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MIGRATION AND RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION IN NIGERIA: THE FULANIZATION DILEMMA

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Abstract: Migration has remarkably influenced the development of civilization and the establishment of cultural borders throughout history. In the case of Nigeria, one of the negative impacts of migration has been the violent seizure of ancestral lands by the Fulani as part of a strategy to 'fulanize' and 'Islamize' the Nigerian nation. This study investigates the links between human migration and religious socialization in Africa, particularly Nigeria. The paper employs the descriptive and phenomenological approaches and bases its arguments on the theoretical foundations of Durkheimian and Weberian theories. The paper argues that regional mobility, with its religious socializing effects, affects national politics, government, the economy, and other national domains. It concludes that African countries should include international migration in their plans and national development goals to make their countries safer.

Keywords: Boko Migration; Religious Socialization; Africa; Fulanization; Islamization; Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Migration of people and the effects of religious socialization are two things that affect the political, economic, and social aspects of nations, including African countries. Both hostile and peaceful, religious mixing and contact will undoubtedly become more intense across the globe as populations rise and migration patterns balloon to unprecedented heights. Since secular logic and abstract reasoning are in contrast to the tidal flows of faith and emotion that guide human activity today, it seems likely that the history of humanity will be centered on the conflict of faiths and civilizations that is occurring around human beings.

The Nigerian State is dealing with the 'fulanization' and 'Islamization' problems that are consequences of regional human migration and religious socialization in Africa. Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, grappling with overlapping and multifaceted security issues. According to Ottuh and Aitufe (2014), kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, and other terroristic acts of violence, commonly referred to as banditry, are on the rise in northwest Nigeria and gradually creeping to the southeast. It is essential to look at the occurrences from a broader angle since they may have beneficial or harmful effects. This paper tries to show how

religion and social mobility can hinder national peace and development or help national development and play a positive role in Nigerian society. The paper does this by putting Max Weber's idea of the Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism in conversation with Emile Durkheim's functionalism. To better understand how religion and social mobility may either impede or promote national development, this article aims to provide additional information on these topics further.

MIGRATION IN CONTEXT

According to Microsoft Encarta (2008), humans have moved from place to place since their origin 2 to 6 million years ago. Migrations may be specifically sparked by societal or environmental factors (Beckford 2019). It may also be linked to the creation of Diasporas, requests for asylum, internal displacement, and refugees. Nomadism, transhumance, or pilgrimages are not included in this context. International migrants are people who live outside of their place of origin, and their number globally increased from 258 million in 2017 to approximately 272 million in 2019 (UN International Organization for Migration 2020). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges migration's contribution to sustainable development for the first time. Targets and indicators related to migration or mobility are included in 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN Sustainable Development Goals 2020). Target 10.7 of the SDGs makes orderly, safe, regular, and responsible movement of people the primary focus of the goal.

International migrants are people who live outside of their place of origin, and their number globally increased from 258 million in 2017 to approximately 272 million in 2019 (Global Migration Data Portal 2020, 11). There were reportedly 38 million migrant children, and three out of every four foreign migrants were of working age or between the ages of 20 and 64. According to the Global Migration Data Portal (2020), Asian migrants made up around 31% of the total, followed by European migrants at 30%, Americans at 26%, African migrants at 10%, and Oceanians at 3% (p. 22). Africa has traditionally been considered a highly migratory continent, and this perception has not changed. According to the IOM 2005 Report (2005), Africa is the continent with the world's most migratory population. Of the 56 nations that make up the African continent, just one census from the 1950s or no statistics is available for 19 of them.

Uberti, De Lombaerde, Nita, and Legovini (2015) found an apparent negative relationship between the amount of intra-regional migration in Africa and the availability of statistical data. Nigeria has the biggest population in Africa and ranks seventh in the world with over 206 million inhabitants (Sasu 2022, 8). Nigeria's immigration policy has changed from one of restriction to one of facilitation. Nigeria had 1.3 million migrant workers or 0.6 percent of the country's total population, in 2020. The most common countries of origin for asylum applicants and immigrants in Nigeria are Cameroon and the Niger Republic (Ottuh 2020, 35). Nigeria is one of the few African countries where people talk openly about refugees and other immigrants. Migration mainly refers to the departure of Nigerian people and chances to more effectively use the vast diasporas of Nigeria.

