers.

The elevation level declines steadily from the plateau. Northward, the area known as the High Plains of Hausaland consists of a broad swath of sandy plains dotted by rock outcroppings. To the southwest, across the Niger River, the Yoruba Highlands have similar topography, except the rocky dome outcrops are embedded in forest or tall grass. They constitute the primary watershed for rivers flowing on a northward course toward the Niger and southwards to the sea.⁴

¹ Africa Policy Information Center. "Nigeria: Country Profile." April 1997.
<http://www.africaaction.org/bp/nigerall.html>

² African Conservation Foundation. "Profile: Nigeria."
<http://www.africanconservation.org/nigeriaprofile.html>

³ Total. About Nigeria. "Natural Influences: The Landscape, Geology, and Climate of Nigeria."
http://www.ng.total.com/01_about_nigeria/0104_geography.htm

⁴ Much of northern Nigeria, particularly the northeastern quarter, does not lie within the Niger River watershed.

Lowlands of less than 300 m (984 ft) extend inland from the sea for over 250 km (155 mi). They are evident in the trough-like basins of the Niger and Benue rivers. The Rima and Chad basins in the respective far northern corners of the country are also lowland areas. The lowlands are bisected by innumerable streams and rivers that flow through wide sandy valleys. The Nigerian coastline is relatively uniform and exhibits few natural indentations.⁵

Climate

In general, the temperature across Nigeria is high, with an average of about 25°C (77°F). It becomes progressively warmer as one moves northward, although variations are influenced by season and latitude. The rainfall and humidity, by contrast, increase toward the coastal areas.

There are two seasons: wet and dry. They are differentiated by two distinct air masses that blow across the country at different times of the year. One is the moist maritime air that comes from the Atlantic Ocean. It ushers in rainfall which can be heavy on the coast. The other is the hot, dry, dust-laden wind (*harmattan*) that blows from the northeast across the Sahara Desert.⁶ Its impact is greater in the northern half of the country where the dry season lasts longer and there are fewer trees to offset its effects.⁷



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Landscape

The coast extends from the coast to about 150 km (93 mi) inland. Abundant annual rainfall ranges between 1,500 and 3,000 mm (60 to 130 inches), with an average temperature range of 17 to 24°C (62 to 75°F). Relative humidity varies from 60 to 90%. The wet season lasts from March to October while the dry season runs from November to March.

The forest extends some 150 to 240 km (93 to 149 mi) northwards from the coast. Annual rainfall ranges between 1,000 and 1,500 mm (40 to 60 inches). The temperature, which ranges from 21 to 25°C (70 to 77 °F) with a 50 to 80% humidity, is relatively high for most of the year. The dry season is longer, lasting four to five months, in comparison to the equatorial zone where it lasts from October to April.

The savannah lies in the Sudano-Sahelian vegetation area. Rainfall averages 250 to 1,000 mm (10 to 40 in) and temperatures range from 25 to 30°C (77 to 86 °F). Nighttime temperatures may drop lower than the average during the *harmattan*. This region enjoys a

⁵ African Conservation Foundation. "Profile: Nigeria."
<http://www.africanconservation.org/nigeriaprofile.html>

⁶ C.O. Dublin-Green L.F. Awosika and R. Folorunsho.
"Climate Variability Research Activities in Nigeria." 3 February 1999.

http://www.clivar.ucar.edu/publications/other_pubs/clivar_conf/national_reports/clivar_nigeria.htm

⁷ University of Northern Iowa. Nigeria Background Information. "Standard 15: Physical Systems Effects on Humans." <http://www.uni.edu/gai/Nigeria/Background/Standard15.html>

relatively low humidity of 20–40 percent. The dry, hot *harmattan* wind lasts from October to May.

The Sahel has a high annual rainfall of between 1400 and 4000 mm (55 to 157 in), relatively low temperatures ranging between 5 and 20 °C (41 to 68 °F), and high humidity of 30 to 90%.⁸

Rivers

Niger

The Niger River, with a total length of about 4,200 km (2,610 mi), is the third-longest river in Africa after the Nile and the Congo. It carries only a miniscule amount of silt in comparison to the Nile so the water is quite clear. The river is literally subsumed in the Niger Delta where it branches into numerous tributaries that flow around tiny islands before ultimately emptying into the Gulf of Guinea.

Benue

The Benue River is the major tributary of the Niger. It travels 1,400 km (870 mi). During the summer months, it is almost entirely navigable, which makes it an important transportation route for the surrounding communities.

Cities of Northern Nigeria

Kano

Kano is the largest city of northern Nigeria. A wall once surrounded the old city but can still be seen in sections. This wall has continuously represented a physical and cultural barrier between the predominantly Muslim districts and the more recently built parts of the city.⁹

Although the vast majority of the city's population is Muslim, different sects flourish. Sunni Muslim groups include the Qadriyya, the Tijaniyya, the Tariqa, the Malikiya, the Ahmadiya, and the Islamiya.¹⁰ Christians are a tiny minority, approximately one percent of the metropolitan population. They are mostly migrants from other parts of Nigeria who live in their own easily identifiable community known as *Sabon Gari* (foreigners' town).¹¹

⁸ FAO. Ita, E.O. "Aquatic Plants and Wetland Wildlife Resources of Nigeria." 1994.
<http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/T3660E/T3660E01.htm>

⁹ Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany. Department of Anthropology and African Studies. Werthmann, Katja. "A Field Full of Researchers: Field Work as a Collective Experience." 2004.
<http://www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de/workingpapers/WerthmannFieldwork.pdf>

¹⁰ Global Security. "Nigerian Christian/Muslim." 27 April 2005.
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/nigeria-1.htm>

¹¹ BBC News. "Kano: Nigeria's ancient city-state." 20 May 2004.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3708309.stm>

Kaduna

Kada means crocodiles, hence Kaduna is the city of crocodiles. It is the capital of the now defunct Northern Region of Nigeria, one of three administrative entities created after independence. Located at the crossroads of a major railway junction, Kaduna is a marketing center for cotton, livestock, and sorghum.¹²



Sokoto

The name, Sokoto, is of Arabic origin, transliterated from *suk* or “market.” The city was the capital of the Sokoto Caliphate and is an ancient center of Islamic learning in Nigeria. The Sultan chosen to head the caliphate is the spiritual leader for all Nigerian Muslims.¹³

History

Early History

The discovery of Stone Age tools in present-day Nigeria indicates that the area hosted human settlement as early as 40,000 BCE.¹⁴ Nigerian history has diffuse origins because it evolved from a variety of tribal traditions. The several hundred distinct groups who inhabit the region created cultures that reflect differences in geographical conditions, historical traditions, and settlement configurations. Many of the enduring features evident today reflect the dominant influence of the three largest regionally based ethnic groups—the Hausa in the North, the Yoruba in the West, and the Igbo in the East.¹⁵

Of particular significance were the Hausa who set up seven small states centered around *birni*, or walled cities. They exhibited sophisticated forms of organization including markets, skilled craftsmen associations, religious organizations, and residential areas to accommodate foreign traders. Hausa rulers interacted with neighboring states and surrounding ethnic groups through raiding, trade, tribute, strategic and tactical alliances, and warfare.¹⁶

From the 14th century on, the Hausa were subjugated by a succession of West African kingdoms, including the Fulani. The Fulani are Muslims like the Hausa. They began to migrate into Hausa territory in the 13th century. A turning point came in 1804 when an Islamic preacher, Othman dan Fodio, launched a holy war (*jihad*) that led to domination of the northern Hausa city-states. Intermarriage was common. Although the Fulani were the conquerors, they adopted the Hausa language and merged the two ruling classes to create a Hausa-Fulani ethnic group under the rule of the Sokoto Caliphate.

¹² World 66. “Kaduna Travel Guide.” <http://www.world66.com/africa/nigeria/kaduna>

¹³ Cameroonworld. “Sokoto.” <http://www.cameroonworld.com/wiki-Sokoto>

¹⁴ The Economist. “History in Brief.” 15 November 2004.

<http://www.economist.com/countries/Nigeria/profile.cfm?folder=History%20in%20brief>

¹⁵ CIAO Atlas. “Nigeria.” 1991. http://www.ciaonet.org/atlas/countries/ng_data_loc.html

¹⁶ U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, “Nigeria: The Northern Area.” June 1991.

<http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-9376.html>

Some Fulani opted to remain cattle herding nomads. The cattle were shepherded along north-south corridors at times determined by the climatic pattern of dry and rainy seasons. The location and the grazing habits of the Fulani herds were determined in accordance with a pastoral calendar. In the course of creating a nomad agrarian way of life, extensive links throughout the region evolved which established ties between otherwise isolated ethnic communities.¹⁷

Colonial Period

Modern Nigerian history begins with the British conquest and the creation of a British colony in West Africa. The country was named in the 1890s by British journalist Flora Shaw before she became the wife of the first colonial governor Frederick Lugard.¹⁸ Nigeria comes from the the Niger River, the country's dominating physical feature.

British colonial policy was dictated by the need to streamline administrative costs as it annexed pieces of Nigeria in stages in the late nineteenth century. In 1914, the area under their control was enlarged by combining the Northern and Southern Protectorates and the Colony of Lagos. For administrative purposes, it was divided into three units: the Northern Provinces, the Eastern Provinces, and the Western Provinces. The decision to govern through the Hausa *emir* in the North meant that Christian missionaries and their schools, were excluded from teaching Muslim children. This contributed to the imbalance in development between the North and the South. In keeping with its policy of divide and conquer, leaders of the different administrative regions had no formal interaction.

As early as 1939, the colonial government implemented a plan to divide Nigeria into the Northern, Eastern, and Western groups of provinces.¹⁹ These groupings were subsequently restructured into administrative regions under the Constitution of 1946. They came to be viewed as the natural regions of Nigeria. The preponderance of a single ethnic group within each region also served to reinforce the appropriateness of these administrative divisions.²⁰

The tripartite structure, however, gave the Hausa-Fulani dominated northern region disproportionate political power. It contained over half the population and covered two-thirds of Nigeria's territory. Minority ethnic groups which were not part of these three dominant tribes, moreover, were politically marginalized.²¹

Independence

By the end of the colonial era, Nigeria was governed through a political system that devolved power to administrative organs of the three regions. After independence, a

¹⁷ Art and Life in Africa, University of Iowa. <http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/people/Fulani.html>

¹⁸ CIAO Atlas. "Nigeria." 1991. http://www.ciaonet.org/atlas/countries/ng_data_loc.html

¹⁹ *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*. Suberu, Rotimi. 2001. Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace.

²⁰ Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security, and Ethnicity. Osaghae, Eghosa and Rotimi Suberu. "A History of Identities, Violence and Stability in Nigeria." January 2005. <http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk/pubs/workingpaper6.pdf>

²¹ Capital Scholar. Lancia, Nicole. "Ethnic Politics in Nigeria: The Realities of Regionalism." 2005. <http://www12.georgetown.edu/students/organizations/nscs/capitalscholar/lancia2.html>

federal structure was established based on the same three regional divisions. It was a “real” federation in the sense that the component regions were granted a great deal of autonomy and had the power to collect revenue over which they had spending authority.²²

Indeed, that was one motivation for such an arrangement. In the 1950s the international prices for regionally grown export crops were rising. Specifically, those areas where groundnut was cultivated in the North and cocoa-producing areas in the West were in a position to benefit from a commodity boom. These regions were predominately populated by the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba, respectively. So from their vantage point, federalism was a means of protecting their power while freeing them from the need to share the revenues generated from cash crop sales with the impoverished Igbo in the East.²³

The Politics of Federalism - Dissension and Revolt

In the Niger Delta, minority grievances turned to violence little more than a decade after oil had been discovered in Ijaw country in the mid 1950s. The Ijaw were already resentful of Igbo dominance in the southeast. As a smaller tribe, they had no hope of gaining control over the revenues generated by the 400,000 barrels of oil Shell was extracting. Independence was the only other option, and the Niger Delta Republic was founded in 1967.²⁴

Although this Ijaw-led separatist revolt was crushed within days, it indicated the depth of minority opposition to the administrative structure of the new country. Later that year, many Delta minorities acquiesced to the Igbo-led Biafra secession. This precipitated an all-out civil war that lasted for nearly three years and left one million dead. These failed secession efforts occurred because people who live in a resource-rich area have the economic means to form a separate state and an incentive to do so to avoid sharing the wealth.²⁵

After Biafra was reintegrated into Nigeria the original three divisions of the country were redrawn into twelve smaller states. This new arrangement grouped many of the Delta minorities outside an Igbo dominated political district. Specifically, it left them in an Ijaw dominated River State. In 1974, the Ogani and other River State minorities asked for their own state in the Port Harcourt area which would be free of Ijaw domination. Smaller units would offer members of their respective tribes opportunities to assume public leadership positions.

Revenue Allocation

Given the dominant role that the distribution of resources occupies in the Nigerian federal system, the issue of revenue allocation has been particularly contentious. Specifically, the

²² “Nigeria: Changing Context of Government.”

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN000222.html>

²³ Suberu, Rotimi. *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2001), p. 25.

²⁴ Ghazvinian, John. *Untapped: The Scramble for Africa's Oil* (New York: Harcourt, 2007), p. 24.

²⁵ Ross, Michael. “Natural Resources and Civil War: An Overview.” 15 August 2003. http://www.unepfi.org/fileadmin/documents/conflict/ross_2003.pdf

formation of nine separate commissions on revenue allocation since 1946 has resulted in neither an acceptable nor a stable sharing formula.²⁶

In logistical terms, revenue sharing is comprised of a vertical distribution tier of administrative bodies along with a horizontal distribution channel for the portion designated for state and local bodies. With respect to the former, the federal government created the National Federal Account from which state governments draw to meet their operating expenses given they lack the authority to collect taxes on their own behalf. This arrangement creates incentives for officials at the sub-national government level to focus on seizing a bigger share of the federal pie rather than creating a larger pie locally.²⁷



The horizontal distribution has been highly contentious. During the 1950s and 1960s, the “derivation principle” allotted the Eastern Region and successor states 50% of the revenue. This was reduced under pressure from the non-oil regions to 20% in 1975.²⁸

In the late 1970s, oil revenues increased dramatically while the rest of the economy languished. Given that the population of the oil states was only a small fraction of Nigeria’s total, the derivation principle was modified in 1981 to 2%. Within a decade it was cut in half. The new distribution formula used interstate parity, population, and criteria created specifically to benefit the large northern states, which were poor in natural resources.

Thus, those whose homeland encompasses the oil region have little to show for it.²⁹ In Nigeria’s ethnically fractured federalist administrative system, the country’s leaders, both military and civilian, managed to siphon off most of the revenues. The ill-gotten wealth either went for personal use or into projects benefiting their own constituencies, primarily in the North. The money which did go back to the Delta did not trickle down to ethnic minority communities. It was either pocketed by corrupt officials or distributed to the larger ethnic groups, such as the Ijaw, who administered the funds at the state level.

As a result, calls for more states and local government-administered areas have grown. Initially many of these claims were based on cultural arguments, namely that minorities faced repression, even extinction, unless their lands were carved out of units dominated by other groups. Later, control over local resources became a motivation.

²⁶ Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security, and Ethnicity. Ukiwo, Ukoha. “On the Study of Ethnicity in Nigeria.” January 2005. <http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk/pubs/workingpaper12.pdf>

²⁷ The Guardian. Stiglitz, Joseph. “We Can Now Cure Dutch Disease.” 18 August 2004. http://www2.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty/jstiglitz/download/opeds/We_Can_Now_Cure_Dutch_Disease.htm

²⁸ International Crisis Group. “Nigeria: Want in the Midst of Plenty.” 19 July 2006. <http://www.dawodu.com/icg2006b.pdf>

²⁹ International Relations and Security Network. Mbachu, Dulue. “The poverty of oil wealth in Nigeria’s delta.” 3 February 2006. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?id=14670>

Those pressing such demands now include both minority and regional majority groups. They want new administrative units that align with their territorial borders. Such new entities would need to be staffed, opening up the prospects of government jobs.³⁰ There is also the promise of new public infrastructure such as roads, schools, hospitals, etc.³¹

Since independence Nigeria's administrative boundaries have been continuously redrawn.³² Initially divided into twelve states, the number was subsequently expanded to 18 and currently stands at 36. Whereas the former regional administrative boundaries institutionalized the demographic and political dominance of the three major tribes, these groups now dominate several smaller state units. This has only served to magnify the nation's ethnic, regional, and religious tensions. In sum, the issues of ethnic autonomy and a fair distribution of Nigerian natural resources that first appeared during the Biafra secession effort have yet to be successfully resolved four decades later.



