

COLONIALISM AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM AMONG THE ABORO (BEROM) PEOPLE OF NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the historical undercurrents of colonialism and its role in the spread of Islam among the Aboro people of the Berom nation in the Jos Plateau. The Berom, traditionally impervious to Islamisation due to violent jihadist incursions in the 19th century, faced a new challenge with British colonial rule in the early 20th century. While most Berom rejected Islam because of its association with jihad, the Aboro subgroup peacefully incorporated the religion. This study focuses on the period from 1900 to 1960, examining the impact of British colonial policies, the role of the Hausa/Fulani emirs, and the social and trade dynamics that contributed to the gradual conversion of the Aboro people. By employing qualitative and historical methods, including archival research and oral histories, the paper demonstrates how colonialism, in partnership with Muslim elites, facilitated the spread of Islam and reshaped the religious landscape of the Jos Plateau. It highlights the contrast between earlier violent efforts at Islamisation and the more peaceful process of conversion, driven by interactions with Muslim traders and missionaries. The findings underscore the momentous role colonial policies played in transmuting the region's socio-religious structure and the long-term impact of this collaboration on the local religious dynamics.

KEYWORDS: Colonialism, Islamization, Jihad, Berom Resistance, Jos Plateau, and Hausa/Fulani.

INTRODUCTION

Central Nigeria is known for its wide variety of indigenous languages, cultures, and religious customs. The Berom people have long been prominent among the many ethnic groups that call the Plateau home; they have also spread to Kaduna, where they are referred to as the Aboro, both because of their rich cultural legacy and their longstanding confrontation with outside influences, especially the spread of Islam. Islam was aggressively spread during the 19th century by jihadist movements, which is why the Berom opposed it. The Berom developed a sturdy mistrust of Islam because of these jihadist campaigns, which were started by the Hausa/Fulani and attempted to impose Islam throughout Northern Nigeria through coercion and military force. The Aboro, entirely Berom, are a community and a significant minority group in Kaduna State and reside in Sanga Local Government Area, to be specific. They ultimately adopted Islam peacefully, despite widespread resistance from other Berom groups, especially those in the present-day Plateau State.

The religious, cultural, and political dynamics of the area underwent a significant shift with the advent of British colonial forces in the early 20th century. British colonisation of Northern Nigeria, especially the Jos Plateau, was an economic and religious endeavour in addition to a political conquest. In addition to seeking strategic alliances with local Muslim elites, particularly the Hausa/Fulani emirs, the British were eager to establish control over the region's abundant natural resources, especially tin (Gonyok, 2020; Freund, 2018).

Jos Plateau's religious and political landscape was significantly shaped by British colonial policies, especially the application of indirect authority. By enabling local leaders, such as the Hausa/Fulani emirs, to manage their areas, Lord Lugard's indirect rule system (1922) allowed the British to control enormous swaths of territory. The British collaborated extensively with the emirs in Northern Nigeria, giving them significant political autonomy that helped them solidify their hold on power and further Islamise the area. In addition to ensuring the continuity of British control, this collaboration fostered an atmosphere that allowed Islam to progressively flourish among native populations that had previously opposed its influence.

The British and Hausa/Fulani emirs functioned together in a way that benefited both parties. Throughout the region, the Hausa/Fulani emirs aimed to increase their religious and political power, while the British sought to establish partisan and economic supremacy. Because of the premeditated alliance between the British and the Hausa/Fulani, the Berom saw the British invasion of their area as a

purposeful effort to allow Islamic rule over their homeland. Due to their political and religious sway, which was reinforced by British policy, the Hausa/Fulani emirs played a decisive role in this process. This allowed Islam to grow tranquilly, especially among the minority tribes of central Nigeria (Ifeagwu & Fwatshak, 2021).

