

TRADE, ISLAM, AND POLITICS IN NORTHERN IGBOLAND: IBAGWA AND ENUGU EZIKE EXPERIENCE UP TO 1970

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to capture the nuances of interface between trade and growth of Islam in Igboland with reference to Enugu-Ezike and Ibagwa Nkwo of Enugu State. The extant literature argues that the spread of Islam in Nigeria is essentially through the Sokoto Jihad of 1804. To analyze the spread and development of Islam most forcefully, we must look beyond the above explanation rooted in the Jihad. Although the Jihad set in motion a mighty snowball of movement of people with its effect ricocheting areas hitherto untouched by Islam, the area under investigation took an exception to this general practice. In the area under survey, Islam was introduced and propagated through persuasion and absorption process. The paper looks at the nexus between trade and Islam and argues that what propels and props the sustenance of Islam in the area were essentially cultural and the colonial state. These were important because trade during the colonial period propped the growth of the religion just as the colonial state saw Islam as an appendage of the government in the conquest and colonization of the country. The paper posits that Islam here owed its growth to the prestige of being the religion of warrant chiefs. Generally speaking, this northern part of Igboland does not enjoy robust historical attention. As a result of dearth of materials on Islam in the area, the paper relies almost entirely on fieldwork embarked upon by the authors. The paper, therefore, represents an attempt to piece together bits of information distilled from oral traditions after rigorous content analysis.

Introduction

The history of most of the communities that formed what is today known as Nigeria is replete with interactions that brought about cross fertilization of ideas and culture adoption. Such interactions which sometimes took the form of trade relations left in their wake ever-lasting impact on the various groups concerned. Trade is one factor of inter-group relations that has not only knit together peoples of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and religious persuasions but has also made indelible imprints on the culture and history of the people. One area where trade has made impressive impact has been in the spread and growth of Islam in Ibagwa Nkwo and Enugu Ezike and indeed the entire Igboland.

It may be permissible to define the term Islam so as to establish a firmer grasp of its source of spread and sustenance among the Igbo people. According to the Koran “Islam” means “absolute submission or resignation to the will of Allah”¹. I.R.A. Ozigboh on his own part sees Islam as a derivation from the Arabic word-“*Salam or Salama* which means peace, surrender, submission”² to the will of God (Allah). It has to be said that submission is predicated on the fact that Allah is the sole deity who governs the universe and all the creatures there in- ‘La ilaha Ila Allah’ (there is no God but Allah). “Islam”, in the opinion of R. Olaniyan, “is both a religion and a culture: a way of life”³. Being a religion of the books, the task of proselytization of Islam, like that of Christianity, lay squarely on its adherents.

For nearly two centuries after the Uthman Dan Fodio in Hausaland, Igboland remained more or less a ‘*terra incognita*’ to Islam. However, Ibagwa Nkwo provided the bridge-head through which Islam made its debut into Igboland. A. Doi has observed that “Islam first started in Igboland in the Igbo Eze Division near Nsukka and the first place where substantial number of Muslims settled, practiced Islamic teachings and built mosques was Ibagwa Nkwo”⁴. Ozigboh has also argued that in the “East of the Niger, Islam had been in Ibagwa and Enugu Ezike for quite some time through the Igala and the Hausa/Fulani resident traders”⁵. It seems Ozigboh aligns himself to the school of thought which believes that the new faith was introduced by the Igala an Hausa /Fulani traders who had commercial links with the Nsukka Igbo. This is also likely to have influenced Okpani Okoh who postulated that

“the earliest attempts made to establish Islam in Igboland were in the 19th century; when the Igala /Hausa Muslim traders gained inroads into the area of Nsukka”⁶.

What this would appear to suggest is that the contact between the Igala and the Hausa/ Fulani traders and their northernmost Igbo neighbours began only in the 19th century. It may be permissible to observe that the activities of the much-famed Onoja Ogboni in the area pre-dated the 19th century and therefore lends credence to the antiquity of the inter-group relations between the Igala and the Nsukka Igbo. A.E. Afigbo appears to support the antiquity of the contact between the two neighbours in this work. He has forcefully argued that “the contact between Nsukka and Igala, however, preceded the rise of Igala power as it was not just or even primarily, a question of power politics”⁷. In spite of the aged-long trade relations between the Nsukka Igbo and their neighbours from the northern part of Nigeria, such relationship did not lead to conversion of the people to Islamic faith.