During a July 2005 National Political Reforms Conference, delegates were tasked with rewriting the constitution to ease ethnic and religious tensions. But little was accomplished. The 19 northern states remained steadfast in their opposition to any changes that would increase the share of revenues that accrue to the resource-rich states. This prompted southern delegates to characterize the existing terms as one of “internal colonial arrangements.”³³

Contemporary Nigeria, in sum, is not a country engulfed in a national ethnic conflict. Rather it has numerous conflicts at the local level. “There is no single fault line driving these things,” observes a Council on Foreign Relations special report; rather “[t]rading privileges, employment possibilities, welfare payments, water access, and land rights are continually contested.”³⁴

Federalism has devolved ethnic conflict away from the central government or a few regional centers to the various state capitals, which operate as relatively autonomous

³⁰ This is why the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has enjoyed only limited success in establishing a unified border crossing policy among its 16 member nation-states. Implementation might do away with more than half of the official positions and resources devoted by individual countries to patrol their own borders. Znet. Gberie, Lansana. “West Africa: The Curse of Borders.” 19 January 2005. <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=7060>

³¹ This section drawn from *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*. Suberu, Rotimi. 2001. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, pp. 80–81.

³² Association of Nigerian Scholars for Dialogue. “Themes of the Wilberforce Conference on Nigerian Federalism.” 1997. http://www.waado.org/nigerian_scholars/archive/pubs/wilber2.html

³³ Christian Science Monitor. Purefoy, Christian Allen. “Oil inflames Nigeria’s ethnic tensions.” 26 July 2005. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0726/p07s01-woaf.html>

³⁴ Council for Foreign Relations. Hanson, Stephanie. “Nigeria’s Creaky Political System.” 12 April 2007. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/13079/>

agents of authority.³⁵ By institutionally containing conflicts at a lower level, it makes it less likely they will overwhelm the national political system.

Fiscal Politics

“What is true federalism?” asked a northern Nigerian intellectual. “Is it about resource control? You don’t build a country based on one principle, which is sharing money.”³⁶

A different approach would devolve or shift fiscal power from the central government to the sub-national or state governments and allow them to generate independent resources. In effect, this would give each state the incentive to create a local pie.³⁷ Among other benefits, it would reduce the amount of time they currently invest competing for centrally controlled resources. Such a step, however, involves the risk of the oil rich province seceding from the national government and becoming an independent nation.³⁸ The ghost of Biafra still haunts lawmakers in the capitol.³⁹

The people of the oil rich Niger Delta have long maintained that the current system deprives them of their fair share of the petroleum revenue. Northerners, however, resent their using the fact that cotton growers are allowed to keep the profits from Hausaland’s cotton industry as evidence of unfairness. They point out that it takes money and labor to grow cotton. By contrast, there is no comparable cost involved in inviting multinational oil companies to extract petroleum. Therefore natural resources belong to Nigerian citizens as a whole. Affected communities, in short, should be compensated for the environmental damage wrought by oil extraction. But they should not be allowed to keep a disproportionate share of the wealth generated.



Few Nigerians have faith that a revenue allocation reform with which everyone can agree is equitable is actually possible. Moreover, they do not believe that they will ever have a clean government. So the rational response under these circumstances is to try to get their own people into office—those from their own ethnic group, or even better their own family members—where they can appropriate as much money as possible and distribute it among their kinfolk.⁴⁰

³⁵ *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*. Suberu, Rotimi. 2001. Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, p. 4.

³⁶ Ghazvinian, John. *Untapped: The Scramble for Africa’s Oil* (New York: Harcourt, 2007), p. 67

³⁷ Council for Foreign Relations. Hanson, Stephanie. “Nigeria’s Creaky Political System.” 12 April 2007. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/13079/>

³⁸ Overseas Development Institute. Bach, Daniel. “Nigeria: Toward a Country Without a State?” 16–17 June 2004. http://www.odi.org.uk/speeches/nigeria_2004/Bach%20paper.pdf

³⁹ Prevention, Conflict Analysis, Reconstruction. “A Post-Conflict Society: Nigeria and the Legacy of the Biafran War.” 26 December 2006. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/biafra.htm>

⁴⁰ Cato Institute. Guest, Robert. “Africa’s Development Challenge: From Predatory to Accountable Government.” 17 November 2004. <http://www.cato.org/pubs/edb/edb1.html>

Media

Nigeria has a thriving press, particularly in the bustling commercial capital of Lagos, where a dozen daily newspapers and five weekly magazines are based. It is considered the most vibrant in Africa.⁴¹ In such a competitive environment, however, some journalists have adopted a very sensationalistic style of covering political stories. Critics describe this as irresponsible and point out that it could, under the wrong circumstances, fan ethnic and religious tensions.⁴²

During the 1990s, independent journalists were routinely harassed, tortured or jailed for challenging or even criticizing the military government. The situation was reversed after a civilian-led government came to power via elections in 1999.⁴³ However, the problem of the media acting as a public relations arm of politicians who can pay journalists handsomely for this service has also emerged.⁴⁴ Sometimes they do not even pay. Nigerian journalists have voiced concerns that state and local broadcasters are often no more than partisan propagandists for powerful governors who want to use the media to push their own agenda.⁴⁵



The development of Nigerian broadcasting reflects the regional versus national lines of authority embedded in federalism.⁴⁶ Each Nigerian state has its own radio and television broadcasting network. Under democracy, privatization has expanded the number of choices available. By 2005, more than 280 radio and TV licenses had been granted to private operators. Radio is the key source of information for many Nigerians. Television audiences are primarily urbanites.⁴⁷

Economy

Nigeria has a dual economy which consists of a modern sector dependent on oil earnings along with a traditional agricultural and trading sector.

⁴¹ Development Policy Management Bulletin Network. Ayo Olutokun and Dele Seteolu. "The Media and Democratic Rule in Nigeria." September 2001.

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/IDEP/UNPAN004216.pdf>

⁴² International Republican Institute. "2007 Nigeria National Elections: Pre-Election Assessment Final Report." <http://www.iri.org/africa/nigeria/pdfs/2007-02-01-Pre-electionAssessment.pdf>

⁴³ Freedom Forum. International Media Issues. Eddings, Jerilyn. "Giving Nigerian Journalists More Investigative Tools." 16 February 2001.

<http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=13095>

⁴⁴ The Nigerian Village Square. Oduyela, Seyi. "The Media in Nigeria II." 22 August 2005.

<http://www.nigeriavillagesquare1.com/Articles/Guest/2005/08/media-in-nigeria-ii.html>

⁴⁵ International Republican Institute. "2007 Nigeria National Elections: Pre-Election Assessment Final Report." <http://www.iri.org/africa/nigeria/pdfs/2007-02-01-Pre-electionAssessment.pdf>

⁴⁶ Culture Link. "Cultural Policy in Nigeria." 1996. <http://www.wvcd.org/policy/clink/Nigeria.html>

⁴⁷ BBC News (UK version). "Nigeria: Country Profile."

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1064557.stm

During the colonial era, the British introduced cash crops. Infrastructure such as roads and railways were built so the produce could be exported.⁴⁸ By 1960, farmers had achieved high production cultivating small plots.⁴⁹ But these productivity gains have not kept up with rapid population growth. So Nigeria, once a net exporter of food, must now import food. Because food export earnings do not cover the cost of the imports, they are acquired on credit.

The oil sector, which emerged in the 1960s, became a mainstay of the economy during the 1970s. It has now assumed an importance which reflects overdependence: oil currently accounts for 90% of Nigeria's export earnings and 80% of government revenue.⁵⁰ But economic growth since the early 1970s has been erratic as a result of fluctuations in the global market price.⁵¹ This means that government tax revenues have fluctuated dramatically in size from year to year as well.⁵²



The 1970s oil boom brought new-found wealth. The government also borrowed on the international market in order to develop modern cities and attract multinational businesses. But in the 1980s, the price of oil dropped. This sent the economy into a tailspin and the government was unable to repay its debt. Countries dependent on natural resource exports usually learn the hard way that gains made during a boom inevitably unravel in the bust which follows.

One of the puzzling regularities of development economics is that many countries abundantly endowed with natural resources have, like Nigeria, little to show for it. The “resource curse” is a concept which describes the paradox of an abundance of natural resources that ironically reduces economic growth, causes a decline in competitiveness, government mismanagement, corruption and conflict.⁵³ Officials in all levels of the Nigerian government overwhelmingly view oil riches as money to be used rather than an asset to be invested in education, infrastructure, and development.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ The Nigerian Village Square. Chigbu, Uchendu Eugene. “Agriculture As The Only Savior To Nigeria’s Dyeing [sic] Economy.” 19 March 2005.

<http://www.nigeriavillagesquare1.com/Articles/Guest/2005/03/agriculture-as-only-saviour-to.html>

⁴⁹ UN FAO. “Nigeria’s Agriculture and Food Security Challenges.” 2003.

<http://www.fao.org/tc/Tca/work05/Nigeriappt.pdf>

⁵⁰ Counterpunch. Watts, Michael. “Oil Inferno: Crisis in Nigeria.” 2 January 2007.

<http://www.counterpunch.org/watts01022007.html>

⁵¹ Institute for Security Studies. “Nigeria: Economy.”

<http://www.iss.co.za/Af/profiles/Nigeria/Economy.html>

⁵² UK Department for International Development. Ross, Michael. “Nigeria’s Oil Sector and the Poor.” 23 May 2003. <http://www.polisci.ucla.edu/faculty/ross/NigeriaOil.pdf>

⁵³ Seeing the Possibilities. Davies, Robert. “Which Businesses will manage the Resource Curse?” 23 March 2007. <http://www.seeingthepossibilities.com/?p=55>

⁵⁴ Peace Corps Writers. Strain, David. Review of Daniel Jordan Smith’s *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria*. <http://peacecorpswriters.org/pages/2007/0701/701rv-culture.html>

Ethnic Groups

African tribal identities are typically portrayed as ancient and unchanging. But colonial rule had an effect on heightening them and creating tensions between different groups



who may have had little to do with each other previously.⁵⁵ Moreover, colonization caused old distinctions to assume new and often conflictual forms. The changes came out of new types of interaction as well as migration to cities where people encountered those from other groups.⁵⁶ As a result, tribal identities have evolved and now more closely resemble ethnic identifications, which are also shaped by urban residential patterns, commerce and markets.

Owing to its diversity, there is no definition of a Nigerian beyond that of someone who resides within the borders of the country.⁵⁷ However, there are three dominant groups: Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa.

Yoruba

The Yoruba, who inhabit the southwestern part of Nigeria, have a long artistic tradition. Terra-cotta sculpture and cast-metal heads of exceptional quality have been found in the ancient city state of Ife, which achieved prominence from the ninth through the 18th centuries.⁵⁸ The Yorubans have a common and mutually understandable language, despite numerous dialects and centuries of political and military contention among the historic Yoruba kingdoms.

While Yoruba common identity is genuine, it did not come into existence until after British colonization.⁵⁹ It remains weak; Yoruba settlements span several countries and individual loyalty is often to a person's ancestral hometown or region rather than to the group itself. Yorubans in Nigeria practice both Islam and Christianity.

Igbo

Igbo refers to a group that shares a common language spoken in different dialects in the eastern region of Nigeria. Early efforts to standardize the Igbo language were initiated by Christian missionaries and the British colonial government. Aware of the advantages which fluency in English conferred in terms of employment prospects, initially most Igbo

⁵⁵ Africa Policy Information Center. "Talking about 'Tribe' Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis." November 1997. <http://www.africaaction.org/bp/ethall.htm>

⁵⁶ Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security, and Ethnicity. Osaghae, Eghosa and Rotimi Suberu. "A History of Identities, Violence and Stability in Nigeria." January 2005. <http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk/pubs/workingpaper6.pdf>

⁵⁷ National University of Singapore, African Postcolonial Literature in English. Ravok, Simon. "Ethnicity in Nigeria." 1990. <http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/post/nigeria/ethnicity.html>

⁵⁸ Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of African Art. "Images of Power and Identity: Yoruba Peoples." <http://www.nmfa.si.edu/exhibits/ipi/yoruba.htm>

⁵⁹ Slavery and Abolition. Northrup, David. "Becoming African: Identity Formation Among Liberated Slaves in Nineteenth-Century Sierra Leone." April 2006. <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/aads/meta-elements/pdf/northrup1.pdf>

were uninterested in efforts to standardize their native tongue and render it into a written form. That changed later after an independence movement developed. Yet the written version of the language failed to establish itself, and English remained the dominant mode of written expression.⁶⁰

Hausa

The Hausa are an amalgamation of people who inhabit an area known as Hausaland. This geographical designation refers to a region in northern Nigeria which straddles the border with southern Niger. Among other groups they have assimilated are the Fulani, a nomadic Muslim people who are herders. Some have adopted a settled lifestyle indistinguishable from the Hausa. The few Hausa who are not practicing Muslims continue to worship indigenous gods.

The Hausa maintained their own history through legends passed down orally and in written form. The most famous historical narrative is the *Kano Chronicle*. Written in Arabic in the 19th century, it details far older Hausa traditions.⁶¹

Ijaw

The Ijaw inhabit the Niger River Delta area. Owing to the difficulties in covering long distances in the shallow rivers, the Ijaw language consists of numerous mutually unintelligible dialects. Their traditional livelihood was based on fishing. Communities frequently fought each other over control and use of the waterways. An Ijaw ethnic consciousness did not develop until relatively recently driven in part by the need to establish a unified opposition to the effects of oil extraction in their homeland.⁶² This has taken the form of militant activism since the 1990s.⁶³

⁶⁰ Van den Bersselaar, D. "The Language of Igbo Nationalism." 2000.

<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/jbp/lplp/2000/00000024/00000002/art00001>

⁶¹ Xavier University. McCord-Rotondo, J. "Origins of Hausa." 1998.

<http://xavier.xula.edu/jrotondo/Kingdoms/Hausaland/HausaOrigins02.htm>

⁶² OpenDemocracy. Owen, Olly. "The contested rights of the Niger Delta." 18 November 2005.

http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-africa_democracy/niger_delta_3043.jsp

⁶³ University of Maryland, Center for International Development and Conflict Management. "Assessment for Ijaw in Nigeria." 31 December 2003. <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=47506>

Chapter Two - Religion

Overview of Major Religions

Northern Nigeria, including Hausaland, is dominated by Islam, which was spread by traders from North Africa starting in the 14th century CE. Southern Nigeria is largely Christian as a result of European contact with the coastal areas. Nigeria's religious demographic breakdown is approximately 40 percent Christian, 50 percent Muslim, and about 10 percent "other," including traditional religions and beliefs.⁶⁴ Though the government in theory accords equal status to different religions, past leaders have usually been Muslim.



Most Nigerians identify themselves as adherents of a particular faith rather than by nationality.⁶⁵ Even a regional sense of identity is weak. For example, the predominantly Muslim inhabitants of Borno, Gombe, Yobe, and Adamawa states view themselves as part of the Northern Region of Nigeria (NRN) even though it was disbanded in 1967. The non-Muslim minority inhabitants, by contrast, feel no such affinity to the NRN.⁶⁶

*Indigenous*⁶⁷

For those who practice traditional religions, there is no separation between the laws governing secular and spiritual spheres. Whatever the gods are interpreted to have said is sanctioned by society and constitutes the norms of the community.⁶⁸

Traditional religions retain a substantial number of adherents throughout the country. Indigenous belief systems, embedded in particular views of the world and agrarian lifestyles, rarely died out when either Islam or Christianity was introduced. Often these traditions and beliefs are openly practiced by Muslims and Christians alike.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ CIA World Factbook. "Nigeria." 19 June 2007. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>

⁶⁵ "In a May-June 2006 survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 76% of Christians say that religion is more important to them than their identity as Africans, Nigerians or members of an ethnic group. Among Muslims, the number naming religion as the most important factor is even higher (91%)." The Pew Forum. Ruby, Robert and Timothy Samuel Shah. "Nigeria's Presidential Election: The Christian-Muslim Divide." 21 March 2007. <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=182>

⁶⁶ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. "Nigeria: Democracy." Page 294. 4 January 2004. http://www.idea.int/publications/democracy_in_nigeria/upload/democracy_in_nigeria.pdf

⁶⁷ The term indigenous refers to small scale societies which have distinct languages, kinship systems, mythologies and homelands. Grim, John A. "Introduction to Indigenous Traditions." 1998. Center for the Environment, Harvard University. <http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion/indigenous/index.html>

⁶⁸ International Humanist and Ethical Union. Omoso Isiramem, Celestina. "Women in Nigeria: Religion, Culture, and the AIDS Pandemic." 1 November 2003. <http://www.iheu.org/node/979>

⁶⁹ U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division. "Religion." <http://www.country-studies.com/nigeria/religion.html>

Christianity

Today, Christianity in Nigeria spans a broad range of faiths from mainstream Roman Catholic and Anglican to many smaller Protestant organizations.⁷⁰ Missionaries have had conversion successes in the central or middle-belt region because they could offer adherents the opportunity to receive a good education.⁷¹ Evangelical efforts have been aided by televised Gospel messages and sophisticated quantitative population mapping techniques.⁷²

The Anglican Church of Nigeria was founded by British missionaries in 1842. Over the next century its membership steadily, yet slowly, increased. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Church embraced an agenda of intense evangelism, and the number of new members reflected their success. Five million Anglicans lived in Nigeria in the late 1970s and the Nigerian Church was limited to one province with 16 dioceses. Currently, Nigeria is home to 18 million and , by 2025, that number is expected to double. By the end of 2003, the Anglican Church had nearly 80 dioceses, organized in ten states.⁷³



Christian school children & teacher

Among other religions, Pentecostal denominations are actively seeking new adherents in Nigeria. Over the last 30 years, membership has risen to 20 million.⁷⁴ A big part of the success of Pentecostalism lies in its ability to tap into indigenous cosmology, in which deities have long been solicited by poor people in need of specific, worldly favors.⁷⁵

Christianity has not had a strong hold on all of Nigeria. After the Nigerian Civil War (1967–70), General Yakubu Gowon, although himself a Christian, was pressured by the Muslims in the North to expel all foreign missionaries in the East and take over all

⁷⁰ Global Security. "Nigerian Christian/Muslim Conflict." 27 April 2005.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/nigeria-1.htm>

⁷¹ The Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability. Blanco-Mancilla, Georgina. "Citizenship and Religion in Nigeria: Comparative Perspectives of Islam and Christianity in Kaduna State." September 2003. [http://www.drc-](http://www.drc-citizenship.org/docs/internships/2003/GBMcitizenship%20and%20religion.doc)

[citizenship.org/docs/internships/2003/GBMcitizenship%20and%20religion.doc](http://www.drc-citizenship.org/docs/internships/2003/GBMcitizenship%20and%20religion.doc)

⁷² Harvard University, The Pluralism Project. "Cross Reference: Christian-Muslim Conflict in Nigeria." 2003. <http://www.pluralism.org/news/intl/index.php?xref=Christian-Muslim+Conflict+in+Nigeria&sort=DESC#headline11937>

⁷³ The Atlantic. Jenkins, Philip. "Defender of the Faith." November 2003.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200311/jenkins>

⁷⁴ World Association for Christian Communication. Ihejirika, Walter. "Media and Fundamentalism in Nigeria." 2005.

http://www.wacc.org.uk/wacc/publications/media_development/2005_2/media_and_fundamentalism_in_nigeria

⁷⁵ "[Pentecostalism] allows for spiritual or divine agency, so that God has the power to fix and heal and also to protect you," a professor at Yale Divinity School who specializes in West Africa observed. "You might fall into a ditch, or you might be in a car accident, roads such as they are. You are always in present danger. Pentecostalism speaks that language very well." New York Times. Sengupta, Somini and Larry Rohter. "Where Faith Grows, Fired by Pentecostalism." 14 October 2003.