Not by the power of the sword, the Berom people of the Aboro extract peacefully embraced Islam through contacts with Muslim missionaries, traders, and scholars, unlike the majority of the Berom who are in the present-day Plateau, who continued to oppose the faith. Earlier attempts to Islamise the region were marked by violent extremist initiatives, which contrast sharply with these benign conversions. One cannot emphasise how important Muslim traders were in helping to make these conversions possible. By trading among them, which involved adopting young Berom boys to work as shepherd boys, and interacting with others, these traders, who were mainly from the Hausa and Fulani communities, helped propagate Islam. Muslim traders, especially those of Hausa and Fulani descent, were indispensable in the spread of Islam throughout West Africa, including the Jos Plateau, as Fisher (2014) points out. They did this by establishing close contacts with local populations through mutual respect and cultural exchange.

Within the larger framework of British colonial policy aimed at integrating indigenous groups into the colonial economic system, Islam peacefully flourished among the Berom, particularly among the Aboro people. British officials attempted to take advantage of the mineral wealth on the Plateau after tin was discovered there. Muslim traders and labourers from the Hausa/Fulani emirates were among the migrant workers who arrived because of the start of mining operations. Islam was thus introduced to the Berom without the violent tendencies of jihad thanks to the development of mining communities, which created a new economic and social environment (Mwadkon, 2001).

It would be difficult to overestimate the Hausa/Fulani emirs' contribution to the propagation of Islam on the Jos Plateau. Long before the British arrived, the Hausa/Fulani had already taken the reins of Northern Nigeria's politics and religion, and during colonial administration, their power only increased. The emirs' political and religious supremacy was increased by Lugard's (1922) policy of indirect rule, which gave them the authority to run their countries on behalf of the British. Islam flourished across the Plateau in large part due to the emirs' capacity to enforce Islamic governance, although indirectly. Both the British and the emirs profited from their alliance: the emirs augmented their religious power while the British gained governmental dominance (Ediba, 2021). This study aims to investigate the complex

historical rapport between the Hausa/Fulani emirs and the British, which had a major impact on the spread of Islam among the Aboro people and other tribes on the Plateau.

To examine the expansion of Islam among the Aboro (Berom) people during the British colonial era, the article's methodology combines qualitative and historical research, mainly using archival data and oral narratives. It investigates how colonial policies affected the Aboro people's peaceful conversion, the Hausa/Fulani emirs' role, and socioeconomic factors. The findings reveal that the spread of Islam was not driven by violent jihad, as in earlier centuries, but rather through peaceful interactions facilitated by Muslim traders and missionaries. British colonial policies, particularly indirect rule, played a significant role in shaping the religious landscape, fostering a collaborative environment between colonial authorities and Muslim elites, which enabled Islam to gradually gain a foothold among the indigenous groups in central Nigeria. The peaceful conversion process was based on mutual respect and cultural exchange, marking a sharp contrast to previous violent Islamisation efforts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To comprehend the historical, sociopolitical, and religious factors influencing the growth of Islam among the Berom people, especially the Aboro subgroup, this study takes a multi-theoretical approach. A sophisticated framework for analysing the intricate relationship between colonialism, Islamization, and indigenous resistance is offered by the ideas of postcolonialism, indirect rule, social distinctiveness, and horizontal inequality. These ideas allow for a more thorough investigation of how colonial policies influenced the Jos Plateau's religious and cultural landscape, as well as how they influenced the dynamics of social expansion and religious conflict.

Postcolonial Theory

The long-lasting and frequently negative impacts of colonialism on indigenous cultures, identities, and social institutions are criticised by postcolonial theory. According to Homi Bhabha (1994) and Edward Said (1978), colonialism is a cultural endeavour that radically alters the identities and worldviews of colonised peoples in addition to being a political system of control. In addition to trying to maintain control over the lands they had taken over, colonial powers, especially the British in the case of Nigeria, also aimed to alter the pre-existing indigenous identities, cultures, and religious customs.