CONCEPTUALIZING RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION

The term 'religious socialization' is still often used by academics that focus on the social trends that underlie the development of religious views (Klingenberg and Sjo 2019). Recent research broadly acknowledges the influence of social actors and the environment on religious socialization. Barry and Abo-Zena (2014, 221) define the meaning-making of emerging adults as the mutual informing of developmental domains like peers, the family, and religious communities. Petts and Desmond's (2016) review, for instance, includes studies on the role of family, peers, education, congregations, media, and religious traditions in the socialization process. According to Ottuh and Jemegbe (2020), social agents may affect people's religious understandings and beliefs via the dynamic process of religious socialization. Throughout their lives, people encounter a range of socialization agents. These groups, people, and events help shape people's religious preferences, influencing their loyalty to particular religious institutions.

People have much freedom to resist socialization pressure and to decide which relationships influence their religious choices. People's relationships with others and organizations are influenced by their parents' early religious choices and experiences. Agents of socialization only impact people when they come from a reliable source they respect (Sherkat 2012). Peer relationships, particularly spousal choice, which encourages religious ideas and bonds, are also influenced by parents and denominations. Recent years have seen many critiques of religious socialization. The first criticism is aimed at conceptualizations that see socialization as a simple process in which people are formed along a set of clearly defined and observable pathways. It is difficult to explain how social change occurs with a simple conception of socialization as a process of stability and continuity over generations.

Conceptualizations of religious socialization that see it as a process in which religion is learned and passed down from one generation to the next have a limited ability to account for religious change (Furseth 2018). Some socialization theories have also evolved to conceptualize socialization as a process that needs the active and reciprocal engagement of both the ones being socialized and the ones conducting the socializing, in part as a reaction to such criticism (Mol et al. 2013). Several studies support this. For instance, Golo, Broo, Sztajer, Benyah, Ray, and Sarkar (2019) looked at primary religious socialization in Ghana, India, and Poland. They showed how crucial religious socialization is in these settings. In this regard, it is also important to know that religious socialization is a social phenomenon with different aspects depending on the social and cultural setting.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION

Durkheim (1965) believes that the true core of religion is something essentially social rather than thinking about the transcendental source or sources. According to Durkheim (1965, 68), religious images are communal representations that embody collective realities. By doing so, according to Capps (cited in Gbadegesin and Adeyemi-Adejolu 2016, 28), Durkheim drew attention to the idea that social groupings create their distinct patterns of consciously and explicitly 'we-feeling'. For Idjakpo and Ottuh (2021), it is crucial to see that religion has a social

value in making people and groups more moral and spiritual. Durkheim's sociological analysis of religion in terms of function demonstrates its unifying qualities and societal benefits.

Weber's (2003) sociology of religion starts with an inquiry into the theological foundations of contemporary capitalist civilization. In his book, he makes the case that the Christian ethos of inner-worldly asceticism became a driving factor, aiding in creating a bourgeois, contemporary Western kind of capitalism. Given the spike in immigration from predominantly non-Christian nations, the study of religion's influence has regained significance. This ethos is defined by self-control, systematic life behavior geared toward employment in a vocation, and acquisition via a regularly and logically pursued business. According to Weber, the calling is not a circumstance into which a person is born but a challenging and demanding endeavor that must be chosen by an individual and pursued with a feeling of religious duty.

Existing data indicate that immigrants do better when they identify as followers of Western faiths like Christianity (Kogan, Fong, and Reitz 2020, 3549). Islam is only one example of a non-Western religion that might be problematic for acculturation. According to Petts and Scott (2016, 253), immigrant children are likely to rely less on their parents' ethnicity and more on other forms of identity. This analysis correlates with the theory of social identities, which also helps to place this discourse in proper perspective. Competitiveness, cooperation, and even harmony between two or more groups decrease when they have a shared goal that can only be achieved via intergroup interactions (Hogg 2016, 16). According to the social identity theory, the word 'identity' is a widely used word that may mean many different things to different individuals.

As with the Fulani in Nigeria, in-group members may intentionally or unconsciously establish an identity for the out-groups. The Fulani tribe developed a new identity as aggressive people (Ahmadu, Yacoob, and Shukri 2022, 6). The ingrained terror greatly facilitated the crime that other in-groups in Nigeria held. Ethnic, regional, and social identities are developed at the sub-national level to refute specific, prevalent ideas about managing intercultural interactions between nations. Simply put, identity affects how people interact with one another, with organizations, and with political opportunities. For instance, Hogg and Reid (2006, 28) demonstrate that their representation follows a category's context-dependent prototype when people are classified. As a consequence, such phrases are capable of going beyond the boundaries they were designed to influence. Religion helps people develop a feeling of social identity and belonging, which gives them emotional and social support.