<http://www.wrn.org/article.php?idd=10826&sec=71&cont=3>

mission schools and hospitals in the country. This was in reprisal for church support for the short-lived secessionist state of Biafra.⁷⁶

Islam

With respect to its reception in Hausaland, Islam confronted indigenous religious systems which offered solutions to questions of explanation, community organization, and fertility that were effective to practitioners. The importance of mask celebrations and the figurative art of shrines, for example, did not disappear even from the lives of those who converted.⁷⁷



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Koran in museum

As a result, the Hausa leadership was accused of not propagating the faith correctly by the ethnic Fulani Islamic leader, Othman dan Fodio. He initiated a holy war (*jihad*) in 1804 that led to the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate.⁷⁸

After victory in 1808, the Sokoto Caliphate brought most of the northern region and adjacent parts of Niger and Cameroon under a single Islamic government. However, it was not until the 18th and 19th centuries that the majority of northern Nigerian inhabitants converted to Islam.

The slave trade, and its acceptance by Islam, had a profound effect on the spread of this religion. Islamic law allowed for the enslavement of non-Muslims. In fact the Sokoto Caliphate had more slaves than any other modern country, except the United States in 1860.⁷⁹ Such a prospect made conversion more attractive to those who wished to maintain or have their freedom restored.⁸⁰

Islam was absorbed into the existing highly hierarchical social structure of northern Nigeria. In effect, this meant that within the traditional ruling groups there were families of clerics whose male heirs were schooled in Islamic theology and jurisprudence. They moved into prominent positions in the judiciary as well as in mosques. These *ulama*, or learned scholars, assumed the role of religious and legal advisors to the *emir*, princes born to prominent families of noble title who had amassed considerable fortunes, usually through trading.⁸¹

⁷⁶ International Humanist and Ethical Union. Onuoha, Eze Enyeribe. "Religion and State in Nigeria." 20 September 2005. <http://www.iheu.org/node/1759>

⁷⁷ Islamic art does not utilize images but instead stresses God's verbal instructions through ornate calligraphy. *Art of Africa*. "Hausa People (Nigeria)." Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami. 2004. http://www6.miami.edu/lowe/art_africa.htm

⁷⁸ BBC News. "Kano: Nigeria's ancient nation-state." 20 May 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3708309.stm>

⁷⁹ Federal Research Division, U.S. Library of Congress. "Nigeria: History." <http://countrystudies.us/nigeria/3.htm>

⁸⁰ University of Northern Iowa. Nigeria Background Information. "Historical Geography of Nigeria." <http://www.uni.edu/gai/Nigeria/Background/Standard17.html>

⁸¹ Today the *emir* of Kano is one of the most respected religious leaders for Nigerian Muslims.

Ordinary people could consult an assortment of clerics in various stages of training. These included Sufi brotherhoods, a variant of Islam that is characterized by the veneration of local saints and observance of a variety of rituals. They were prevalent, particularly in the major cities.⁸² The two major ones, Qadiriya and Tijaniya, had their own mosques and network of schools that, in some cases, received grants from the state.



The spread of Islamic beliefs served as the basis for assimilation.⁸³ Muslims in the North saw themselves as sharing a common set of cultural traditions affecting family life, dress, food, manners, and personal qualities that linked them to one another as well as to the wider Islamic world. Northerners who were not Muslims, however, had to organize their lives in a way which enabled them to survive outside the dominant culture.

This necessitated the creation of enclaves where they lived, worshipped, and worked.⁸⁴

By contrast, becoming a Muslim opened the door to full participation in the society. Residents of the middle belt, especially those with political and business ambitions, often converted to Islam for this reason. The main exception was in Plateau State, where the capital, Jos, was as much a Christian as a Muslim community. Not surprisingly, a greater accommodation between the two sets of beliefs and their respective adherents occurred in the public sphere.⁸⁵

Religious Conflict

In the years following independence, the tensions between Muslims and Christians were evident. The Premier of the now defunct Northern Region and Sardauna of Sokoto, for example, embarked on a massive campaign to spread Islam. He was said to be motivated by the prospect of “dipping the Quran into the sea.” In effect, this would have reversed the spread of Christianity, which had been introduced during colonialism. He was assassinated in the January 1966 coup carried out by Igbo Christian officers. Northern Muslims felt aggrieved that their charismatic leader had been assassinated. This contributed to the 1966 July massacre of Igbo Christians in the North.⁸⁶

⁸² The name derives from the Arabic *sufi*. Hence, *sufi* is a person wearing an ascetic’s woolen garment, which reflects devotion to a mystic life. Islam and Islamic Studies Resources, University of Georgia.

Godlas, Alan. “Sufism -- Sufis -- Sufi Orders.” <http://godlas.myweb.uga.edu/Sufism.html>

⁸³ Scattered throughout Hausaland are groups of Hausa speakers who have never converted to Islam. They are referred to as *maguzawa*. “Society Hausa.”

http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/EthnoAtlas/Hmar/Cult_dir/Culture.7844

⁸⁴ About Agnostism/Atheism. “Religion in Nigeria: Islam.” June 1991.

http://atheism.about.com/library/world/KZ/bl_NigeriaIslam.htm

⁸⁵ Jurgen Habermas identified the role of the “public sphere” in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962). Its function is to eliminate authoritarian power and provide the basis for a government that acts on behalf of an informed public which engages in critical debate.

⁸⁶ International IDEA. “Democracy in Nigeria: Continuing Dialogue(s) for Nation-Building.” 2001.

http://www.idea.int/publications/democracy_in_nigeria/upload/democracy_in_nigeria.pdf

After the civil war (1967–70), relations between Nigeria’s relatively equal number of Muslims and Christians could be characterized as amicable. This was because the succession of military rulers sought to deemphasize the religious cleavage to avoid destabilizing the country.

Nigeria’s enlistment in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1986 represented a major change. Some Christians feared that participation of heads of governments and foreign ministers in the OIC summits would necessitate reserving these two important offices for Muslims. The uncertainty gave rise to allegations that Christians were being replaced by Muslims in key ministerial appointments. These were met by counter-allegations that Christians dominated certain government agencies creating the impression “that Muslims do not exist or are incompetent to handle crucial matters.”⁸⁷ This sensitivity owed to the fact that Hausa-Fulani have long been viewed by other Nigerians as responsible for many of the ills that afflict the Nigerian government.⁸⁸

More recently, the peaceful Plateau State has been engulfed in religious violence. In September 2001, sectarian clashes killed over 1,000 people in the capital city, Jos. Smaller conflicts spread throughout the countryside between Christian farmers and Muslim livestock herders, killing hundreds and forcing thousands to flee. Most of the clashes have been portrayed as being religious in nature, but they also have an ethnic dimension.⁸⁹

Moreover, as the desert has spread, trees have been cut down and the populations of both herders and farmers have increased, the competition for land use rights has become more intense. When disputes over land intersect with tribe, faith or political power groups can turn on each other with surprising ferocity.⁹⁰ In the 2004 Yelwa conflict over land, groups and individuals were singled out on the basis of religious affiliation.⁹¹ Mosques and churches were targeted for vandalism. On some streets no houses were left standing.⁹² Religion was used as a rallying cry to drag other groups into the conflict. Both sides made their appeals and denounced the other in religious language.⁹³

There has also been intra-Muslim tension. Most Muslim Nigerians are Sunnis. The Shi’a are a minority sect. Shi’a Islam found favor in the late 1970s in the wake of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. It was attractive in part because it offered an alternative to the

⁸⁷ *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*. Suberu, Rotimi. 2001. Washington DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press. p. 134..

⁸⁸ Adujie, Paul. “Hausa-Fulani Myth and Nigerian Politics.”
<http://www.gamji.com/article4000/NEWS4378.htm>

⁸⁹ Global Security. “Nigerian Christian/Muslim Conflict.” 27 April 2005.
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/nigeria-1.htm>

⁹⁰ New York Times. Sengupta, Somini. “Where the Land is a Tinderbox, the Killing is a Frenzy.” 16 June 2004. <http://www.msu.edu/course/aec/810/Land%20conflict-Nigeria.htm>

⁹¹ Time (European Edition). Robinson, Simon. “Fighting for Their Lives.” 23 May 2004.
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,641105,00.html>

⁹² BBC News (International Version). “Searching for Peace in Nigeria.” 19 August 2004.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3579150.stm>

⁹³ Human Rights Watch. “The Conflict in Yelwa.” May 2005.
http://hrw.org/reports/2005/nigeria0505/4.htm#_Toc103668138

corruption-tainted Islam practiced by high ranking members of the successive Nigerian military regimes.

There have been periodic clashes between the two groups. On 5 August 1996, a verbal confrontation turned into violence in Katsina, leaving one person dead and several others injured. During the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birth a week later, an argument between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims erupted in rioting in which several people were injured and many homes were burned to the ground.⁹⁴



© 2007 clipart.com
Sokoto Islamic warrior

Influence of Religion in the Government

With independence and a democratic government comes more freedom of religion. Along with more freedom, states have gained more power to govern. This has enabled states in northern Nigeria to implement *Shari'a* criminal code.

Shari'a Criminal Code

Muslims in twelve northern Hausaland states have expanded the scope of Islam by introducing *Shari'a* criminal code. While *Shari'a* civil courts have long been used to settle family matters such as divorce and inheritance disputes, the legal use of *Shari'a* criminal code represents a challenge to the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state.⁹⁵

The punishments, which include death by stoning for adultery, amputation of the hands for thievery, and flogging for lesser offenses, have raised questions of constitutionality with the Justice Minister. However, northern states are ignoring the government's position.⁹⁶

This has created unease over how non-Muslim residents of these states will be treated.⁹⁷ Implementation of *Shari'a* criminal code has made drinking alcohol illegal in the northern states regardless of religious affiliation.

A good example of the difference between Nigerian thought and the views of *Shari'a* criminal code is marriage. Among the Igbo, marriage is a multi-stage process rather than a ceremony for many of those who practice other faiths. It is socially acceptable for children to be born once the process has been initiated but not yet completed. It is the birth of a child, in fact, that traditionally conferred the title of wife on an Igbo woman.

⁹⁴ Yale International Forum. Aymer, Elise. "Nigeria: Clash of Religions." Winter 1996. <http://www.yale.edu/iform/Winter1996/nigeriaWin96.htm>

⁹⁵ Voice of America. Eagle, William. "Nigeria/Sharia." 3 March 2000. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2000/03/000303-nigeria1.htm>

⁹⁶ BBC News. Isaacs, Dan. "Nigeria in a Crisis Over Sharia Law." 26 March 2002. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1893589.stm>

⁹⁷ University of Bordeaux, Institute of Political Studies. Bach, Daniel. "Nigeria: Toward a Country without a State?" June 2004. http://www.odi.org.uk/speeches/nigeria_2004/Bach%20paper.pdf

Prior to motherhood, she may be a wife only in anticipation.⁹⁸ In the Yoruba culture, it is common for a women to be pregnant before the marriage to ensure her ability to have children.⁹⁹ For Muslims, however, under *Shari'a* law a woman who becomes pregnant before marriage, which is a single ceremony that lasts a week, or out of wedlock is guilty of adultery for which the punishment is death by stoning.¹⁰⁰

Influence of Religion on Daily Life

The dominant model of religious education in Nigeria has been faith oriented. The goal is for Nigerians to embrace Christianity or Islam. The need to engage those of other faiths in dialogue to foster mutual respect is not being addressed in the classroom.

Consequently, most of those educated within this framework veer toward blind faith.¹⁰¹ This leads people to “parade religious dogma as authentic spirituality.”¹⁰²



Media coverage of religion reflects this orientation. The press, in short, has shifted attention from reporting on religious institutions to religious experience. Much of the news about religious experience comes from coverage of events such as choir anniversaries, harvest and thanksgiving, funeral and remembrance services, miracles and healing.¹⁰³

Religion, as illustrated by its media coverage, is what shapes the people’s beliefs and systems of value in deeply religious Nigeria. Because the culture is defined by religion, the north and south of Nigeria differ in many ways. Norms in northern Nigeria are defined by Islamic beliefs. Islam dictates daily life. For example, the call to prayer in northern towns is an important part of the people’s daily schedule.

Gender Relations and Religion

Men are superior to females in all Nigeria’s religions. This has been the case in the traditional Nigerian patriarchal society, not just the Muslim society.¹⁰⁴ However, in Kano, the most conservative state in Hausaland, women drive cars and vote. They may be

⁹⁸ African Traditional Religion Special Topics. Obi, Celestine. “Traditional Marriage Among the Igbos.” 1970. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. <http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/igbo-marriage.htm>

⁹⁹ Motherland Nigeria. “The Wedding.” <http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/life.html>

¹⁰⁰ BBC News. Issacs, Dan. “Nigeria in Crisis over Sharia Law.” 26 March 2002. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1893589.stm>

¹⁰¹ Council for Secular Humanism. Igwe, Leo. “Nigeria’s Educational System Needs FreeThought (sic).” http://www.secularhumanism.org/library/shb/igwe_19_2.htm

¹⁰² USAfricaOnline. Adeyeye, Sola. “Is Obasanjo Ordained by God to Rule Nigeria? And, other fallacies.” http://www.usafricaonline.com/adeyeye_obasanjofallacies.html

¹⁰³ Religion in the News. Ojo, Matthew. “On the Beat: In Lagos Religion’s Above the Fold.” Summer 1999. <http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/csrpl/RINVol2No2/Lagos.htm>

¹⁰⁴ International Humanist and Ethical Union. Isiramen, Celestina. “Women in Nigeria: Religion, Culture and the AIDS Epidemic.” 1 November 2003. <http://www.ihcu.org/node/979>

educated, walk outside and take part in the economy. Some Muslim Nigerian women cover their hair, but few wear the full-body shrouds.¹⁰⁵

In many West African Muslim communities, women often dress as their ancestors did before converting to Islam. However, a minority, including the wealthy Hausa families, value a form of strict *purdah* (female seclusion) in which women seldom venture outside the home, and then only when fully covered.¹⁰⁶ For women, ironically, a life of seclusion may be more attractive than performing hard labor in the fields.

Adherence to *purdah*, in short, reflects a family's socioeconomic status. Seclusion implies a man's breadwinning ability meets the household's needs without his wife going out to work. So the movement of women is not viewed as a violation of religious norms but rather as evidence of insufficient male earning power. The reality is that in most households all able hands, male or female, must be put to work at whatever jobs can be found.