Postcolonial theory is pertinent to the Berom people and the Jos Plateau because it analyses how the British colonial government strategically employed indirect rule and collaborated with the Hausa/Fulani emirs to redefine the Berom people's religious and cultural identity. Islam, which the Berom had traditionally opposed because it was linked to violent jihadist activities, was made easier to expand by the imposition of colonial practices. Therefore, the process of Islamization was not just a religious phenomenon but also a political and cultural imposition, with colonial authorities working together to promote Islam and aiding in the eradication of indigenous spiritual practices and civilisations. The Berom's identity was reshaped under colonial administration in several ways, including the loss of their political unconventionality and cultural purity, which were essential to their fight against colonial domination and Islamization.

Indirect Rule Theory

The foundation for understanding British colonial governance in Northern Nigeria is Lord Lugard's (1922) doctrine of indirect control. The British employed a strategy called "indirect rule," in which they governed large areas by working through local elites and traditional leaders. To maintain political stability and preserve existing power structures, the British chose to collaborate with local rulers rather than establishing direct colonial control, which would have been logistically difficult across such extensive regions. The Hausa/Fulani emirs served as intermediaries for the British in Northern Nigeria, giving them the authority to rule on behalf of the colonial administration.

Due to the greater resistance by the Berom and other native populations to both British administration and Islamic influence, this arrangement worked especially well on the Jos Plateau. The Hausa/Fulani emirs were given more authority by the British colonial government, which helped Islam flourish while consolidating their hold on the area. Using their status as strong local leaders, the emirs promoted Islamic administration, further marginalising indigenous religious leaders and traditions. Firm native populations, like the Aboro people, were directly influenced by their contacts with Muslim traders and emirs, which led to their peaceful Islamization. The social and economic dynamics established by the Hausa/Fulani emirs and the colonial government made the Aboro subgroup more open to Islam than the Berom, who mainly opposed it.

Thus, indirect authority was crucial in forming the Plateau's religious environment. It promoted the expansion of Islamic influence while also enabling the British to keep control. Islam unintentionally flourished among indigenous

populations, such as the Berom and the Aboro, thanks to the indirect rule system's reliance on local Muslim elites to run the area. Therefore, the theological and political dynamics that developed in the area were significantly shaped by the British colonial agenda.

Social Identity Theory

By classifying people according to perceived distinctions, Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory explains how colonial power fuelled ethnic and religious conflicts. Indigenous populations were frequently divided into ethnic, religious, and cultural groupings during colonialism, and European rulers established hierarchies that privileged some groups while marginalising others. By elevating Muslim elites and subjugating non-Muslim tribes like the Berom politically, economically, and socially, the British colonial government in Northern Nigeria, along with the Hausa/Fulani emirs, institutionalised these distinctions.

Muslim populations, especially those from the Hausa/Fulani dynasties, were positioned at the top of the hierarchy that the British created in the case of Jos by cataloguing groups into separate ethnic and religious identities. In addition to upholding the status of the Muslim aristocracy, this classification disadvantaged indigenous tribes such as the Berom, who were alleged to be both religiously and ethnically distinct from the Muslim rulers. Through the indirect rule policy, which gave Muslims political clout and encouragement while leaving non-Muslim populations to contend with cultural and political marginalisation, the British strengthened this system. Social differences that still exist today are a product of the institutionalisation of religious and ethnic identities brought about by the classification of groups according to these criteria.

The way the British-imposed hierarchical structures in Jos fuelled the theological, political, and social expansion of Islam requires a grasp of social identity theory. Because they were labelled as "other" in a society that promoted Muslims, indigenous communities like the Berom fought Islam, as the idea explains. The Berom and the Hausa/Fulani developed a long-lasting social identity struggle because of this division, which was institutionalised by colonial control. This conflict continues to exacerbate intergroup conflicts long after colonial rule ended.