Islam In Ibagwa Nkwo

Ibagwa Nkwo appears to have played host to Islamic faith much earlier than Amufie Enugu Ezike. According to Alfa Abubakar, a Nupe resident in Ibagwa Nkwo “a group of Hausa traders arrived at Ibagwa over three hundred years ago with the sole aim of trading.”⁸ The settling of the Nupe (generally but erroneously referred to as Hausa traders) pre-dated the debut of other muslim migrants from the northern part and also provided them with the road map into Igboland. Sule Abubakar, a tailor by profession and a Muslim by faith asserted that his grand father - Mallam Sule Abubakar (a Nupe) was amongst the first generation of Muslim traders to settle at Ibagwa⁹. The periodicity of the event has been lost but the fact that Mallam Sule Abubakar died many years ago suggests its antiquity. This view is shared by Musa Yakubu who observes that “our great grand fathers who settled in Ibagwa brought Islam along with them”¹⁰.

Following the beaten paths of the forerunners of Muslim traders from Nupeland, many more Muslim traders from the Igala land, Hausaland and Yorubaland came to Ibagwa and Enugu Ezike on business trips. Gradually some of these Muslim traders got settled and integrated into the Ibagwa community; a development that attracted the indigenes to the new faith. Consequently, Ahmed Ugwuoke Oyima Ukwaba became converted - the first Igbo man to become a Muslim¹¹. In the words of Danjuma Aliyu Ukwaba, his father, Ahmed Ukwaba,

died in 1973 at a ripe age of over one hundred years”¹². Subsequently many more Igbo embraced the new faith thereby increasing the numerical strength of Muslim adherents in Ibagwa in particular and the Igboland in general.

Islam in Enugu Ezike

The question of the first Igbo man to embrace Islam has been a subject of debate. To some people, Garba Okeme Abugu of Umuogodo Amufie Enugu Ezike was the first Igbo man to be islamaized¹³. But a more recent investigation seems to disagree with this claim. As noted above, Nupe residents of Ibagwa asserted that Islam was long-established in Ibagwa before the conversion of Garba Abugu. When Okeme Abugu (as he was then called) set out on a trading venture to Anyigba (an Igala town of the present day Kogi State) he was on a path that eventually led to Islam. It has been argued that at Anyigba, he came in contact with one Usman Buzu, a horse trader from the present day Niger Republic¹⁴. Being a bi-linguist (speaking Igbo and Hausa equal fluently), Okeme was entrusted with the responsibility of collecting money from the Igbo horse buyers and remitting it to Usman and his agents. It is, perhaps, reasonable to surmise that after many years of unbroken relationship with the Muslim traders serving as their interpreter, Okeme became converted to Islam. There followed the ‘*Sunna*’ ceremony – an equivalence of Christian baptism, which gave him the name Garba to reflect his new faith¹⁵.

Given this development, it can, therefore, be said that Garba Okeme Abugu’s conversion provided another impetus to Islamic influence in Igboland. In other words, his acceptance of Islam appears also to have opened the door for the many more streams of Muslim traders into Amufie where some settled permanently. Prior to the settlement of waves of Igala and Hausa/Fulani Muslim traders, Islam did not take deep root in the area. It may be permissible to state, however, that the presence of these traders provided enormous fillip to the propagation of the faith.

From the foregoing discussion, it is in doubt if Garba Okeme Abugu can still be rightly claimed to be the first Igbo indigene to embrace Islam. The fact that his first tax receipt to bear his Muslim name was issued in 1928 and that he died in 2007¹⁶, at a ripe age of about one hundred years appears to suggest that his conversion came much later than Ahmed Ukwuaba’s. Put differently, the fact that the latter who was converted as a youth died in 1973

(34 years earlier) at the age of about a hundred years goes to suggest that his conversion preceded that of Garba. Furthermore, the fact that Ibagwa Nkwo was the first Igbo town to play host to Muslim traders, on its own, further debunks Garba's position as the first Igbo Muslim.

From Alfa Abubakar's account which dates the coming of the Nupe Muslim traders to Ibagwa over 300 years ago, it seems certain that Islam came to the town much earlier than it did at Amufie. It may be permissible to argue that Ibagwa Nkwo was the cradle of Islam in South-Eastern Nigeria from whence it spread to towns in the region. Probably in agreement with this, C. A. Nnorom argues that "in terms of propagating the Islamic faith in Igboland, perhaps one town and two institutions have played the most significant roles: with fourteen (14) mosques Nsukka is, undoubtedly the Islamic capital of Ala Igbo"¹⁷.