In rural areas where subsistence farming predominates, economics force most women out of the family compound. Those from poorer households have no choice but to seek seasonal work harvesting and threshing crops. Urbanite female slum dwellers find seclusion difficult to maintain. Their families are often forced to share housing compounds with unrelated families.¹⁰⁷

Religious Holidays

Ramadan

One of the most important religious holidays for Muslims is the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, which celebrates Allah giving Muhammad his first revelation. During the one month celebration of Ramadan, Muslims fast every day from sunup to sundown. Fasting is a considerable test of discipline and may make people more irritable. All but the sick and the weak, pregnant women and lactating mothers, soldiers on duty, travelers on necessary journeys, and young children under the age of seven are prohibited from eating or drinking during daylight hours.



The Islamic lunar year cycle is eleven days shorter than the solar calendar. This means Ramadan will fall at various seasons in different years.¹⁰⁸ So a fast that falls during the summer imposes the biggest test on those who must do heavy physical labor.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ The Eagle, Associated Press. "In Kano, women-only tricycle taxis a symbol of compromise." 7 April 2007. http://www.theeagle.com/stories/040707/faith_20070407062.php

¹⁰⁶ Emory University. "West Africa." <http://www.law.emory.edu/IFL/region/westafrica.html>

¹⁰⁷ Nordic Journal of African Studies. Zakaria, Yakubu. "Entrepreneurs at Home: Secluded Muslim Women and Hidden Economic Activities in Northern Nigeria." 2001. <http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol10num1/yakubu.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ The lunar calendar, 354 days, is shorter than the solar year. Under the solar calendar, Ramadan begins 11 days earlier each year. It is held during the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

¹⁰⁹ Nigeria Planet. <http://www.nigeria-planet.com/Religion-In-Nigeria.html>

Eid el-Fitr

This Muslim holiday marks the end of Ramadan. Known as *durbar*, a word derived from the Urdu language meaning “audience hall,” the day begins with prayers outside each town. This is followed by a procession of ornately attired horsemen that accentuates the past glories of the emirates.¹¹⁰ Groups of equestrians then race through the town square. Riders, with their swords drawn, pass a few feet from the *emir* at full gallop before stopping to salute him. Villagers watch from assigned spectator spots. Afterwards, the *emir* reads an address. The celebration concludes with eating, drinking (non-alcoholic beverages), and general revelry.¹¹¹ It has become a popular festival hosted by non-Muslim communities.

Eid el-Kabir/ Eid al-Adha

This is the Muslim holiday that commemorates the end of the *hajj* (pilgrimage) season. It usually falls in June. That is the time of year when Muslims make their pilgrimage to the holy land of Mecca. Nigerian Muslims commemorate it by slaughtering a ram. In the North, there may also be *Durbar* festivals, horse races, and other types of entertainment.

Eid el-Maulud/Maulid el-Nabi

The Muslim holiday to celebrate the birthday of Muhammad in 571 BCE falls in September. Muslims pray in the mosques and then return to their homes. Those who can afford to, give alms to the poor. *Durbar* festivals are also held in the North.¹¹²

Buildings of Worship

The original Great Mosque of Kano was built in the late 15th century but was destroyed in the 1950s. It was constructed of mud and was the first tower-type mosque in West Africa. This mosque lacked minarets and a formal staircase. After its destruction in the 1950s, the British built the Central Mosque of Kano as a sign of appreciation for Nigeria’s role in World War II.¹¹³ This mosque is closed to non-Muslims.

Exchange 1: May I take photographs?

Soldier:	May I take photographs inside the mosque?	zan eya dawkan hotnaa a chekey masalaachanko?
Local:	No.	aa-aa

Located in the city of Abuja, the National Mosque is a large complex that includes a main prayer hall, library, conference hall, religious school and a gold anodized, aluminum shingled dome. Built in 1981, this national monument is not open to non-Muslims.

¹¹⁰ On the Globe. Nanek, Jura and Andrew Prinz. “The Durbar.” 2005.
<http://www.ontheglobe.com/photos/nigeria/nigeria1.htm>

¹¹¹ TravelMax. “Durbar Nigeria.” http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=event&event_id=74485

¹¹² Motherland Nigeria. “Holidays.” <http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/holidays.html>

¹¹³ ArchNet. “Great Mosque of Kano.” http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.tcl?site_id=7729

Other notable mosques, also located in Kano, include Waje Mosque, Massallain Murtala Mosque, Lumar Ibu Khattab Mosque, Sahaba Mosque, BUK Mosque and Sheik Tijjanu Mosque.

Mosque Etiquette

Most mosques in Nigeria do not allow non-Muslims to enter. Be sure to ask someone if you may enter before doing so.

Exchange 2: May I enter the mosque?

Soldier:	May I enter the mosque?	zan eyshga masalaachan?
Local:	Yes.	ey

Shoes must be removed and left outside. Men should wear loose fitting pants, a loose fitting shirt and clean socks. Women should wear a long, loose skirt and loose, long sleeved top that reaches the thighs. Women should also cover their hair with a scarf.

Exchange 3: Do I need to wear a hijab?

Soldier:	Do I need to wear a hijab?	naa bukaatran saka hijaabee?
Local:	Yes.	ey

Do not walk in front of someone praying as this will invalidate his prayer.

Exchange 4: When do you pray?

Soldier:	When do you pray?	Yawsha kakey salah?
Local:	I pray at noon.	na sala da azahar

Also, make sure to sit cross legged, as it is considered rude to sit with your legs outstretched and your feet facing Mecca. Women should make sure they are sitting in the right place as there may be separate rooms or areas shielded from view for women.

Chapter Three - Traditions

Traditional Language

Hausa is the mother tongue of approximately 22 million Nigerians; about 17 million use it as a second language. It is an official language in northern Nigeria.

Approximately one-fourth of the language is derived from Arabic and the rest from African tribal tongues.¹¹⁴ Educated Hausa use one of two writing systems. The official Hausa orthography uses Roman letters along with special symbols that convey proper pronunciation. This Latin alphabet is used by most commercial publishers and nearly all Hausa language newspapers, as well as for the publishing of official government documents since the late 19th century. The current version, however, was introduced by the British colonial government in the 1930s.



The other writing system in use is the Arabic alphabet, which when used for writing Hausa, is referred to as *ajami*. *Ajami* continues to flourish as a written language, especially by those who compose literary works. There is at least one newspaper published in Arabic orthography. Nigerian bank notes (*naira*) give their monetary value in *ajami*.¹¹⁵

Traditional Jobs and Economy

The economy of the Hausa people is dominated by trade in urban areas and by agriculture in rural areas. Hausa men often have more than one job such as a formal job supplemented by trade work. They are well known for their leather work, carving and sculpting, ironwork, blacksmithing, silver work, pottery and embroidery.¹¹⁶

Nigeria, especially Kano, is known for its dyed-cloth industry, which has been in existence since the 15th century.¹¹⁷ Artisans hand dye cloth using different techniques. Handwoven baskets, table and floor mats may also be found in Northern marketplaces. These handwoven crafts are made from the long grasses found throughout the region and come in a variety of colors.

Women in northern Nigeria are active participants in the economy. Some women complete their jobs at home. They may embroider the *riga*, dye cloth, weave baskets or mats, or make meals that are then purchased by other women to free up their own time.

¹¹⁴ Minnesota State University, Mankato, eMuseum. "Hausa." <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/oldworld/africa/hausu.html>

¹¹⁵ University of California, Los Angeles. "Writing Hausa." <http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/aflang/Hausa/Pronunciation/writing.html>

¹¹⁶ World Cultures. "Hausa." <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Mauritania-to-Nigeria/Hausa.html>

¹¹⁷ Africa Styles. Africana.com. "Clothing in Africa." Khaminwa, Muhonjia. 9 July 2007. http://www.africastyles.com/blackhistory/history_clothing.html

The money they make will be used toward their daughters' dowry.¹¹⁸ Women in urban areas may be employed in nursing, teaching or in the media.¹¹⁹

Greetings

Friendly greetings are very important in Hausa culture.

Exchange 5: Good morning!

Soldier:	Good morning!	barka da asbah!
Local:	Good morning!	barka da asbah!

Exchange 6: Good afternoon!

Soldier:	Good afternoon!	barka da raanaa!
Local:	Good afternoon!	barka da raanaa!

The Hausa people are known for greeting all friends and strangers alike by asking about the other person's health as well as that of family members. The appropriate response to this line of inquiry is *lahiya lau* or "in good health."¹²⁰

Exchange 7: How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	Yaqaya kakay?
Local:	Fine, very well.	laafeeya kalo

Neglecting to greet someone is a sign of disrespect and it is unforgivable to discuss business without taking part in the complex greetings.

Exchange 8: Good evening!

Soldier:	Good evening!	barka de Yamaa!
Local:	Good evening!	barka de Yamaa!

Exchange 9: Good night!

Soldier:	Good night!	a kwaana lapeeya!
Local:	Good night!	a taashey lapeeya!

English is widely used to exchange formulaic social pleasantries among different groups owing to Nigeria's linguistic diversity. When dealing with Hausa individuals, it is a sign of respect to not use the name of one's spouse or family members. Men should also wait for a woman to extend her hand before shaking.

Exchange 10: Hi, Mr. Garba!

¹¹⁸ Nordic Journal of African Studies, Vol. 10 (1). Zakaria, Yakubu. "Entrepreneurs at Home: Secluded Muslim Women and Hidden Economic Activities in Northern Nigeria." 2001. <http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol10num1/yakubu.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol 810. Mack, Beverly. "Authority and Influence in the Kano Harem." 1997. <http://www.annalsnyas.org/cgi/content/abstract/810/1/159>

¹²⁰ Yale School of Public Health. Kirtley, Ariane Alzhara. "Three Rounds of Tuareg Tea." 2006. <http://info.med.yale.edu/eph/news/archives/june/kirtley1.html>

Soldier:	Hi, Mr. Garba!	barka, malam garba!
Local:	Hello!	barka!
Soldier:	Are you doing well?	kana lapeeya?
Local:	Yes.	lapeeya kalo

Male–Female Interactions

Since the introduction of *Shari'a* rule, transportation around the cities and states of northern Nigeria has faced major changes. Minibuses and small public taxis were once widely available for both men and women. However, as the cost of maintaining those vehicles rose, the owners opted to use them for long distance transport only. Transportation around the cities was replaced by motorbikes (*okada*), which can take passengers closer to their destinations by using the narrow alleys. For Muslim women, however, taking a motorbike taxi puts them in close proximity to a male driver.

As a result, the state government decreed that women whizzing through the streets clutching a male driver to whom they were not related was inappropriate. Barred from riding motorcycles as passengers, women found themselves immobile. Cars were not an option because they could not navigate the narrow back alleys and outdoor market areas. So women, who make up 60 percent of commuters in Kano, protested. Pointing out that they needed transportation, they forced the government to find a solution. It came in the form of a tricycle rickshaw. This motorcycle with two back wheels has a canopied seating area with room for three passengers. Women are seated behind the male drivers, separated by black plastic curtains that conceal them from public view.¹²¹



This has met with greater customer satisfaction than the earlier introduction of mini-buses with segregated seating by gender. If the female section was full, for example, women, who constitute the disproportionate share of passengers, were required to wait for the next one.¹²²

Hospitality

The Hausa people are friendly but unless it is a close acquaintance, foreign guests are unlikely to be invited to a Nigerian home. Most professional socializing in cities takes place in restaurants and night clubs.¹²³ By contrast, in rural areas residents invite you into their homes. In the Hausa language, for example, the word *bako* means both guest and stranger.

Exchange 11: I really appreciate your hospitality.

¹²¹ The Eagle, Associated Press. "In Kano, women-only tricycle taxis a symbol of compromise." 7 April 2007. http://www.theeagle.com/stories/040707/faith_20070407062.php

¹²² Washington Post. Timberg, Craig. "Riding Too Close For Comfort." 23 August 2005. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/22/AR2005082201218.html>

¹²³ iExplore. "Nigeria Travel Guide." <http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Nigeria/Do's+and+Don'ts>

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	na Yaba da karimchinkaa
Local:	It is nothing.	ba komay

Exchange 12: The food tastes so good.

Soldier:	The food tastes so good.	key, abinchin da dadee
Local:	Oh, no, it's quite mediocre.	key, wana ay ba wana abinchey baney

Gift-Giving

Gift giving in Nigeria has become part of the political corruption. Gifts are used to persuade, and it is not uncommon for individuals to give gifts that far exceed their financial abilities. They do this in hopes of reaping a large reward. To ensure that a gift is not perceived as a bribe, one must be careful about the selection.

Small gifts of fruits, nuts or chocolates are appreciated as a thank you for dinner. However, a man should never give a gift to a woman; instead he should offer one to her male relatives or husband, or he can offer it from his mother, wife or sister. Gifts should always be wrapped and may not be opened in front of the gift giver.¹²⁴



© pyttter 05.1 flickr.com
Greeting from a Norwo family

When receiving or giving an item, it is appropriate to do so with the right hand or both, but not the left hand only. This applies to gifts and food as well as business cards or other small items.¹²⁵

Eating Habits

In Nigeria, table manners are important. The host will direct people where to sit, which in Muslim households may be on the floor surrounding a mat or low table. The eldest person should always eat first, even if someone is instructed to do otherwise. While eating in a Hausa home, a washing basin may be brought out before the meal. Food is served from a communal plate. If there are no utensils, the right hand should be used to scoop food from the section of the plate directly in front. Do not commit *santi*, the mistake of introducing trivial conversation topics while eating. This includes complimenting the cook.¹²⁶

Exchange 13: What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	wanawan irin abinchey nee?
Local:	This is tuwo shinkafa.	tuwan shankafaa nee

¹²⁴ Kwinesstential Language and Cultural Specialists. "Nigeria – Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette." <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/nigeria.html>

¹²⁵ Kwinesstential Language and Cultural Specialists. "Nigeria – Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette." <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/nigeria.html>

¹²⁶ University of California, Los Angeles. "Mai Jidda Commits Santi!" http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/aflang/Hausa%20culture/culture_frame.html

Cuisine

Roadside stalls (*buka*) are the best place for finding tasty fare.¹²⁷ One popular street food is *suya*, barbecued street food. Few make it at home because the best cooks are the *Suya* people, from the Hausa tribe, who have been making it for generations.¹²⁸ It consists of a piece of meat roasted with oil, onions and salt on an open heat basin.¹²⁹ It is usually prepared during the evenings and is known as a “social food.”



Muslims do not eat pork, but instead eat goat meat as well as beef. The Hausa people in the North favor meat kebabs. Paper soup, made from goat meat or goat’s internal parts, is also a popular dish that is often used as an appetizer.

Exchange 14: What type of meat is this?

Soldier:	What type of meat is this?	wanan waney irin naama nee?
Local:	Lamb.	naaman ragoo nee

Their diets are also based on beans, brown rice and a grain known as sorghum.¹³⁰ Grains make up a large part of the northern Nigerian diet. *Tuwo* is a popular dish similar to pudding that is made from rice grain (*tuwo shinkafa*) or corn grain (*tuwo masara* or *tuwo dawa*). It is usually served with vegetables and beef. Other grain-based foods include *aksi FURO do NONO*, corn balls served with milk yogurt, and bean cakes.¹³¹

Tea is the Muslim Hausa’s drink of choice and coffeehouses have become busy places popular for socializing.

Dress Codes

Hausa prefer traditional attire that is both colorful and elaborate. For women who do not veil in public, this includes the *buba*, or blouse, and *gele*, a headpiece that when unfolded is a plain rectangular sheet. It can be folded or tied in a variety of different ways around the head. The *kaba* is a traditional dress that may be worn with a *gele*.

Exchange 15: Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	ana ay saa wanan kaayan?
Local:	Yes.	ey, ana eya saawa

¹²⁷ Rice University. Hermann, Margo and Roma Patel. “Nigeria.” <http://www.owl.net.rice.edu/~rpatel/>

¹²⁸ Guardian Unlimited. Diski, Chloe. “Nigerian Culture Revolves Around Food.” 10 June 2001. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/foodmonthly/story/0,,502663,00.html>

¹²⁹ Global Voices. Popoola, Edward. “Nigerian Suya.” 20 September 2005. <http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/2005/09/20/nigerian-suya/>

¹³⁰ Food in Every Country. “Food in Nigeria.” <http://www.foodbycountry.com/Kazakhstan-to-South-Africa/Nigeria.html>

¹³¹ Geo Cities. “Nigeria: The Country Today.” 1 May 1997. <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/3629/nigeriaa.html>

Men wear *sokoto*, or loose trousers tied at the waist, *agbada*, a long, wide gown, and *fila*, a round cap.¹³² For ceremonial purposes, men also wear *riga*, a long hand-embroidered robe. This robe is a family heirloom that is passed on from father to son. Traditionally, the embroidery was done by men, but recently it has been taken over by women as a way to generate income.¹³³

Exchange 16: How should I dress?

Soldier:	How should I dress?	wan irin kaaya Ya kamaata in sakaa?
Local:	Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.	ka sa kaaya may walwalaa da zay rufee jikinka

International female visitors should neither wear pants nor dresses that are revealing. Loose fitting skirts are recommended as a way to keep cool. Business suits or attire should be worn when going to a nice restaurant.