Horizontal Inequality Theory

Disparities across social groups, especially along ethnic, religious, or cultural lines, can cause skirmishes and detachment, according to the Horizontal Inequality Theory (Stewart, 2002). Colonial measures in Jos made the disparities between

Muslims and non-Muslims, especially the Berom, even worse. These disparities were not just economic; they were also political and social, as the British marginalised the Berom and other indigenous communities while giving the Hausa/Fulani emirs governmental and religious domination.

During the colonial period, British authorities focused on Muslim elites, especially the Fulani, while neglecting indigenous communities such as the Berom. They disregarded local customs and sacred lands, forcibly relocating populations to create space for mining camps controlled by Hausa/Fulani elites. In addition to displacing local communities, prisoners from regions like Kano, Sokoto, and Katsina were released from prison and sent to serve their sentences in the mining camps of Jos, where forced labour was widespread. The Berom, unwilling to take part in mining due to their cultural beliefs, faced significant social consequences as a result. This history highlights forced labour, economic and political exclusion, and the lasting effects on the Berom community in Nigeria. A comprehensive examination of these issues is provided by Suberu (2013) in his study titled "Ethnic Minority Problems and Governance in Nigeria: Retrospect and Prospect," which explores how colonial and post-colonial policies have driven regional inequalities and social stratification. Furthermore, research on forced labour systems in Northern Nigeria during the colonial era indicates that convict labourers were frequently used in mining areas such as Jos, with prisoners being sent from places like Kano and Sokoto to work in these camps.

During the colonial era, non-Muslim people felt deeply unfairly treated since Muslim elites received preferential treatment. The Berom, who had fought against Islamization and preserved their religious and cultural independence, were losing their rights. Berom marginalisation resulted from the colonial economic system, which benefited Muslim elites in the region's political and economic systems, in addition to religious divides. Consequently, the Berom found themselves both economically disadvantaged and politically isolated from the choices that influenced their lives. Intergroup conflicts and social differences that were exacerbated by colonial authority and still exist in the area can be tacit through the prism of horizontal inequality theory.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF COLONIALISM AND ISLAMIZATION IN JOS, PLATEAU STATE

The upland Jos Plateau has traditionally served as a haven for indigenous people fending off outside threats. Along with other ethnic groups in the area, the

Berom people have long opposed the growth of Islam, especially during the 19th century when jihadist operations were launched. The Sokoto Jihad, which was regulated by the well-known Islamic scholar Usman dan Fodio, was one of the most important of them. The goal of the jihad was to create a single Islamic state under sharia rule and purify Islam (Last, 1967). The Berom, however, were able to successfully thwart Islamic encroachment into their region despite the coordinated efforts of jihadist armies. This was chiefly clear during the Hausa/Fulani armies' unsuccessful attempts to forcefully impose Islam on the Plateau's indigenous communities during their jihadist incursions between 1843 and 1846 (Morison, 1982).

The Berom's hostility to Islam, especially by military methods, was noteworthy because of the larger sociopolitical climate of the day, as well as their rejection of religious quotas. Their traditional spiritual and cultural practices, which they painstakingly consider essential to their identity and way of life, were zealously secured by the Berom and other Plateau people. The influence of Islam, specifically in its jihadist form, directly threatened these firmly held convictions (Falola, 1998). The jihadist armies persisted, but the Berom remained independent, using the Plateau's untamed landscape as a strategic advantage to stave off incursion and coercive conversion.

However, a significant turning point for the Berom people and the larger Jos Plateau was the entry of British colonial forces in the early 20th century. After the discovery of large tin reserves on the Plateau, the British, motivated by both political and economic factors, attempted to increase their dominance over the area. To promote resource extraction, the British sought to establish their rule over Jos, whose mineral riches became a significant economic resource. Because the Berom had a history of resisting both Islamic and colonial powers, the British attempted to crush any indigenous resistance, including that of the Berom.

