



## CONTENDING RELIGIONS, IDENTITIES AND SPACE

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**PAPER'S TITLE:** A Religious Minority in Search for Space and Identity: A History of the Ahmadiyya Community in Kano, Nigeria, 1922-2014

### ABSTRACT:

Kano is located in the Northern part of Nigeria and majority of its population is Sunni Muslim. Islam has been the dominant religion in the society since the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the people adhered to Sufi brotherhood. There are two Sufi groups in Kano namely; Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya. The former was the first to have appeared on the religious space of Kano, arguably, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, while the latter was introduced in the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The *Salafi*-inclined group, *Jama'atu Izalatul Bid'a wa Iqamatus Sunna* (The Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition) popularly known as *Izala* came into the scene in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the second decade of the century, Ahmadiyya movement was introduced to Kano by a group of missionaries from the south-western part of Nigeria under the leadership of Abdur-Raheem Nayyar who was a Pakistani. The mainstream Sunni groups (Qadiriyya, Tijaniyya and later *Izala*) treated Ahmadis (followers of Ahmadiyya) as heretics based on their belief system and the resolution passed by the World Muslim League (WML) in 1974. Moreover, the sunnis refused to recognize Ahmadis as Muslims because of their belief in the prophet-hood of the founder of Ahmadiyya movement, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, which according to them contrasted with the main teaching of Islam. It is in view of this that the paper purports to study the history of the Ahmadiyya community in Kano, its struggle to acquire religious space/identity, its relationship with the mainstream Sunni groups, and its inability to get a reasonable followership from the members (Hausa-Muslims) of the host community in spite of their welfare/community services and more than nine decades of existence in Kano's religious terrain. The paper relies heavily on oral sources due to paucity of written documents on the history and the activities of the group in Kano.

### AUTHOR'S SHORT BIO AND ACADEMIC PROFILE:

I was born in Kano State and attended Kwalli Special Primary School and proceeded to School for Arabic Studies, Kano. I bagged my first and second degrees at the Department of History (where I work now as Assistant Lecturer), Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria. During my undergraduate and postgraduate studies I emerged as the overall best student. I worked with the Department of History and Security Studies, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina from 2009-2012. I am currently running a PhD programme at the Department of History, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto, Nigeria and the title of my research is ***Religion and Society in Kano: A Historical Study of Intra-faith Relations, 1978-2014***. I am an *All Africa House Fellow*, University of Cape Town, South Africa. I published articles in different journals locally and internationally among which are *Annual Review of Islam in Africa* (ARIA), University of Cape Town, *Kano Journal of History*, Bayero University, Kano, *Taguwa Journal of Humanities*, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina. ss