Weddings

While Nigeria is the most culturally diverse nation in West Africa, one common denominator across tribes is that marriage rites are observed with much fanfare and passion.¹³⁴ This includes traditional music, dance and food. In urban areas, people of marital age increasingly select their own partners.¹³⁵ Unions across ethnic groups are becoming more common but there are still prohibitions against interfaith marriage.¹³⁶



Exchange 17: Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	inaa tayaa ka murnar awrenka!
Local:	We are honored you could attend.	munji dadee da ka sa modaman zuwa

The marriage is agreed upon at a meeting where the groom’s family introduce themselves to the bride’s family, and ask for their daughter’s hand in marriage to their son. This takes place at the bride’s house while both families are clad in traditional attire.

¹³² National Geographic Traveler. “Nigeria.” May/June 2007. <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/extras/shoppingguide/shopping2.html?fs=www3.nationalgeographic.com&fs=plasma.nationalgeographic.com>

¹³³ Textile Society. Renne, Elisha. “Hausa Hand-Embroidery and Local Development Projects in Northern Nigeria.” http://textilesociety.org/abstracts_2002/Renne.htm

¹³⁴ BBC Radio. “Word on Your Street.” Broadcast 5 July 2003. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/world/onyourstreet/nigerianweddings.shtml>

¹³⁵ Cultural Profiles Projects, Citizen and Immigration Canada. “Family Life.” <http://www.cp-pc.ca/english/nigeria/family.html>

¹³⁶ Islamic law prohibits a Muslim man from taking a woman of animist faith as his wife. They may still marry Christian women, however. Muslim women can only marry Muslim men. Emory University. “West Africa.” <http://www.law.emory.edu/IFL/region/westafrica.html>

The woman's family is responsible for the preparations and costs of this meeting. But if the groom's family is able to, they can suggest helping out with some of the costs and/or the food. This is one function where they are expected to show up at the appointed hour; if they are tardy the bride's family may fine them or even ask them to leave.

Upon entering the bride's home, the female members of the groom's family kneel while the males prostrate themselves for the bride's parents. The groom's family and the bride's family sit on opposite sides of the room, with the bride and groom sitting closer to the center, and the *olopa iduro* and *olopa ijoko*, representatives of the groom's and bride's families respectively, occupying the middle.

The *olopa iduro* introduces the groom's family to the bride and her family. He then presents a formal letter of proposal on their behalf. It is usually tied with a pink ribbon and handed to them through the *olopa ijoko*. The letter is then read out aloud and a verbal response follows immediately. This is simply a formality, since everyone expects the marriage to go forward.

In the past, it was customary for the groom's family to provide the bride's family with a dowry (*owo-ori-iyawo*) intended to compensate them for some of the costs of raising her. But if a dowry is offered nowadays, it usually goes directly to the bride as seed money to set up a new household.¹³⁷



© only @ / Flickr.com
Nigerian groom and his bride

Sometimes the engagement ceremony takes place right after this introduction, and the wedding itself follows quickly. The engagement ceremony also takes place at the bride's house, and her family is once again responsible for the expenses incurred.

Exchange 18: I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	inaa eyo wa koo beyan paatar alheree
Local:	We are honored.	mun godee

A traditional Nigerian bride wears imported Indian fabric, a decorative coral-beaded headpiece, necklaces and coral-beaded ankle bracelets. Muslim women are decorated with henna.

The bride usually has her face covered during the ceremony. When it is over and everyone goes outside for a reception banquet, she usually remains indoors until her presence is requested. She is then guided out to join the group (with the assistance of a friend since her face is still covered) and kneels before her parents so that they may pray for her. Next she kneels before her in-laws so that they may pray for her. Then she is guided to her husband where she sits next to him and is unveiled. Along with the food, there may be a cake in the shape of a Bible or Quran.

¹³⁷ Motherland Nigeria. "Marriage and Family." <http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/life.html>

After the reception festivities have concluded, they go to the groom’s house (his house, not necessarily his family’s house). The bride should arrive at his home before he does and be there to greet him. It is important to note that Muslim Hausa men may marry up to four wives.

Funerals

Indigenous religions offer survival guidance in an unpredictable natural environment. Good spirits are believed to provide protection against harm, misfortune and disease; they are also believed to heal sickness, bestow children, rain for crops, fish, and wild game, and protect the livestock. But these good blessings are contingent upon people adhering to the established norms of good behavior. The most important of these are the values and behavior deemed appropriate by a tribe or ethnic group, participation in religious rituals and practices, and proper respect for family, neighbors, and community. Failure to follow these behavioral guidelines runs the risk of losing the good spirits’ blessing and protection. Evidence of this will come in the form of death, draught, and other misfortune.¹³⁸



Exchange 19: Please be strong.

Soldier:	Please be strong.	kada ka karayaa
Local:	We will try.	zama yooko karee

For example, there is a strong Igbo belief that the spirits of one’s ancestors maintain a constant watch over their descendants. So the living must show appreciation for the dead and pray to them for future well being. In fact it is against tribal law to speak badly of a spirit.¹³⁹ Those ancestors who lived good upstanding lives and died natural deaths are given burials. They then inhabit one of the worlds of the dead, which mirror that of the living. It is believed that they are periodically reincarnated among the living and are referred to as *ndichie* (the returners).

By contrast, those who die violent unnatural deaths are not accorded the same burial rites. They can neither enter the world of the dead nor return to the world of the living. Thus they are condemned to endless wandering, expressing themselves by causing harm to the living. For almost all practitioners of indigenous religions, sorcery and even witchcraft are presumed to be the acts of “bad people” whose spirits or souls are the cause of misfortune for their descendants.

While specific funeral rites vary by tribe, the ceremony is viewed by all as a rite of passage for the deceased, who joins the ranks of venerated ancestors when the prescribed funeral rites have been completed. The ancestors, or living-dead, are believed to be the

¹³⁸ Michigan State University, African Studies Center. “Unit Three: Studying Africa through the Humanities.” <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m14/activity2.php>

¹³⁹ The Imperial Archive, Queen’s University Belfast. Slattery, Katharine. “Religion and the Igbo People.” 15 August 2001. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEnglish/imperial/nigeria/religion.htm>

disembodied spirits of people who lived upright lives here on earth and ultimately died at a ripe old age.¹⁴⁰

After Hausa die they are buried in accordance with Islamic traditions. The Imam prays over the body and leads the family in preparations. Their bodies must be washed, dressed in white, and wrapped in a mat. They must be buried facing eastward, toward Mecca.¹⁴¹

Exchange 20: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	inaa son inya maka jaajee, key da eyaalinkaa
Local:	We are grateful.	mun godee

Non-Religious Celebrations

National Holiday

October 1st is Nigerian National Day. This day marks the Independence in 1960. Schools and businesses are closed so people can attend some of the many celebrations, such as the special ceremonies held at parade grounds.¹⁴²

Exchange 21: Happy Salah!

Soldier:	Happy Salah!	barka da salah!
Local:	You too.	keyma barkanka



Hausa Dance Festival

The Hausa festival of dances is a popular form of village entertainment. Invitations are issued in the form of kola nuts, which villagers distribute to one another. Drummers use a different beat to signal each farmer who stands up, shouts loudly, and then breaks into a song of gratitude. If he knows any magical tricks, he performs them to entertain onlookers. This celebration provides entertainment and strengthens relationships between villagers who attend each others' dance festivals.

¹⁴⁰ African Traditional Religion. Ejizu, Christopher I. "African Traditional Religions and the Promotion of Community – Living in Africa." <http://afrikaworld.net/afrel/community.htm>

¹⁴¹ Country Unit Study. Ralston, Christine. "The People of Nigeria." <http://www.countryunits.com/nigpeople.pdf>

¹⁴² Motherland Nigeria. "Holidays." <http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/holidays.html>

Argungu Fish and Cultural Festival

This four-day cultural event is held on the banks of the Sokoto River and attracts Nigerians from afar. The highlight of the festival occurs when hundreds of fishermen jump into the river and are given an hour to scoop the largest fish for a big cash prize.¹⁴³ The fishermen use traditional nets and gourds. This competition was not held in 2006 owing to low water levels. Other events at the festival include camel and donkey racing, a motor rally, musicals, and cultural dancing.



Markets

Markets are a traditional part of Hausa society. They are places to socialize, to see marriageable prospects, and a place to trade. Children come to the market to dance, sing, hear stories or do business for their mothers. On special holidays, wrestling or boxing matches may take place in the market.¹⁴⁴

Exchange 22: Is the market nearby?

Soldier:	Is the market nearby?	kasuwar bajey kolin tana kusaa?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	ey, a chen daga daama

The rural areas have periodic markets while the urban areas have markets daily. This, along with the size of the markets, is how Hausa determine whether a village is rural or urban.¹⁴⁵ In the administrative center of the state, there is also a central market, which is at the top of the market hierarchy. A group of officials oversee markets and settle any disputes.

¹⁴³ BBC News (International Edition). "Nigeria Bans Fish Festival." 7 December 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6216640.stm>

¹⁴⁴ World Cultures. "Hausa." <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Mauritania-to-Nigeria/Hausa.html>

¹⁴⁵ World Cultures. "Hausa Economy." <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Hausa-Economy.html>

Do's and Don'ts

Do show respect for those older than you even if their professional status is lower.

Do ask before taking anyone's photograph.

Do tip at least 10 percent for all services (i.e., waiters, taxi drivers, etc.)

Don't use your left hand in dealings with Muslims.

Don't discuss intimate matters.

Don't push the palm of your hand forward and spread the fingers because it is considered vulgar.

Don't raise trivial matters during meal conversation with Hausa.

Chapter Four - Urban Life

Urbanization

Nigeria has not only experienced one of the fastest rates of urbanization in the world, it has been unique in magnitude. Nigeria now claims a dense network of metropolitan areas unequalled on the rest of the African continent. It includes over ten cities with populations exceeding one million people.¹⁴⁶ Lagos already qualifies as a “megacity,” which is defined by the UN as having more than ten million residents.¹⁴⁷ This city has grown forty times in size since the 1950s. One of its vast shantytown swamp slums, Ajegunle, is home to approximately 1.5 million residents whose living space is packed into eight sq km (three sq mi).¹⁴⁸ By 2025, four additional Nigerian cities will qualify as megacities as well.



A substantial number of cities in Nigeria functioned as urban centers prior to British colonial rule. They evolved as centers of political and religious authority, and may have served as trading stations for the shipment of goods across either the Sahara Desert or the Atlantic Ocean. Alternatively, some cities were established as military fortifications that provided the population with protection from outside armies.¹⁴⁹

After the establishment of colonial rule, a number of additional port cities, river ports, railway terminus towns, rail-side towns, and administrative centers came into existence as a result of the commercial activities generated by the European presence. But the prospect of a large population of African city dwellers made British colonial administrators leery.

The British saw cities as enclaves for administration, colonial trade, and transportation, not as centers of industry where jobs would be created or as places for self-sustaining growth. The policies and institutions for urban development were extremely limited or even nonexistent in some places. This was particularly true in critical areas such as land-use and the provision of infrastructure and services, since expansion was not envisioned.

Urban planning and housing settlements simply existed to ensure that the European community was protected in segregated high-quality residential enclaves. But these laws,

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Conference on Planning Growth and Sustainable Architecture. Alkali, John L.S. “Planning Sustainable Urban Growth in Nigeria: Challenges and Strategies.” 6 June 2005.
<http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2005/docs/Alkali.pdf>

¹⁴⁷ National Academy of Engineering. Bugliarello, George. “Megacities and the Developing World.” 1999.
<http://www.nae.edu/nae/bridgecom.nsf/weblinks/NAEW-4NHMPU?OpenDocument>

¹⁴⁸ Counterpunch. Watts, Michael. “Oil Inferno.” 2 January 2007.
<http://www.counterpunch.org/watts01022007.html>

¹⁴⁹ Global Urban Development Magazine. Nwaka, Geoffrey I. “The Urban Informal Sector in Nigeria: Towards Economic Development, Environmental Health, and Social Harmony.” May 2005.
<http://www.globalurban.org/Issue1PIMag05/NWAKA%20article.htm>

codes, regulations, and institutions designed to ensure hygienic living standards for small expatriate populations were never updated after independence. Successive governmental administrations failed to appreciate how unsuitable they were for the post-colonial era.

The adoption of an import-substitution industrialization strategy had some impact on urbanization. Factory production relied mainly on imported inputs, particularly raw materials, to make goods for the domestic market.¹⁵⁰ Locating the factories near ports reduced the cost of imports. But it also meant that factories could not be located in the interior, which would have reduced the flow of job seekers to port cities.¹⁵¹

Urban Infrastructure

Only about 20 to 40 percent of construction in Nigeria cities has been undertaken after receiving formal government approval.¹⁵² Until 1981, there was no urban transportation plan for the Lagos metropolitan area. Road networks were simply extended into areas as urbanization expanded on the city's fringe.¹⁵³ The weaknesses of administrative regulatory controls along with the spread of the informal sector have resulted in commercial activity extending into every available space.¹⁵⁴



In the words of one Nigerian, this means that “[t]here is no functionality in our cities, no beauty and no rules....Our trash is sometimes left to dispose of itself. Our traffic lights can work when they please, just as we obey them when we please. We develop roads and business areas without providing for drainage or parking or public toilets.”¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the complete lack of municipal services in most urban neighborhoods forces residents to become self-sufficient by any means available. For example, they tap into electrical lines, causing blackouts and fires.¹⁵⁶

To further worsen the situation, only 50 percent of the water demand is met by Lagos waterworks. Individuals often dig wells to supplement piped water. Although most

¹⁵⁰ Egwaikhede, Festus O. “Determinants of Imports in Nigeria: A Dynamic Specification.” 2000.

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/IDEP/UNPAN003901.pdf>

¹⁵¹ Montclair State University, Center for Economic Research on Africa, School of Business. “Urban Development Policies in Nigeria: Planning, Housing, and Land Policy.” December 1988.

<http://alpha.montclair.edu/~lebelp/CERAFRM002Taylor1988.pdf>

¹⁵² This situation was addressed by Herman de Soto in *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*. 2000. New York: Basic Books. He argues that a haphazard regulatory environment forces the poor into the underground economy which does not allow them to count their assets, such as housing, as capital.

¹⁵³ United Nations University Programme on Mega-cities and Urban Development. “Infrastructure, Services, and Housing.” <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu26ue/uu26ue0j.htm>

¹⁵⁴ Abdou, Maliq Simone, “Moving Towards Uncertainty: Migration and the Turbulence of African Urban Life.” June 2003. <http://www.pum.princeton.edu/pumconference/papers/2-Simone.pdf>

¹⁵⁵ Port Harcourt Telegraph. Olumhense, Sonala. “Behold Nigeria’s Loveliest City.” 26 March 2007. http://www.thephctelegraph.com/stories/050307/2603feat_03.html

¹⁵⁶ The New Yorker. Packer, George. “The Megacity: Decoding the Chaos of Lagos.” 13 November 2006. <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/board/lounge/33688-megacity-decoding-chaos-lagos.html>

residents have access to flush toilets, the lack of piped water means these do not work properly. This is coupled with inadequate waste treatment facilities, which end up emptying untreated waste into the lagoon. This, in turn, pollutes the groundwater and makes water collected from wells unhealthy.

Housing Issues

During the oil boom in the 1970s, grand plans were announced to build housing for the urban poor. But less than one-fifth of the housing was actually constructed. Most of it, moreover, went to Nigerians with incomes high above the eligibility requirements.¹⁵⁷

The placement and layout of the buildings reflect the fact they were built to meet the needs of a continuously expanding population. The predominant architectural model is the rooming house built on one or two stories. These houses have rooms built on either side of a long hall. Cooking facilities are located at either the end of the halls or in a separate shack.

In most residential buildings, the bathrooms are located outside, usually in the back. Because of the lack of planning, the outhouse of one building is often located directly in front of a newer building. Outhouses consist of corrugated zinc sheets over dug pits and concrete floor slabs.¹⁵⁸



© Journal Woman / Flickr.com
Apartments in Lagos

In Lagos, when land occupied by squatters becomes attractive to developers, the squatters are often evicted. These marginalized people, many long-term residents despite lack of access to clean water, sanitation, adequate health care or education, are usually heavily represented in the ranks of the uprooted. “The poor of Lagos pay a heavy price for living on land that has increased in value: seeing their homes razed to the ground by government bulldozers,” said Felix Morka, Executive Director of Social and Economic Rights Action Center, Lagos.¹⁵⁹

This has also become a problem in Abuja, the new capital. Demolition of existing homes was carried out in the absence of a relocation plan. When a package was belatedly offered, only a handful of those evicted were actually able to physically inspect the remote site. Even fewer have been able to afford to build new homes there.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ *Planet of Slums*. Davis, Mike. 2006. New York: Verso, pp. 66-67.