British troops led by Captain Laws conducted military missions to conquer the Berom people between 1903 and 1907. Many Berom villages were destroyed during this time of military conquest, and essential resistance figures, including Da Jamang, who had spearheaded the Berom people's resistance to colonial control, were executed (National Archives Kaduna—N.A.K. 15/1/ACC.62; SPN 6/3/C 140/1907). These expeditions demonstrated the British colonial government's resolve to crush the Berom's resistance. They paved the way for the establishment of colonial governance systems, which would have a long-term impact on the political and religious dynamics of the area.

The British established an indirect rule system after the Berom were defeated, and this served as the cornerstone of colonial authority in Northern Nigeria. By coopting pre-existing local power structures, this approach allowed the British to control with little direct involvement. The British significantly reduced the traditional Berom kingship's power and influence under this prearrangement by reducing it to the position of district headship (Paden, 1973). In contrast, the Hausa/Fulani rulers were still referred to as "Emirs" by the British, which strengthened the Muslim emirs' religious and political hegemony in the area. A significant change in the balance of power in the area was brought about by this twofold strategy, which elevated the Hausa/Fulani emirs while weakening the native Berom leadership. This effectively solidified Muslim political and religious rule.

Although the British benefited politically from this tactic, the Berom and other indigenous tribes suffered greatly as a result. The British unintentionally contributed to the spread of Islam by giving Muslim elites more authority, especially among populations like the Aboro people, who would subsequently peacefully accept Islam. Islam was able to expand more readily because of the indirect authority that was imposed and the economic constraints that the colonial government applied. Muslim emirs were able to maintain their authority through the system of indirect rule, and their influence also reached the native populace, who were frequently familiarised with Islam through secretarial interactions, trade, and social interactions.

In divergence from the previous violent attempts at conversion, the peaceful spread of Islam among the Aboro validates a complex process of Islamization that was influenced by both indigenous resistance dynamics and colonial agendas. Because of their contacts with Muslim missionaries and traders, as well as the socioeconomic shifts brought about by British colonialism, the Aboro people, in contrast to the bulk of the Berom, converted to Islam. The colonial system, which aimed to include the Plateau region into the larger colonial economic structure, including the introduction of mining operations, can be seen as having produced this peaceful conversion process. Mwadkon (2021) specified that the Jos Plateau and the Berom people underwent significant change when the British arrived in the early 20th century. The region's religious and political landscape was significantly altered by British colonial forces in their pursuit of economic exploitation. In addition to strengthening Muslim political and religious power, the British, along with the Hausa/Fulani emirs, encouraged the famous ancillary rule system that allowed Islam to grow into previously hostile territories. With significant ramifications for the Berom people and their religious identity, the progressive Islamization of the Jos

Plateau was made possible by a combination of military conquest, indirect authority, and economic exploitation.

COLONIAL ROLE IN THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

In Northern Nigeria, the actions of the British colonial government extended beyond economic exploitation and political domination. Muslim elites were given the authority to rule on behalf of the British, and the establishment of indirect rule, especially on the Jos Plateau, strengthened their hold on power. The indigenous populations, especially the Aboro people, were able to adopt Islam peacefully because of this arrangement.

The British chose to cooperate with the Hausa/Fulani emirs rather than overthrow their political structures because they understood the administrative effectiveness of Islamic rule. By doing this, they promoted the spread of Islam via socioeconomic integration and education while simultaneously ensuring a stable and manageable region. As Muslim missionaries and traders built mosques and schools throughout the area, the British perceived Islam as a "modern" form of government, which aided in its peaceful spread.

THE CONVERSION OF THE ABORO PEOPLE

The Aboro people's conversion to Islam marks a dramatic change in the religious landscape of the Jos Plateau. It affords a crucial illustration of how Islam was able to peacefully expand in an area that had previously opposed violent attempts at Islamization. Muslim businessmen and missionaries played a significant role in the Aboro's peaceful social relations as they accepted Islam, in contrast to the earlier 19th-century jihadist efforts that attempted to impose Islam by military force. These traders, who were primarily from the Hausa and Fulani groups, developed close social and economic relationships with the local populace. Their reciprocal respect eventually resulted in the peaceful conversion of the Aboro people.