MIGRATION AND RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION

Migration changes everyday patterns, and even the most fervently held religious traditions are eventually affected by new migration experiences (Jones 2022). On the other hand, religion often encourages migration since it provides a new channel for profane experiences. The defining of civilization and cultural boundaries in historical eras is greatly influenced by peaceful or violent migration. For example, a constant supply of warriors who came to India to fight infidelity and perhaps find fame and riches helped promote the Muslim conquest of the country (Eickelman, Dale, and Piscatori 1990, 241). Within each civilization, pilgrimage confirmed and aided in blending religious and secular cultures. While sometimes bringing new people into

the fold of one or more religions, religious conflict and peaceful conversion promoted variability. Since itinerant holy men who lived on alms seldom chronicled their experience in writing, private, personal migration for religious reasons is difficult to trace.

The first documented instances of private, individual migration away from everyday civilization in search of religious enlightenment and truth were the woodland retreats of ancient India when the Upanishads were created (Jones 2022). Monastic institutions needed to stay connected to the currents of holiness-seeking migration that flowed through each of the Eurasian civilizations to survive and grow. Christian monasteries were instrumental in bringing Christianity beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Following European exploration expeditions in the sixteenth century, missionary organizations successfully converted Amerindians to Roman Catholicism (Geaves 2003, 66). The spread of sophisticated sophistication resulted from migration for reasons other than religion.

The majority of historical migration may be modeled after the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites and the transatlantic slave trade. The Bible demonstrates how hard it was for the Israelites to maintain their desert faith in Canaan after settling down to a life of agriculture. It needed extra effort to oppose the faiths of their people, which was challenging given the long-established local customs. Others adopted the strategy of practicing all accessible faiths to avoid closing doors to the paranormal. For example, many 'barbaric' conquerors chose to follow a heretical kind of religion in an effort to get the best of both worlds (Eickelman, Dale, and Piscatori 1990, 240). Migration has changed dramatically in scope and form throughout the centuries, yet it has remained a phenomenon that is closely related to religions. Religious factors and motivations may sometimes be found in migration. It affects how immigrants and their descendants practice their religions in many more circumstances and the cultures in which they dwell (Beckford 2019). Migrations made for political or economic reasons have less of an influence on traditional religious practices than migrations made by people who abandon more cultivated modes of religion. According to the Pew Research Centre (2015), global migration trends are causing a transfer of world religions among different parts of the world.

IMMIGRATION'S EFFECTS ON RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION

Conditions at the destination, such as the percentage of fellow believers, the percentage of foreign-born residents, and the variety of local religious practices, are likely to impact religious engagement (Kogan, Fong, and Reitz 2020, 3547). Religion may impact whether or not immigrants adopt a particular religion and engage in religious activities in their new country. Although there have been numerous quantitative studies of religious engagement, most of the data used to support the theologizing hypothesis has come from qualitative research on specific religious communities. Many recent immigrants have crossed a wide religious chasm to integrate into Nigerian culture. The social distance that must be crossed is influenced by devotional fervor and nominal disparities in religious membership.

Religion's teachings may prevent crime and deviance by influencing cultural values and attitudes (Kogan, Fong, and Reitz 2020, 3546). Through its role as an identity marker, religious content and personal traits associated with religious affiliation, resources obtained through religious participation, and overt discrimination against some religious minorities, religion may

impact socioeconomic and other integration outcomes. First, religion could stop being a worldview or organizing principle that influences young people's everyday lives and starts acting as a symbol of group identification. Depending on how much stress their faiths put on social attitudes, such as gender norms, sexual orientation, alcohol use, or the eating of specific foods, the social integration of various minorities may be aided or hindered. Religious institutions provide community services so that newcomers may come together and socialize with others of the same religion and often of the same ethnicity.

Religious headgear indicates personal religiosity to the outside world, such as the 'kippah' in Judaism or the 'dastar' in Sikhism. Employers may penalize applicants who declare their religion as Islam on a job application. Some religious groups may be viewed with suspicion, which are instances of prejudice based on personal preference or statistics. Rethinking the radicalization of religion has become more critical due to the intricacy of mechanisms relating to religious minorities' social marginalization (Ottuh and Erhabor 2022, 245). The idea of self is connected to a larger social group via social identity theory (SIT), which also makes a critical distinction between belonging to an in-group and an out-group.