¹⁵⁸ Olotuah, Abiodun and Olutunde Solomon Adesiji. “Housing Poverty, Slum Formation and Deviant Behavior.” <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/chp/hsa/autumn05/papers/OLOTUAH1.doc>

¹⁵⁹ Amnesty International. “Nigeria: Forced evictions in Lagos make thousands homeless.” 24 January 2006. <http://news.amnesty.org/index/ENGAFR440032006>

¹⁶⁰ Nigeria was named one of three “Housing Rights Violators” by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions in 2006 because of its extensive record of state-sanctioned mass forced evictions reflecting an official ongoing disregard for the right of people to adequate housing. Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions. “Violator Award – Nigeria.” 5 December 2006.

http://www.cohre.org/view_page.php?page_id=235

Employment

Since the early days of Independence, the informal sector has been the largest source of employment in Nigerian cities. In the absence of government services, entrepreneurial urbanites cobble together an informal economic infrastructure utilizing kinship and ethnic networks. This enables them to undertake commercial activities that are sufficient to provide a livelihood. Their main strategy for economic betterment is to have as many members of households in the workforce as possible. This is why female participation in the urban work force is considerably higher among the poor than the well-off.

Exchange 23: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

Soldier:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	key ka eenee a chink eyaalinka kakey aaykee?
Local:	No.	aa-aa, ba nee kaday baney

Health Care

Western medicine was introduced into Nigeria in the 1800s by Christian missionaries. Throughout the colonial period, missionary groups played a major role in the provision of health care services to Nigerians and built more hospitals than the government.¹⁶¹

Exchange 24: Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	akwey asibitee nan kusaa?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	akwey, chan TSakiyar garee

After independence, the government set up a health care system which, by the early 1970s, worked rather well. This was paid for by oil revenues. But by the 1980s, even emergency services were difficult to find and required cash payment up front. Endemic corruption and embezzlement of public funds by a succession of military governments ruined much of Nigeria's health care system and caused many health care professionals to emigrate.¹⁶² In 2003 the Nigerian infant mortality rate was 100/1000. One-fifth did not survive to reach the age of five.¹⁶³

Some preventive health measures have been stymied owing to religious sensitivities. For example, in 2003 the World Health Organization campaign came to Kano in order to vaccinate children against polio. The city's Muslim religious leaders claimed the vaccine had been contaminated with drugs that would make African women, Muslims in particular, infertile.¹⁶⁴



© Mike Uyth
Container functioning as a clinic

¹⁶¹ U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division. "Nigeria: Health." 1991. <http://countrystudies.us/nigeria/50.htm>

¹⁶² Harvard Public Health Review. Silber, Judy. "Nigeria: Changing Times, Improving Health." 1999. http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/review/summer_nigeria.shtml

¹⁶³ Huhdanpaa, Pihla. "Child Health in Nigeria." 2005. <http://www.uku.fi/kansy/eng/child.pdf> [p.5]

¹⁶⁴ BBC News (UK version). "Kano: Nigeria's Ancient City-State." 20 May 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3708309.stm>

Northern Nigeria still has a high risk of polio infection, as well as cholera and meningitis. Travelers there should be aware that government facilities are poor but private hospitals may be able to provide adequate care if needed.

Exchange 25: Is Dr. Likita in, sir?

Soldier:	Is Dr. Likita in, sir?	likeeta sahaabee na nan?
Local:	No.	aa-aa, baaya nan

Telecommunications

At the time of Independence in 1960, there were fewer than 20,000 land line telephones in Nigeria. By 1999, when military rule ended, there were still fewer than 400,000 lines.¹⁶⁵ The sole telecommunications provider was state-run Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL). Since then privatization has occurred and cell phones are widely in use in urban Nigeria.

Exchange 26: What is your telephone number?

Soldier:	What is your telephone number?	mineyn lambar wayarkaa?
Local:	My phone number is 1325477.	lambar wayataa itesey daya, uku, beeyu, beyar, hu-oo, bakoy, bakoy

Exchange 27: May I use your phone?

Soldier:	May I use your phone?	zan eeya anpaanee da wayarka ta tarho?
Local:	Sure.	zaaka eeya manaa

Safety

Riots occur across northern Nigeria. Travelers should avoid crowds, demonstrations and protests. Ethnic tensions in the Muslim majority areas can escalate with deadly consequences. Visitors should use only licensed transportation services and avoid dealing with unlicensed drivers.

Exchange 28: Did these people threaten you?

Soldier:	Did these people threaten you?	wadanan mutaanin sun yee makaa barazaana nee?
Local:	No.	aa-aa

¹⁶⁵ Nigerian Communication Commission. "The Nigerian Telecom Industry: Focus on History of Telecom." 11 October 2006.
 Nwww.ncc.gov.ng/speeches_presentations/EVC's%20Presentation/EVC's%20CTO%20Presentation101006.pdf

Transportation

Ironically, citizens of this oil-rich nation suffer from a scarcity of fuel owing to the erratic supply of oil, limited production capacity of Nigerian refineries, and price controls imposed by the federal government. Low refining capacity means that Nigeria often has to import much of its oil. Artificial price controls have led to the expansion of a black market in gas, making it difficult to find gas in certain places (especially in the North) and at certain times.¹⁶⁶



Exchange 29: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	akwey orin shan may a nan kusaa?
Local:	Yes.	ey, akwey

While the roads are of better than average quality by African standards, driving is hazardous. In addition to drunk drivers and unenforced speed limits, the roads themselves follow circuitous routes in newly developed areas.

Exchange 30: Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	wacha haanya ke zuwa pilin jirgin sama?
Local:	The road heading east.	haanyar da tayee gabas

This is because, in the words of an urban planner, “The government would acquire land, and people just moved on and constructed buildings, so it becomes difficult to build roads on that land. So you have to wind your way around the existing structures.”¹⁶⁷

Exchange 31: Where can I rent a car?

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	inaa zan saamoo hayar mota?
Local:	Downtown.	a tikin garee

In the north, it is more common to see people on bicycles as this mode of transportation is much cheaper than owning a car. Motorized rickshaws also transport people around the cities. These are smaller than automobile taxis and can navigate the narrow alleyways and markets found throughout urban areas.

Exchange 32: Can I share this cab with you?

Soldier:	Can I share this cab with you?	zamu eya shiga taksee din taarida key?
Local:	No, wait for another.	aa-aa, ka jira wata motar

¹⁶⁶ University of Northern Iowa, Nigeria Background Notes. Kraxberger, Brennan. “Transportation and the Movement of People in Nigeria: Some Tentative Notes.” <http://www.uni.edu/gai/Nigeria/Background/Transportation.html>

¹⁶⁷ Los Angeles Times. Dixon, Robyn. “Lagos: ‘The New York of Nigeria.’” 25 June 2007. <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-lagos25jun25,0,1166186.story?coll=la-home-center>

Exchange 33: Can you take me there?

Soldier:	Can you take me there?	zaaka ey key nee cha?
Local:	Yes, I can.	ey, zan ya

After the introduction of Shari'a law, women were banned from riding on motorcycle taxis, as this put them in too close proximity to unrelated men. The three-wheeled motorcycles had a curtain added that would block female passengers from view.¹⁶⁸

Exchange 34: Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	motar safara zaata zo nan bada jima ba?
Local:	Yes.	ey, zaata zo

Restaurants

In northern Nigeria, you may be invited to go out to eat instead of being welcomed into someone's home. Most entertaining is done in restaurants. Coffeehouses are also prominent places for men to socialize.

**Exchange 35: I would like coffee or tea.**

Soldier:	I would like coffee or tea.	inaa son gahaawa ko shaayee
Local:	Sure.	To

Exchange 36: Are you still serving breakfast?

Soldier:	Are you still serving breakfast?	har Yanz akwaree karin kumalo?
Local:	Yes.	Ey

Dressing up is expected when dining out. Nigerians take great pride in their appearance and visitors should as well. Women should not wear pants. They should opt for a long skirt with a long tunic-like top that has sleeves to the elbows.

Exchange 37: What ingredients are used to make *tsiren*?

Soldier:	What ingredients are used to make <i>tsiren</i> ?	da me akey yin TSiren?
Local:	Meat, chilis, tomato and coriander	naman rago da akey hadawa da Yajee, albasa da gishiree

Exchange 38: The meal was very good.

Soldier:	The meal was very good.	abinchin Yayee dadee
Local:	Next time the food will be better.	abinchin na gaba maa zay fowanan dadee

Restaurants in Nigeria can run the gamut from Chinese to traditional West African food.

¹⁶⁸ The Eagle. Associated Press. "In Nigeria's Muslim North, Women-Only Tricycle Taxis a Symbol of Compromise." 7 April 2007. http://www.theeagle.com/stories/040707/faith_20070407062.php

Exchange 39: I'd like some hot soup.

Soldier:	I'd like some hot soup.	inaa son roman sha may zaapee
Local:	Sure.	To

An entrée can cost anywhere from 40 US cents to USD 100.¹⁶⁹

Exchange 40: Do you have a dessert?

Soldier:	Do you have a dessert?	kana da kwalama?
Local:	Yes, we have fura and nono.	akwey puraa da nunoo

Alcohol is not served in northern Nigeria due to Shari'a law.

Exchange 41: May I have a glass of water?

Soldier:	May I have a glass of water?	ko zan samu gilaashin rowan sha?
Local:	Yes sir!	za asaamu, meygira!

Do not expect to receive the bill for drinks or food until you are ready to leave. Nigerians do not pay as they go; rather they pay at the end. The older or better off individual usually picks up the tab.

Exchange 42: Can I have my total bill, please?

Soldier:	Can I have my total bill, please?	zaaka gayamin ko nawa nee kudin da zan beeya bakee daya?
Local:	Yes sir!	ey, meygira!

If everyone is paying for themselves, it is recommended to hand over the money to one person prior to eating. Nigerians do not split the bill, so the designated person should pay the bill on behalf of the group. A ten percent tip is expected for all services, including waiters.

Exchange 43: Put this all in one bill?

Soldier:	Put this all in one bill?	za abya duk wana a hadee nee?
Local:	Okay.	ey, Yayee dadee

Exchange 44: Where is your restroom?

Soldier:	Where is your restroom?	inaa awrin bahayarku?
Local:	That room to your left, over there.	wanchan dakin nee, daga geypin hagu

¹⁶⁹ Consulate General of Nigeria. "Practical Information for Visitors." <http://www.nigeria-consulate-atl.org/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=73&op=page&SubMenu=>

Marketplace

Northern Nigeria is home to marketplaces, not shopping malls. Here there are rows of stalls that sell anything ranging from food to clothing to musical instruments.

Exchange 45: How much longer will you be here?

Soldier:	How much longer will you be here?	zaaka dadee ana?
Local:	Three more hours.	zan kaara aawa ukoo

Kurmi Market in Kano has many of the local crafts, including the embroidered horse blankets used in festivals, hand-dyed and indigo cloth, leatherwork, and metal crafts.

Exchange 46: Do you sell *data baja*?

Soldier:	Do you sell <i>data baja</i> ?	kuna da data baja?
Local:	Yes.	ey, muna da su

Exchange 47: Do you have any more of these?

Soldier:	Do you have any more of these?	kanaa da sawrin wadana?
Local:	No.	aa-aa, baabu

Exchange 48: May I examine this close up?

Soldier:	May I examine this close up?	zan ey duba wanan da kil?
	Sure.	sosey manaa

Purchasing

You are expected to barter, but beware that the seller is usually an expert at this. In the North, the seller's original price can be 100 times the price he is willing to sell the item for. Do not try to negotiate downward. Instead, you may offer back with a much lower price that you would be willing to pay. If this is not agreeable to him, you may negotiate upwards by small amounts or you may walk away. Once you agree on a price, you are expected to purchase the item.¹⁷⁰ Be sure not to behave rudely while bartering or cause the seller to lose face.¹⁷¹



© Zouzu Wirman / Flickr.com
Market in Lagos

Exchange 49: Can I buy a carpet with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a carpet with this much money?	wanan kudin zey eya saya min dar dooma?
Local:	No.	aa-aa

¹⁷⁰ Consulate General of Nigeria. "Practical Information for Visitors." <http://www.nigeria-consulate-atl.org/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=73&op=page&SubMenu=>

¹⁷¹ Online Nigeria. Ekpenyong, A.J.U. "Useful Information for the Foreign Visitor." <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/tours/visitorGuide.asp>

The currency is the naira, which consists of both coins and paper notes. Although the currency exchange is high, it is advised to exchange at approved exchange facilities using the official rate only. Trading money on the black market, or at unofficial exchange facilities, is illegal and can lead to an arrest. Credit cards are usually not an acceptable form of payment. Using one is not advised due to the prevalence of credit card fraud.¹⁷²

Exchange 50: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	kuna karbar kudin amurka?
Local:	No we only accept naira.	aa-aa, naira ko muk karba

Exchange 51: Can you give me change for this?

Soldier:	Can you give me change for this?	zaaka ey chanja min wana?
Local:	No.	aa-aa



Street Peddling

Peddling is an ancient form of marketing. Sellers display their wares and move them from one destination to another with the aim of finding buyers for their goods and services. The lack of infrastructure, however, limits the ability of sellers to move from one locale to another.¹⁷³

Exchange 52: Please, buy something from me.

Local:	Please, buy something from me.	don alah, zo ka sey wanaa abu daga wurinaa
Soldier:	Sorry, I have no money left.	key hakuree kudina Yaa kaaree

For street sellers this can be an advantage. To find customers, they sometimes create traffic congestion. The most common methods are depositing refuse and other materials or by creating pot holes just to slow traffic, which must halt for their convenience.¹⁷⁴ The best way to deal with these street sellers, as well as beggars, is to calmly make clear to them that you are not giving them money.

Exchange 53: Give me money

Local:	Give me money	baanu kudee
Soldier:	I don't have any.	baana da kudee

¹⁷² iExplore. "Nigerian Travel Guide - Shopping." <http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Nigeria/Shopping>

¹⁷³ One World. Barrailler, Vince. "Letter from Lagos (and Beyond)." 4 July 2005. <http://us.oneworld.net/article/view/116606/1/7587?PrintableVersion=enabled>

¹⁷⁴ Nigerian Tribune. Olabulo, Olalekan. "Survival extraordinaire street traders dig potholes on roads - To sell wares, other items," 11 April 2007. <http://www.tribune.com.ng/11042007/lagos.html>

Chapter Five - Rural Life

Rural Economy

Small-scale farmers dominate the agricultural landscape of Nigeria. Their livelihood is characterized by cultivation practices that are highly labor-intensive, meaning the level of mechanization is low. The steady decline of the price agricultural products fetch in the international market is reflected in what they grow. Nigerian farmers have shifted from cultivating cash crops for export to growing food items for household consumption and sale to urban consumers.¹⁷⁵



Output increases have come from expanding the area under cultivation rather than from improvements in productivity. Intensive cultivation of fragile soil has exacerbated the problem of soil degradation. The government has attempted to encourage private investment in agriculture and agro-industries by offering incentives such as tax breaks, credit and extension services. But this effort has not been met with much success.¹⁷⁶

Exchange 54: Where do you work, sir?

Soldier:	Where do you work, sir?	aa inaa kakey aaykee?
Local:	I am a farmer, sir.	nee manomee nee

Typical Sources of Income

The livelihood of herder nomads is based on animal husbandry. Cattle herding tribes in the North are faced with the challenges of living near the Sahara.¹⁷⁷ As both animal stocks and human population have increased in size, grazing demands on the ecosystem near the desert have exhausted natural barriers to desertification.¹⁷⁸ As these barriers break down, the desert encroaches southward. This has made it necessary for herders to move their animals southward into the agricultural areas of settled farmers whose livelihood comes from harvesting planted crops.¹⁷⁹

In the northern half of Nigeria, government policy has encouraged groundnut, cotton, maize, and millet production over the years.¹⁸⁰ Today, farmers grow peanuts, cowpeas

¹⁷⁵ U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division. "Nigeria: Social Structure." <http://countrystudies.us/nigeria/42.htm>

¹⁷⁶ Africa Recovery, United Nations. *Africa Recovery*, Vol. 13 #1. "Agriculture lags, despite potential." June 1999. <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/subjindx/131nigr5.htm>

¹⁷⁷ American University, Trade and Environment Database. Furber, Andrew. "TED Conflict Studies Fulani and Zarma Tribes Pushed into Fights by Desertification?" June 1997. <http://www.american.edu/ted/ice/niger.htm>

¹⁷⁸ Desertification refers to the loss of soil fertility and structure to the extent that its ability to support plant life is severely reduced.

¹⁷⁹ Moritz, Mark. "Changing Contexts of Herder-Farmer Conflicts across West Africa." <http://www.wou.edu/~moritzm/introduction%20CJAS.pdf>

¹⁸⁰ Oasis. "Nigerian farmers adapt and prosper." <http://oasisglobal.net/gombe.htm>

and cotton. Farmers remain limited to a single annual crop that coincides with the rainy season. Reduced harvests not only threaten livelihoods; in communities where the livelihood of residents is based upon rain-fed agriculture, it threatens survival itself.