These amicable exchanges were crucial to the propagation of Islam among the Aboro, as evidenced by the oral histories gathered for the study. One of the study's major informants, Mallam Idris Abubakar, related a first-hand story of how his grandfather was introduced to Islam. He described how the Fulani traders treated his grandfather, who was not initially a Muslim, with care and respect. He later voluntarily converted to Islam because of his grandfather and the Fulani developing a relationship of trust through this polite exchange. According to Abubakar, the kind

and courteous way the Fulani behaved in both social and commercial contexts drew his grandfather, who had never been exposed to Islam before, to the faith. This story marks a significant shift from previous instances of religious imposition, in which compulsion and violence were frequently used to propagate Islam.

Similar to Abubakar's story, other informants, including Mallam Ismail Saeed and Mallam Kabir Audu, related anecdotes from their own families. For example, Saeed's great-grandparents were exposed to Islam through their contacts with Muslim merchants who frequently visited their village. In addition to conducting business, these traders interacted socially and culturally with the local populace. Through these exchanges, Saeed's forefathers learnt about Islam and eventually chose to embrace it voluntarily, seeing it as an essential component of their developing social bonds rather than an outside force. By peacefully interacting with the Fulani, who were already well-known in the area as traders and religious leaders, Audu's family also converted to Islam. The conversion of Audu's forefathers was motivated by a growing respect for the Islamic customs that the Fulani imposed on their societies rather than by coercion.

In contrast to the violent and coerced conversions that had marked previous jihadist campaigns, Islam was able to infiltrate indigenous tribes on the Plateau by peaceful and voluntary means, which is why these accounts are important. The character of relations between Muslim traders and the indigenous populace is responsible for the peaceful propagation of Islam inside the Aboro community. These peaceful conversions were founded on mutually beneficial partnerships created via trade, social collaboration, and cultural exchange, in contrast to the violent jihadist incursions that were centred on religious dominance and territorial control.

These conversions' harmless appeal reflects a larger change in the Plateau's religious environment, where Islam started to be seen less as a foreign imposition and more as a faith that could coexist with native customs. The mutual respect and social bonds that grew between the Muslim traders and the Aboro people made this coexistence possible. The locals viewed Islam as a possible spiritual and cultural supplement to their own way of life rather than as an outside force since the traders shared their beliefs and customs with the Aboro. In stark contrast to the violent jihadist tactics that had defined previous attempts at Islamization in the area, these nonviolent conversions demonstrate the possibility of social and religious integration when various cultures and religions are permitted to coexist without resorting to violence.

This case further highlights the importance of trade and social interaction in the development of religion. Due to their strong social and economic connections with the native inhabitants, Muslim traders from the Hausa and Fulani groups were able to exert control over the local communities without using force. In addition to exposing the local populace to Islamic principles, these traders served as spiritual and economic bridge builders, encouraging camaraderie and respect for one another. The local population's increasing integration with these traders made the conversion to Islam a logical progression of these changing ties. The peaceful potential of religious conversion when supported by mutual respect, understanding, and social interaction is thus demonstrated by the Aboro people's conversion to Islam.

Furthermore, the peaceful conversion of the Aboro demonstrates the larger significance of social integration for religious spread. It implies that allowing different cultures and religions to interact freely and without force can generate opportunities for peaceful religious adoption and cultural exchange. This is in stark contrast to other examples of forced conversions, in which Islam was propagated by violent means. The Aboro's peaceful embrace of Islam through trade and social involvement teaches important lessons about the possibilities for religious and cultural integration in modern times, particularly in multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries.

