

Conflict in nigeria assignment

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Muslims may be a majority, but if so they are barely that. Islam has functioned in cultural and political terms to create unity in northern Nigeria. Indeed, as Nigeria moved to a 12-state system in 1967 from one of four regions and then to a federal republic with 19 states in 1976, it became necessary to stress Islamic unity in the 10 northern states where two-thirds of the population was Muslim.

In order to maintain the dominance of the north in national politics, Islam had to provide the glue that had disappeared with the demise of the old Native Administration, the regional reassurance, and the party that had ruled the north in the First Republic—the Northern Peoples' Congress. 22 When the military left power in 1979, the NP tried to appeal beyond the north. Under constitutional provisions, in order to elect a president, it had to win at least a quarter of the votes in two-thirds of the states. At the NP could not campaign as a Muslim party and it had cost the administrative class that had supported the old ruling Northern Peoples' Congress. But it retained the support of Islamic elites in the north and it also had the support of many high-ranking officers, some but not all of them. Ibid., p. 23. 22. Dudley, Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics, p. 163. 23. In fact, Shehu Shari did not win quite 25 percent of the vote in 12 states but in a series of contested court actions he was declared president in the 1979 elections by virtue of having won 20 percent of the vote in the twelfth state. However, many were Muslims. 24 The NP was seen as a Muslim party in the north. With the chairman of the NP coming from the west, the president of the republic from the north, the vice president from the east—an alignment was attained in the second election of 1983. The NP's political zone party traders would have been under pressure if

the civilian regime had continued and the posts had to be rotated by place of origin in 1988.

At the same time, as it became necessary to stress Islam in order to maintain northern unity that was under pressure from the creation of more states, Islam itself often worked to intensify fissures opened up by social and economic changes. Appeals for social justice were made in Islamic terms. Thus, as reform and purifications paved the way for Islam to proliferate, Islam as a religion and a set of cultural symbols was not solely a force for unity in the northern states. It was interpreted variably by different social groups.

Elites tried to maintain their eminence by manipulating modern and traditional institutions in the name of Islam while businessmen built mosques and workers made demands through Islamic terminology. At the same time, Muhammad Ali appealed to fringe groups to follow him to an Islamic revival. Of the five military regimes since 1966, the one that had the most Muslims among its leadership was the Babangida regime, which came in at the end of 1983, actually as had the most Muslims among its leadership of all the five military regimes since 1966—the other four being Irons's, Gowon's, Mohammedan, and Babangida's. Irons and Gowon were Christians, as was Babangida.

I have focused much more on the impacts of Islam than of Christianity on political legitimacy and the role of the state in Nigeria because Islam has been, in the north, an unofficial state religion. Moreover, the struggle to define the relationship of religion to the state has been a struggle around the role of Islamic symbols in Nigeria. The manipulation of religious symbols both to justify the rule of elites and to challenge that rule has been a manipulation of Islamic values and symbols more than Christian ones.

There is reason to believe, however, that some Christian sects provide for their followers a measure of autonomy from established authority, both reel-Sioux and secular. The development of Ladder Christianity-the praying churches such as the Christ Apostolic Church and the Cherubim and Sera-pimp in Hardbound-seems to go hand in glove with the development of values and attitudes of industriousness and business. That is, the adherents of the Ladder hurdles o not appear s CEO- omicron addicts, a Thought hem ay insist on a measure of political independence from established authorities. AS o far, though, the impact of Christianity in Nigeria has been less directly cones-sequential for the struggle for political legitimacy and control of authoritative roles at central and state levels than has been the impact of Islam. Nigeria has not evolved political formulas hate explicitly Lori elision r religious theorists defined astigmatic. But there have been struggles carried out in religious terms over constitute-cantonal champions r adjudicating n-flick. Religion as been an element in the conflicts twenty ethnic-language pups.

And religion provides a language, a set of values, a NDIS institution's rough which groups struggle and over which groups contend, both within and between reel-Sioux communities. 26. For a major study of the adoption of Ala-durra Christianity, see J. D. Y. Peel, *Ladder: A Religious Movement among the Your* (Loon-don: Oxford university Reese, 1968). P eel is con-current o explain he fundamental characters f a religion f industrialization the Yearbook intent as a new morality of obeying rules. Ibid. , p. 299. 60 This content