Since the rainy season lasts longer the farther south one goes, Fulani pastoralists move their herds toward greener pastures in the middle belt region during the eight-month dry season in the North. Violence has periodically flared up in the Plateau state, which enjoys climatic conditions suitable for both crop cultivation and livestock rearing.¹⁸¹



© Maellym
Fulani boy herding cows

A planted field can be destroyed by animals in search of pasture. Disputes turn ugly when farmers, who are Christian, accuse Muslim herders of deliberately sending cattle to trample their cornfields. Or the opposite charge is made; herders accuse cultivators of stealing their cattle.

The feud over land use is exacerbated by other fault lines. Those who refer to themselves as indigene in the Plateau state, for example, are mostly Christians, from a host of small ethnic groups.

Exchange 55: Did you grow up here?

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	a nan ka jirmaa?
Local:	Yes.	Ey

By contrast, those known as settlers are mainly Muslims from the Hausa and Fulani tribes, whose ancestors came from the North. The indigenous people tend to be farmers while the settlers herd cattle and engage in trade.

Exchange 56: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	wanan peelinka nee?
Local:	Yes.	ey, nawa nee

The fact that violence escalated after democracy was restored is not coincidental.¹⁸² Under military leadership, the army kept a tight lid on the simmering tensions. Elected officials, by contrast, often resort to stirring up conflict to divert attention from their own self-enrichment schemes or to build a base of support for upcoming elections.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Abubakar Sokoto Mohammed. "The Impact of Conflict on the Economy: The Case of Plateau State of Nigeria." http://www.odi.org.uk/speeches/nigeria_2004/AS%20Mohammed%20Web%20paper.pdf

¹⁸² IRIN News. "Nigeria: Jos Voters Angry and Divided." 9 April 2007.

<http://newsite.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=71232>

¹⁸³ Wider's Conference on Making Peace. Onyeiwu, Steve. "On the Economic Determinants of Violent Conflict in Africa: Preliminary Evidence from Nigeria." June 2004.

<http://www.wider.unu.edu/conference/conference-2004-1/conference%202004-1-papers/Onyeiwu-1905.pdf>

Politics of Exclusion

In 1979, the concept of indigeneity was introduced into Nigerian public law by the constitution. This was done on the grounds that it would guarantee a fair distribution of power. In effect, it accords a special status to the group that is designated as indigene. Those are the residents of any given locality who can prove they belong to the ethnic community whose ancestors first settled the area. Everyone else is considered a non-indigene, no matter how strong their ties to the communities where they reside.¹⁸⁴

Exchange 57: Do you know this area very well?

Soldier:	Do you know this area very well?	kaa san wanan worin sosey?
Local:	Yes.	ey, naa san shee

Behind the concept of indigeneity is the belief that there is a meaningful distinction to be made between “host” and “settler” communities.¹⁸⁵ The thought that “first in time is first in right,” is enough justification for such a distinction.¹⁸⁶ It opens the door to conflict, however, when the primary means of securing a livelihood is land-based and where some of the “settler” tribes have resided in the region for generations.¹⁸⁷

A different justification has been made on the grounds that Nigeria is a country made of 250 ethnic tribal groups. Many Nigerians belong to ethnic communities so small that their fear of being absorbed into the larger populations around them and losing control of their community identity is legitimate.

Exchange 58: Does your leader live here?

Soldier:	Does your leader live here?	a nan shugabanku ke zoney?
Local:	Yes.	ey, nan nee

The *indigene* policy affords smaller ethnic communities the power to maintain some degree of cultural autonomy, including control over their chieftaincies and other forms of traditional governance.

¹⁸⁴ Indigenous women who marry non-indigenous men lose their own status and will not gain that of their husband’s group. Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. “Nigeria: Country Report Based on Research and Dialogue with Political Parties.” 2005.
<http://www.idea.int/parties/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=14997>

¹⁸⁵ Relief Web. “‘They Do Not Own This Place:’ Government Discrimination Against ‘Non-Indigenes’ in Nigeria.” 25 April 2006. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EK0I-6P83FK?OpenDocument>

¹⁸⁶ Washington College of Law. Human Rights Brief. Isa-Odidi, Nabila. “Ethnic Conflict in Plateau State: The Need to Eliminate the Indigene/Settler Dichotomy in Nigeria.” 2004.
<http://www.wcl.american.edu/hrbrief/12/1isaodidi.cfm>

¹⁸⁷ Scholars have identified conflicts involving “sons of the soil” as more intractable than urban-based disputes where historical and emotional ties to the land are usually not a factor. International Studies Association. Regan, Patrick. “Complex Strategies: Interventions and the Management of Civil Conflicts.” March 2002. <http://www.isanet.org/noarchive/regan.html>

Exchange 59: Can you take me to your leader?

Soldier:	Can you take me to your leader?	ko daaka key nee wurin shugaban naaku?
Local:	Yes.	ey

Exchange 60: Respected leader, we need your help / advice / opinion.

Soldier:	Respected leader, we need your help / advice / opinion.	may girma, shugabaa, muna bukaatar tamakonka / shaawararka / ra-ayinka
Local:	Yes.	to

The Nigerian Constitution guarantees equal rights to any citizen who settles anywhere in the country. This means government policies that deny non-indigenes the material benefits of citizenship exclude many Nigerians from rights they should be able to enjoy as citizens. In some states, non-indigenes are barred from competing for government jobs and academic scholarships. State-run public universities also subject them to discriminatory admissions policies and higher fees. Moreover, as the Africa Director of Human Rights Watch observed “[m]any Nigerian politicians are simply trying to curry favor with their indigene constituents by excluding non-indigenes from scarce opportunities that should be available to all.”¹⁸⁸

Ethnic conflict has erupted because groups have disagreed over who is entitled to claim indigene status. After this distinction was codified, it increased the power of those who are in a position to confer it.¹⁸⁹ Local officials have fueled Christian–Muslim tensions by denying certificates of indigeneity to people who do not share their religion.¹⁹⁰

The Agricultural Household



One common characteristic of a Hausa village is that the household is the primary social unit of the community. Rural Hausa villages, *gari*, are made up of many compounds called *gidas*, and are headed by a *maigari*. In turn, each *gida* is headed by a *maigida*, who is a male head of household. The women of a house must have permission from the *maigida* to pursue any economic activities, enforcing the patriarchal society.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch. “Nigeria: Indigeneity Policies Marginalize Millions.” 25 April 2006. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/04/24/nigeri13260.htm>

¹⁸⁹ University of Bordeaux, Institute of Politics. Bach, Daniel. “Nigeria: Toward a Country without a State?” June 2004. http://www.odi.org.uk/speeches/nigeria_2004/Bach%20paper.pdf

¹⁹⁰ Inter Press Service News Agency. Lobe, Jim. “Nigeria: Discrimination Against ‘Non-Indigenes’ Threatens Civil Peace.” 25 April 2006. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=33002>

¹⁹¹ *Adapted Farming in West Africa: Issues, Potentials and Perspectives*. Graef, F., P. Lawrence and M. von Oppen. “Ethnic Groups in Nigeria.” 2000. <http://www.troz.uni-hohenheim.de/research/sfb308/FRcont/EthnicGNiger.pdf>

Exchange 61: How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	mutaney nawa ke zoney a wanan gidan?
Local:	Ten.	goma

Compounds are composed multiple of buildings, surrounded by an earthen wall, which marks off the collective space of a single compound. The size of the compound is determined by the number of children and extended family residing in the compound and by the number of wives that a man has. Polygamy is much more prevalent in the North where Muslim men are allowed by law to have as many as four wives. In households where polygamy is practiced, each wife will usually have her own hut within the compound.¹⁹²



© FineApples / Mad Ahcam
Family patriarch

Health Care

Government-provided services for rural Nigerians have largely fallen under the umbrella of primary healthcare.¹⁹³ This encompasses issues relating to an adequate and safe water supply, nutrition, and immunization, among other things. But most parts of the country lack even this level of basic care.¹⁹⁴

Exchange 62: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	akwey karmar asibtee nan kusaa?
Local:	Yes, over there.	ey, gaata chan

Many Nigerians opt for traditional practitioners rather than those who have been Western-trained whose expertise is only to be consulted as a last resort.

Exchange 63: My arm is broken, doctor, can you help me?

Soldier:	My arm is broken, doctor, can you help me?	hanoona Ya karee, likeeta, zaaka eya taymaka min?
Local:	Yes, I can help you.	ey, zan eya taymakonka

Traditional healers, who are believed to have special powers that enable them to communicate with the spirit world, view the presence of disease or illness as a sign that there is an imbalance between the patient and either the natural or the spirit world.

¹⁹² University of Northern Iowa, Nigeria Background Information. "Standard 12: Human Settlements." <http://www.uni.edu/gai/Nigeria/Background/Standard12.html>

¹⁹³ World Rural Health. Fatayi-Williams, Alan. "The Pakoto Project: Training Community Health Workers For The New Millennium." 2002. <http://abc.net.au/rural/worldhealth/papers/13.htm>

¹⁹⁴ Avert. "HIV & AIDS in Nigeria." 20 April 2007. <http://www.avert.org/aids-nigeria.htm>

Clientele can include urban residents as well.¹⁹⁵ Medicinal plants are widely used by all practitioners to treat a variety of ailments.¹⁹⁶

Health Problems

Many health problems in northern Nigeria are caused by water or lack of it. Cholera and guinea worm are spread by contaminated water, while air-borne meningitis and measles are spread by the wind during the dry season. Even during the rainy season, the lack of suitable drinking water forces people to consume water from contaminated sources. Doctors have noted that the worst cases they see are people who have little access to medical care.¹⁹⁷



Exchange 64: Do you know what is wrong?

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	kaa san abinda ba daday ba?
Local:	No.	aa-aa, ban sanee ba

The Muslim community in northern Nigeria caused an uproar over polio vaccinations in 2004. They claimed that the vaccines were contaminated by the U.S. in order to render Muslim Nigerian women infertile. This refusal was detrimental to the efforts for eradicating polio worldwide as Kano became the center of a polio outbreak that then spread to areas in surrounding Nigerian states and other countries.¹⁹⁸

Today, Nigeria is one of the last four countries in which polio is a problem. In 2006, 56 percent of the world’s polio cases occurred in Nigeria. Recently, vaccinations have been taking place thanks to government run “immunization plus days” and child education programs.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Springer Link. Izugbara, Otutubikey “Urban women’s use of rural-based health care services: The case of Igbo women in Aba city, Nigeria.” March 2005.
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/j066w866v111n851/>

¹⁹⁶ Refugee Heath ~ Immigrant Health. Early, Mindy; and Sharon McKinney, Jenny Murray. “Nigerians.”
http://www3.baylor.edu/~Charles_Kemp/nigerian_refugees.htm

¹⁹⁷ Relief Web. United Nations Officer for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – IRIN. “Dozens Die in Cholera Outbreak in Northern Nigeria.” 07 September 2003.
<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/4ef40549b130388649256d9b0002122e>

¹⁹⁸ BBC International. Borzella, Anna. “Nigeria’s Muslim Clerics Fear polio Vaccine.” 16 January 2004.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3400651.stm>

¹⁹⁹ UNICEF. Jaulmes, Christine. “Children Take the Lead in Northern Nigeria’s Immunization Drive.” 5 March 2007. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nigeria_38545.html

Rural Transportation Issues

Nigerian roads in rural areas are not well maintained and can be difficult to navigate. The rains continue to cause road damage making some of them inaccessible during certain times of the year. Villages have many alleyways and markets that make car navigation difficult. For this reason as well as others, bicycles, motorcycles, and scooters are popular modes of transportation.²⁰⁰



Exchange 65: Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	akwey tashar jiragin kasa nan kusaa?
Local:	No.	aa-aa baabu

Exchange 66: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	aana saamun makankey kirkee a nan kusaa?
Local:	Yes.	ey, aana saamu

Rural Gender Roles

Even in Northern Nigeria, women practice seclusion to some extent. The patriarchal nature of the Hausa culture allows the men to make decisions for the women and the entire household although the extent of *purdah* is dependent on economy status. The more affluent families can afford for women to stay inside the home or compound all day, while other families must have the women work on the farm.

A Hausa woman's main role is to take care of household chores and her children. She may also take part in her own economic activity, producing something at home (food or other items) that will be sold at the market or to individuals. Since women do not attend the market or often leave the house, the children are sent to pick up necessities, sell items and run errands for their mothers.

Men are financially responsible for the household. A man's wealth determines the number of wives he may have.²⁰¹ Hausa men must fetch firewood and water, which differs from other ethnic groups in Nigeria in which this is a woman's responsibility.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Nigeria Background Information. Kraxberger, Brennan. "Transportation and the Movement of People in Nigeria." <http://www.uni.edu/gai/Nigeria/Background/Transportation.html>

²⁰¹ Islam allows a man to have up to four wives if his economic status permits it.

²⁰² University of Toronto. Olawoye, Janice; and Femi Omololu, Yinka Aderinto, Iyabode Adeyefa, Debo Adeyemo, Babatunde Osotimehin. "Social Construction of Manhood in Nigeria: Implications for Male Responsibility in Reproductive Health."

<https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/4108/1/ep04010.pdf>

Education in Rural Areas

All Nigerian children are allowed access to education. However, attending school is much more difficult in rural Nigeria than in the urban areas. Many factors, including cost to attend and the loss of household help, will determine who, if any, of the children from a family may attend school. Usually, boys are sent to school over girls.

Exchange 67: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	YaaranKa na zuwa makaranta?
Local:	Yes.	ey, suna zuwa

However, it is at home where children learn the importance of gender roles. Young girls are taught to cook and clean while boys are taught to work the fields or tend to livestock, fetch water and provide for the family.²⁰³

Exchange 68: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	akwey wata makaranta nan kusaa?
Local:	Yes.	ey, akwey

Different Ways of Life

The Niger River Delta encompasses dense mangrove forests, which rarely rise more than three or four feet above sea level, and swamps crisscrossed by tidal channels, rivers, streams and creeks. It is made up of nine states and 185 local government areas. The population, which tops 27 million, comprises 40 ethnic groups who speak 250 dialects and are dispersed among 5,000 to 6,000 mainly agro-fishing communities. The Delta boasts some of the highest population densities in Africa.



© PineApple / i Med Africa
Stream in the Niger Delta

One of those groups is the Ijaw who are dispersed across six states, Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States. They number more than 14 million and constitute the fourth largest ethnicity within Nigeria.²⁰⁴

The Ijaw were one of the first Nigerian peoples to have contact with Westerners. They were active as go-betweens in trade between Europeans and the peoples of the interior, particularly in the era before the discovery of quinine, when malaria-infested West Africa was still known as the white man's graveyard.²⁰⁵ Some of the kin-based trading lineages

²⁰³ Every Culture. "Culture of Nigeria." <http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/Nigeria.html>

²⁰⁴ The Niger Delta has also been defined by its ethnography as the region inhabited primarily by the Ijaw peoples together with a variety of smaller tribal groups. But this does not describe a territory with precisely drawn boundaries because the Ijaw people are found in areas beyond the Delta. Earth Rights Institute. "Niger Delta Fund Initiative: Political Definition of N-Delta." 15 September 2003. <http://www.earthrights.net/nigeria/news/definition.html>

²⁰⁵ Seventy to 80 percent of Delta inhabitants are infected with the parasite that causes malaria, which is the leading cause of death for pregnant women and children under five. If they manage to survive the first five years of life, Deltans seem to develop a natural immunity to the disease. But that is not true for people of

that the Ijaw created then developed into substantial corporations, which were referred to as “houses.” Each house had an elected leader as well as a fleet of war canoes to protect commerce and fend off rivals.