NIGERIA'S 'FULANIZATION' - 'ISLAMIZATION' DILEMMA

The term 'fulanization', which means 'Fulani control', refers to the rapacious, exploitative, and oppressive use of the machinery of government and diplomacy (policies of cattle ranches) to seize territories, typically occupied by other ethnic groups to advance domination and opportunities for cow rearing. As a result, the government forces forced the region's original population into servitude and subjection. Fulanization goes along with Islamization. Specific arguments state that what is occurring in some regions of Nigeria now is the complete and ultimate takeover of all areas in accordance with Uthman Dan Fodio's long-standing ambitions as the father of Islam in Nigeria (Ottuh and Erhabor 2022). Most Nigerians firmly feel that Mohammedu Buhari, the country's current president, has goals different than those of Nigerian nationalism. Through the deliberate eviction of indigenous groups that have lived in what is now Nigeria for a long time, there is a plan to open Nigeria's northern borders, covertly admit the nomadic Fulani of West Africa, and permanently establish them in a new Nigerian homeland (Nwakanma 2019). Some have argued that the relocation of the Fulani could be partially attributed to global warming, which has made their pastoral way of life unsustainable. Under the pretense of herding, the Fulani have been spreading mayhem, destroying livelihoods, kidnapping, killing, raping women, and pillaging across the nation.

The problem of 'fulanization' and 'Islamization' results from the influx of immigrants into Nigeria, which are Fulani from other African countries. Ahmadu, Yacoob, and Shukri (2022) claim that studies from all over the world, including those of the United Nations and the European Union, have paid intense attention to Fulani culture and all made various contributions to people's knowledge of Fulani and their cultural traditions. According to Osadebamwen (2017), their socioeconomic activities are concentrated in and around the wooded reserves and rural grazing areas. Their main economic pursuits have been partially or entirely abandoned due to security and climate change challenges as they have moved farther south (Nartey and Ladegaard 2021). Due to the widespread instability in northwest Nigeria, Fulani engages in

various criminal activities, including armed robbery, banditry, abduction for ransom, hostage-taking, and insurgency (Ojo 2020; Nnabugwu 2018). This has been used to make them seem like criminals with nothing to do but break the law.

The Fulani are often denigrated with homicidal verbal venom, yet they are also accused of possessing all kinds of cunning and supernormal political power. Concerns about Fulani dominance have been around since Nigeria was founded, but now the south of Nigeria is more worried about these people than ever before. Some schools of thought contend that the Fulanis are free to dwell anywhere they like in Nigeria, just like other Nigerians (if they are) (Nwakanma 2019). The forceful plunder of ancestral lands by the Fulani via a project whose goal has been termed the 'fulanization' and 'Islamization' of Nigeria is what Nigerians do not understand. Some have alleged that President Muhammadu Buhari purposefully appointed Fulani and other northerners for political and economic positions in his administration. Others have asserted that most of those selected are just northern Muslims who are neither Fulani in ethnicity nor culture (Kperogi 2021). Hammed Ali, the head of immigration, is neither a Fulani nor a Hausa. He is a member of the Dass, Bauchi State, and Jarawa ethnic groups.

CONCLUSION

So far, the paper has shown that the creation of civilizations and cultural boundaries throughout history has been significantly influenced by peaceful or violent migration. Notably, it shows that security issues are complicated and overlap in Nigeria due to Fulani migrants. Terrorist acts, such as cattle rustling and abductions for ransom, are increasing in northwest Nigeria and gradually creeping to the southeast. The paper further shows that migrations done for politics or commerce have less of an influence on traditional religious activities than those made by people who abandon more established forms of religion. It is argued that Nigerians cannot fathom the Fulani's violent annexation of ancestral lands as part of a plan that aims to 'fulanize' and 'Islamize' the country. Thus, regional mobility, with its religious socializing effects, affects national politics, government, the economy, and other national domains. As per the Nigerian constitution, Fulanis are entitled to the same citizenship rights as other Nigerians (if they are actual citizens).

Durkheim and Weber's analysis of religion in terms of function and conflicts demonstrate the inherent unifying and destructive qualities of religion in society, thus showing that immigrants do better when they identify as followers of Western faiths like Christianity and do less well when they do not. For example, Islam is one of the non-Western religions in Africa that is not acculturation friendly. This is because immigrant Fulanis are likely to rely on their religion to advance their political and religious dominance everywhere they go. African nations should incorporate international migration in their plans and objectives for national development to address the issue and make their countries safer. Because of the boom in immigration from predominantly non-Christian nations, the significance of studying religious socialization and migration effects is a *sine qua non*. At the same time, given the spike in immigration from mostly non-Christian African nations, the study of religion's influence needs further research to regain its significance.

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