In conclusion, the conversion of the Aboro people to Islam is a remarkable example of peaceful religious reform on the Jos Plateau. Muslim businessmen and missionaries played an important role in promoting this peaceful conversion by cultivating social relationships based on mutual gain and respect. This process, which contrasts dramatically with the violent jihadist efforts of the nineteenth century, emphasises the possibility of religious unification through social and cultural interchange rather than violence. Through peaceful encounters between the Aboro and Muslim traders, Islam was able to develop a foothold in an area that had previously resisted its imposition, resulting in a profound shift in the Plateau's religious dynamic. The peaceful conversion of the Aboro people exemplifies how religious change can be achieved through voluntary, peaceful ways based on social bonds and mutual respect.

FINDINGS

The study's findings imply that the expansion of Islam in Jos, notably among the Aboro people, was influenced by a combination of colonial policies and benign social interactions, providing a nuanced view of the region's Islamization process.

The British colonial authority worked closely with the Hausa/Fulani emirs to propagate Islam through a variety of channels, including education, trade, and social integration. This collaboration enabled Islam to spread among indigenous groups, not via forced tactics, but through more subtle mechanisms such as cultural exchange and mutual respect.

The British colonial presence in Northern Nigeria, particularly their use of indirect control, fostered a distinct sociopolitical milieu that influenced religious dynamics. Under the British colonial framework, indirect rule enabled local elites, especially the Hausa/Fulani emirs, to preserve authority while also promoting Islamic governance. This system boosted Muslim elites, whose influence extended to indigenous communities, facilitating the spread of Islam. The British, in their efforts to stabilise and control the region economically, particularly after the discovery of tin, facilitated the influx of Muslim traders and workers into Jos, which contributed to the growth of Islam.

However, the peaceful conversion of the Aboro people calls into question the widely held belief that Islamization in Jos was solely the product of violent jihad or forceful conversion. While previous jihadist efforts aimed to impose Islam through military force, the Aboro people were converted through peaceful interactions, particularly with Muslim businessmen and Fulani missionaries. These traders, who interacted with the local populace in trade and daily life, provided a type of Islam that was absorbed into the culture without violence or coercion, but rather through mutual respect and cultural interchange.

These peaceful conversions demonstrate the significance of social and cultural linkages in religious expansion. Unlike previous violent jihadist endeavours, Islam grew among the Aboro people through gradual societal assimilation. Muslim traders and missionaries built trustworthy and respectful relationships, gradually imparting Islamic doctrines that complemented local cultural traditions. This example of peaceful conversion demonstrates how religious transformation can occur in an environment of collaboration rather than strife.

The findings of this study provide a more comprehensive understanding of religious proliferation in colonial situations. By emphasising peaceful social interactions and cultural exchanges, this study contributes to a counter-narrative to the often-overused notion of violent religious imposition. The peaceful growth of Islam among the Aboro people demonstrates the potential for religious integration through non-coercive means, and also sheds light on the role of cultural interchange in changing religious landscapes during the colonial period. This study emphasises

the need to study several pathways to religious conversion, especially in areas where colonialism and cultural interaction were prevalent.

CONCLUSION

The spread of Islam in Jos was more than just a religious phenomenon; colonial politics, economic concerns, and social connections influenced it. The British colonial administration's strategic relationship with the Hausa/Fulani emirs aided the peaceful spread of Islam in the region, particularly among the Aboro people. By vesting Muslim elites, the British reinforced theological and political inequities that continue to impact the region's sociopolitical dynamics.

This study shows that colonialism acted as both a catalyst and a cover for the spread of Islam on the Jos Plateau. While terrorist initiatives failed to establish Islam via force, the partnership of British and Muslim elites laid the groundwork for peaceful religious expansion. The peaceful conversion of the Aboro people demonstrates how Islam can be received through social amalgamation and respect for native customs, rather than force or bloodshed.

It can be said that colonialism's legacy in Jos has had lasting implications for the region's political, social, and religious landscape. The marginalisation of indigenous groups like the Berom, combined with the entrenched religious hierarchies created by the British, continues to shape the region's sociopolitical fabric today.

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