Historically, Ijaw villages were organized into loosely affiliated clusters that cooperated to defend themselves against outsiders. Over time, however, the Ijaw have come to see themselves as belonging to a single nation bound together by ties of language and culture, and the fact their homeland is inconveniently situated atop all the oil.²⁰⁶

After the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantity in Oloibiri in the mid 1950s, oil companies negotiated contracts with successive ruling military regimes.²⁰⁷ There is very little evidence of oil wealth in Delta communities, however, despite the fact that oil has undeniably transformed the Niger Delta into what the European Union called “an ecological nightmare.” It has the highest gas flaring rate in the world.²⁰⁸ “Nigeria accounts for about 25 percent of the world’s flaring,” Stephen Morrisson, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told a Senate committee in 2004. “It’s visible from outer space.”²⁰⁹

“The Fire” has loomed over Deltans’ daily existence as long as most can remember.²¹⁰ Moreover, their communities make do with erratic electricity supplies, poor water quality, schools without teachers and health care centers with no trained medical personnel on staff.²¹¹ Often, the only visible presence of the government is heavily armed security.²¹²



The fish that provided the traditional livelihood and source of food for the Ijaw have been killed off by decades of oil spills, acid rain caused by gas flares, and mangroves that were

European stock. Doctors Without Borders. “Reporter’s Notes.”
<http://www.insideout.org/documentaries/doctors/reporters2.asp>

²⁰⁶ United Ijaw. <http://www.unitedijawstates.com/>

²⁰⁷ Global Security. “Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force Egbesu Boys.”
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/ijaw.htm>

²⁰⁸ Peterside, Sofiri and Patterson Ogan. “Background Paper: The Niger Delta.”
<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/GreenGovernance/papers/Nigeriabckgrd.pdf>

²⁰⁹ National Public Radio. Inskip, Steve. “Gas Flaring Continues to Plague Nigeria.” 25 August 2005.
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4797953>

²¹⁰ Chris Hondros. “Nigeria.” 2001. <http://www.chrishondros.com/images.htm>

²¹¹ Even in Port Harcourt, the petroleum capital, electricity is unreliable at best. This forces businesses and homeowners who are in a position to pay for gas-powered generators to rely on them, furthering blackening the city’s already toxic air. World Politics Watch. Gentile, Carmen. “Reporter’s Notebook: Poverty and Corruption in Nigeria.” 24 April 2007. <http://www.worldpoliticswatch.com/blog/blogs.aspx#a722>

²¹² Amnesty International. “Nigeria Ten Years On: Injustice and Violence Haunt the Oil Delta.” 3 November 2005. <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR440222005>

stripped to make room for the pipelines.²¹³ Markets now sell imported frozen fish for local consumption.²¹⁴

Residents live in shacks constructed out of driftwood and corrugated zinc. They watch their children die of preventable diseases and face bleak prospects for earning a living. In households with multiple adult family members, some join the exodus to seek work elsewhere. A significant number of people from the Delta work as migrant cocoa farmers in Cameroon. Others migrate to urban areas in search of job opportunities.²¹⁵

Moreover, the contrast between the poverty of local residents and the oil company enclaves, which house outsiders, is stark. Even jobs filled by Nigerians in the oil fields often go to those from larger tribal groups. This owes to a form of institutionalized diversity that requires employment in state-owned companies such as the NNPC to reflect the country's overall ethnic composition.²¹⁶

Revenue sharing is subject to a similar formula. The federal government returns a tiny percentage of the funds generated by the oil industry to the state. But much of that is siphoned off by corrupt state level officials.²¹⁷ They pocket the money or fritter it away on showcase projects that do little to improve the lives of ordinary people.

Long-term coexistence between oil companies and villages was facilitated by the oil companies' unofficial practice of paying village chiefs to ensure that resident youths did not disrupt their extraction activities. This approach created tensions that resulted in violent confrontations between neighboring villages vying for handouts, and ugly contests to fill the position of village chief. In essence, it had the effect of turning centuries old tribal leadership practices into naked money grabs as those who served as officials simply pocketed the payouts but failed to contain vandalism.²¹⁸

Over time peaceful protest, particularly after the 1995 execution of environmental and Ogani tribal rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, has been replaced by a more confrontational style of activism.²¹⁹ It has been led by a succession of groups and individuals who view violence, in the form of kidnapping expatriates and pipeline vandalism, as a justifiable

²¹³ National Geographic. O'Neill, Tom. "Curse of the Black Gold: Hope and Betrayal in the Niger Delta." February 2007. <http://www7.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0702/feature3/>

²¹⁴ "Sweet Crude: A Film about the Niger Delta." 18 August 2006. <http://www.sweetcrudemovie.com/fieldReport.8.18.06.php>

²¹⁵ Vanguard. "Niger delta human development report: Emphasis on sustainable livelihood." 2002. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/articles/2002/viewpoints/vp812092006.html>

²¹⁶ *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism*. Bob, Clifford. 2005. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 61.

²¹⁷ Human Rights Watch. "Nigeria: Corruption and Misuse Rob Nigerians of Rights: Rivers State Local Governments Squander Oil Revenues Instead of Funding Health, Education." 31 January 2007. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/01/28/nigeri15204.htm>

²¹⁸ *Untapped: The Scramble for Africa's Oil*. Ghazvinian, John. 2007. New York: Harcourt, p. 25.

²¹⁹ This logic has been articulated by James DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*. 1985. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

means to advance their agenda.²²⁰ They are principally interested in adequate political representation in Nigeria's federal government and what they view as a fair share of the oil revenues.

One Ijaw militant group, the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), was headed by Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari. In 2004, they threatened to launch an "all-out war" against the Nigerian government. In exchange for the group's weapons, President Obasanjo offered Asari amnesty and compensation. However, this offer was short lived. Nearly a year later, Asari was put in prison on charges of treason. He is still there.

A new militant group, Movement for the Emancipation of the Nigerian Delta (MEND), emerged in January 2006 to take credit for kidnapping several foreign oil workers who were released after 19 days on "humanitarian grounds."²²¹ It has a far deeper organizational network and is committed to independence. "Asari was a one-man show," observed Ike Okonta, of Oxford University. MEND "has managed to win broad sympathy among the [Niger Delta] community."²²²

Because state authority is weak and Abuja has spent little on the region, residents see the oil companies as the most accessible authorities for a host of pressing community problems.²²³ The presence of the multinationals has created a host of perverse survival strategies for the destitute locals.²²⁴ Compensation for environmental damage, for example, has driven some Deltans to destroy their own land through pipeline sabotage.²²⁵ Kidnapping expatriate employees is also on the rise, prompting those based in Port Harcourt to commute to work with police escorts and private security as well.²²⁶

²²⁰ National Public Radio. Quist-Arcton, Ofeibea. "Fight Over Money Percolates in Nigeria." 9 March 2006. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5253435>

²²¹ The term, militants, refers to gunmen whose actions are intended to advance a set of political demands. These could include the release of imprisoned leaders, cash reparations for environmental damage, change of electoral candidates, and a greater share of oil revenues, among others. Global Terrorism Analysis. Terrorism Monitor. Briggs, James. "Guide to the Armed Groups Operating in the Niger Delta – Part 1." <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373321>

²²² Council of Foreign Relations. Hanson, Stephanie. "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group." 22 March 2007. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/12920/>

²²³ There have been complaints that the oil companies play tribes off of each other by forcing them to compete for a few opportunities. Common Dreams. Doran, D'arcy. "Nigerian Tribes Fight for Oil Jobs." 25 July 2002. <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0724-03.htm>

²²⁴ Some local people think they must be stealing the oil because so little of the revenue trickles down to the communities where the extraction occurs. Foreign Policy. Friedman, Thomas. "The First Law of Petropolitics." May/June 2006. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3426&page=3

²²⁵ Global Ecovillage Network. "Jonathan's West Africa Ecovillage Tour – Letter 1." 2005. http://gen.ecovillage.org/iservices/publications/articles/westafrica_1.pdf

²²⁶ Non-African visitors to the Delta are not free to move around as they please, whatever the motivation for their visit. According to one recent account, "the village chief took a seat at a small table under a mango tree and asked what we were doing in his village. It wasn't an unfriendly question, but neither was it an invitation to feel right at home. Young men with guns started to drift into the area and position themselves around the group..." Vanity Fair. Junger, Sebastian. "Blood Oil." February 2007. <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2007/02/junger200702?currentPage=2>



The future, in sum, does not look promising for an entire generation of disaffected Delta youth that has come of age amidst fraying tribal structures, soaring population growth and widespread environmental devastation.²²⁷

Under these circumstances, taking hostages for ransom (as opposed to advancing a political agenda) and illegal bunkering can appear attractive in a situation where there are few other prospects. Their actions, moreover, will be

felt by the outside world. Pipeline and other oil production facility sabotage has succeeded in shutting off over one-fifth of Nigeria's oil output, steadily driving up world oil prices.²²⁸

Checkpoints

Checkpoints, both authorized and unauthorized, are located throughout Nigeria. The authorized ones are for security purposes.

Exchange 69: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	inaa ne wurin binchka abubuwan hawa mapee kusaa?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	kamar keelomeeta byoo daga nan

However, at both types of checkpoints, extortion and violence may occur.

Exchange 70: Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	dan alah, ka pito daga motar
Local:	OK.	to

It is hard to tell the difference between checkpoints because those at unauthorized checkpoints may be wearing police or military clothing.

Exchange 71: Show us the car registration.

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	noonaa manaa takrdur rajistar motar
Local:	OK.	to

Exchange 72: Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	kanaa dawkey da wasu bindigogee?
Local:	Yes.	ey

²²⁷ The Oil Drum. Vail, Jeff. "Nigeria: Energy Infrastructure." 11 March 2007. <http://www.theoil Drum.com/node/2348>

²²⁸ Christian Science Monitor. "New militia is potent force in Nigeria's oil-rich delta region." 7 March 2006. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0307/p04s01-woaf.html>

ID Cards

Every citizen over the age of 18 is eligible for a national ID card.²²⁹ The cards include such identifying information as fingerprints and photographs, as well as the name, address, occupation, state of birth and height of the bearer. The long delayed introduction of this program in February 2003 was officially promoted as helping the government to make accurate demographic plans and to curtail fraud and corruption. There were also fears that it could lead to fraud if local authorities created fictitious residents in order to boost the amount of government resources they are eligible to receive. While it is not obligatory for an adult to have an identity card, it could be necessary for those seeking government services.²³⁰

Exchange 73: Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	wanan ney toy takardan sheydan da kakey da she?
Local:	Yes.	ey

²²⁹ Privacy International. "Federal Republic of Nigeria." 16 November 2004.
<http://www.privacyinternational.org/article.shtml?cmd%5B347%5D=x-347-83514>

²³⁰ BBC News. "Nigerian ID Scheme Kicks Off." 18 February 2003.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2775695.stm>

Chapter Six - Family Life

The Hausa Family

Though it is difficult to generalize across tribes and the urban–rural divide, the Hausa, like most Nigerians, share a strong attachment to family and to clearly differentiated roles for men and women. Females are typically identified as someone’s daughter, wife, widow, or mother. In the Hausa language, there is no word for an adult female who has never been married.²³¹



The Hausa are patriarchal. This means that inheritance rights come through the male members of the family.

Exchange 74: Do you have any brothers?

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	kanaa da enwaa mazaa?
Local:	Yes.	ey

Extended families, which include parents, adult children, their spouses, grandchildren and other relatives, all live under one roof or within one compound.

Exchange 75: Are these people part of your family?

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	wadanan mutanan suna chinka eyaalinka?
Local:	No.	aa-aa

Family relationships are nurtured under a strict system of seniority. There is always a male head of household who is at the top of this system. Children are instantly ready to run errands for adults without any expectation of payment. It is an obligation as a member of the family and satisfaction comes from being able to make a meaningful contribution.

Exchange 76: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	wanan sunee eyakachin eyaalinkaa bakey daya?
Local:	Yes.	ey

The freedom to use first names is afforded only to seniors and superiors. It would be an insult for a younger sibling to address an older one by his or her first name. Husbands and wives traditionally refer to each other as “the mother of” or “the father of,” rather than with a personal name or a term of endearment.²³²

²³¹ Every Culture. “Nigerians.” <http://everyculture.com/wc/Mauritania-to-Nigeria/Nigeriens.html>

²³² “Name Use in the Family.” <http://family.jrank.org/pages/1197/Names-Children-Name-Use-in-Family.html>

Married women have an obligation to bear children. Traditionally, society blames the wife if a couple produces no offspring. Women are, in effect, valued for their reproductive efficiency.²³³



As a Nigerian woman explained, “We are anchored in the family; people define themselves by their family and its accomplishments. Children are a blessing. If you have a child, you have everything on earth. You are expected to have a family of your own, and something is wrong if you don’t.”²³⁴

Exchange 77: Are these your children?

Soldier:	Are these your children?	wadanan Yaayanka ney?
Local:	Yes.	ey

Marriage and Divorce

Polygamy is common among the Hausa. According to Islamic law, men can marry up to four wives depending on his financial ability. The Hausa term for co-wife is *kishiya*, derived from “jealousy.”²³⁵ Each wife, as well as the husband, has their own hut within the compound. The first wife is known as the *uwar gida* and has the most status.

Exchange 78: Is this your wife?

Soldier:	Is this your wife?	wana matarka chi?
Local:	Yes.	ey

The divorce rate among the Hausa is high and successive marriages are common. Women initiate some divorces; quarrelling is given as the most common reason. Usually they have lined up a new husband before terminating the marriage.²³⁶ Since the first marriage generally occurs between the ages of 12 and 14, Hausa women may have three husbands before they reach menopause.

Exchange 79: Are you married?

Soldier:	Are you married?	kanaa da awree?
Local:	No.	aa-aa

Seclusion

Female seclusion (*purdah*), which is only practiced in households where male labor is sufficient to provide for everybody, does not mean a woman is idle. With the help of their

²³³ University of California, Berkeley. “African Films and Documentaries by and About Women.” <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/GlobalGender/africafilm.html>

²³⁴ International Reports. Lambert, Kevin. “Akwa Ibom State, 2005-2006.” <http://www.internationalreports.net/africa/nigeria/akwa%20ibom%202006/july27%20family.html>

²³⁵ EveryCulture. “Hausa Marriage and Family.” <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Hausa-Marriage-and-Family.html>

²³⁶ *African Marriage and Social Change*. Mair, Lucy Philip. 1969. New York: Frank Cass, p. 144 Google edition.

children or servants, many married Hausa women produce crafts or food items that may be marketed by younger members of the family. Husbands have no claim on the income generated from these activities.²³⁷ In poorer households, women take whatever jobs they can find to supplement the family income.

Status of Elderly and Children

Sons are desired in Hausa culture for their ability to take care of their parents as they age. When a son has married, his wife moves into his family's compound. If a family has more than one son, the wives of those sons will also move to the parent's compound and new huts will be added on. Elderly women are respected and are given a choice when it comes to the marriage prospects for their sons, grandsons and also their brother's children.²³⁸



After giving birth, a woman practices a sort of sexual taboo during which she breast feeds for the first two years. When the baby is weaned onto soft foods, it is also handed off to an older sister who cares for it. If the child is a girl, she is taught domestic skills. If the child is a boy, he begins to learn that, as a male, he is superior to females. The male children begin to distance themselves from their mothers and move in to their father's hut after they start working.²³⁹

Exchange 80: Does your family live here?

Soldier:	Does your family live here?	a nan eyaalinka sukey zoney?
Local:	Yes.	Ey

Naming Conventions

Hausa newborns do not achieve personhood until a week after their birth when a ceremony is held to give them an Islamic name.²⁴⁰ Indigenous names are very few; most Hausa names are Arabic in origin.²⁴¹

Nigerian children are given at least three names at birth by the father, mother, and father's relative or the grandparents on the mother's side. In some parts of the country, newborns receive four names at birth.²⁴²

²³⁷ Magazine for Development and Cooperation. Werthman, Katja. "The example of Nana Asma'u." 2002. http://www.inwent.org/E+Z/content/archive-eng/03-2005/foc_art3.html

²³⁸ Culture and Aging. Ritts, Vicki. "Overview of Culture and Aging: Hausa." 2000. <http://users.stlcc.edu/vritts/aging.html>

²³⁹ EveryCulture. "Hausa Marriage and Family." <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Hausa-Marriage-and-Family.html>

²⁴⁰ Minnesota State University, Mankato, eMuseum. "Hausa." <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/oldworld/africa/hausa.html>

²⁴¹ Motherland Nigeria. "Names and Origins." <http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/names.html#Hausa>

²⁴² ProGenealogists. Horlacher, Gary. "Various Country and Ethnic Naming Conventions." September 2000. <http://www.progenealogists.com/namingpatterns.htm>

Each name conveys something about the child and the family. The first name is the child's given name and may reflect the circumstances of the family or simply the day of birth. The second name is a descriptive name that expresses the personality of the child, what the child might become, or is an attribute the family hopes the child will acquire. The third name reflects kinship. For example the Igbo name, Abua, conveys the fact that the father has no brother and the son has assumed that role. There are no family surnames as we know them. However, the child's adult name does reflect the pattern of family relationships.

When Nigerian children grow up, they choose two of the names given to them at birth and add that to their father's, grandfather's, or great-grandfather's name, according to their family custom. This becomes a kind of surname. A complex pattern emerges: Udo Akpan Etuk (name of the child's great-grandfather), Sunday Udo Akpan (the child's grandfather; he took the names Akpan Udo from his own father), Effiong Friday Udo (the child's father; he took the names Sunday Akpan from his father), Paul Effiong Sunday (the son coming into adulthood; he took the name Effiong Sunday from his father).



A second naming pattern is found when a family descends from a well-known warrior or famous hero. Here, the entire family would use the warrior's surname which does not shift in sequence order: Okonkwo (the famous great-grandfather), Okafor Ojo Okonkwo (the grandfather), Okeke Okoro Okonkwo (the father), Okechi Obi Okonkwo (the grandson).

When a Nigerian woman marries, she takes the two family names of her husband. This would result in a naming pattern such as: Eno Sampson Ekim (her father), Lily Eno Sampson (the daughter's maiden name), Tuesday Ukodie Akpan (her husband), Lily Tuesday Ukodie (her married name). The couple's children could be John Tuesday Ukodie for a son and Sarah Tuesday Ukodie for a daughter.²⁴³

²⁴³ AfriGeneas. Nigerian Naming Patterns. 5 March 2006. <http://www.afriGeneas.com/forum-africa/index.cgi?noframes;read=291>