The Nexus between Trade and Growth of Islam Up To 1908

N. Levtzion once argued that "in Africa, traders rather than warriors have been Islam's principal agents"¹⁸. Islam owed its growth in Igboland and even beyond, to the existence of Eke Amufie and Nkwo Ibagwa where horses were sold by the Nupe, Hausa /Fulani and Igala Muslim traders. These Muslim traders brought to Ibagwa horses, 'Ijigida' and 'aka' (or beads in English language) which were exchanged with local products such as palm oil, and delicate parts of wild animals that abounded in the Nsukka area¹⁹. Being hospitable, both the Ibagwa and the Amufie people are said to have housed some of these non-Igbo horse traders who slept over after their business transactions at Nkwo Ibagwa. In the Igbo calendar week, Nkwo precedes Eke, a fact that tended to encourage the movement of traders and their wares from Nkwo Ibagwa to Eke Amufie. As was to be expected, most if not all the non-Igbo traders were Muslims whose presence and activities forestalled the new faith from backsliding?

It has been noted that "many towns and commercial centres of southern Nigeria, notably... Ibagwa and Enugu Ezike were settled by Muslim proselytizers-traders and Mallams"²⁰. The peaceful settlement in Ibagwa and Amufie by the Nupe, the Yoruba and the Hausa /Fulani Muslim traders not only increased the volume of economic activities of the area but also brought about increased tenor and tempo of Islamic evangelization there. As it were, while the Nupe and the Hausa /Fulani traders settled at the two market towns, their Igala

counterparts remained itinerant and often returned home given the proximity between Igalaland and the commercial entrepôts²¹. It can further be said that the two towns were not just a gateway to Islamic penetration into Igboland but also became a melting pot for people of various ethnic backgrounds who were drawn by economic opportunities of the area.

According to H. O. Eya, some of the Hausa/ Fulani Muslim settlers at Amufie included Omale Kano, Salisu Omale and Ibrahim Bello all from Kano, Omale Musa from Zaria, Omale Nguru and Audu 'Inyara' (nick named after his aggressive nature). Amongst Nupe settlers were Alfa, Baba Okaratu, Ndaa Muazu, Adamu Baba, Audu Abdulahi and, of course, Ibrahim Adukwu²², "an ambitious and powerful Nupe"²³. At Ibagwa Nkwo, the foremost purveyors of Islam included such notable Muslim traders as Mallam Garba, Alfa, Abubakar Sule, Baba Ibrahim otherwise called Baba Gwugwu, Baba Kpotu and Mallam Yusuf all Nupe while the Hausa/Fulani migrants were Mallam Zakari from Kano, Mallam Bala Keffi, Mallam Seraju and Mallam Sambo, and from Yorubaland came Talfa, Badamosi and Muhammadu Lawal among others²⁴. These first Muslim settlers would appear to have contributed immensely in expanding the frontiers of Islam to encompass both near-by and distant villages of Olido, Ekposhi, Alor-Agu, Obukpa, Ogrute, Afikpo etc. The fact that Islam accepted every convert on equal terms and the settlers' communal and prayer lives must have excited some indigenes very remarkably.

Apart from Ahmed Ukwaba and Garba Okeme Abugu of Ibagwa and Amufie, respectively, people like Momoh Omada, Ibrahim Eze, Inuwa Eze, Audu Orijo, Omada Idoko, Momoh Ossai, Adamu Eze nwa Ossai, Umaru Idoko were among the first generation of Igbo Muslims in the area²⁵. The earlier fear of 'Hausanizing' oneself by converting to Islam would appear to have been deflated by the number of Ibagwa and Enugu Ezike men who had now embraced the Islamic faith. There was established a tradition of Islamic learning – '*Okaratu*' not just for the Igbo converts but also for the Muslim traders to deepen their faith²⁶. Through this way, it can be said that, the new converts had availed themselves of the accompanying literacy which Islam provided.

As has been noted by Ozigboh, "as a religion of the book, Islam cultivated and promoted literacy and numeracy"²⁷. It is, therefore, not surprising that the new converts were subsequently instructed in Arabic language to be able to recite the prayers and also read the

Quran-the embodiment of the word of *Allah*. This development integrated the new faithfuls into the Muslim community as they were seen praying together especially during the Friday ‘*jumat*’²⁸. It is hardly open to doubt that at this stage, Islam had moved from being a religion of settlers to that of farmers and house wives alike.

It is also worthy to note that Islam has come to be regarded as an Igbo religion with Igbo men becoming the imams in the various mosques within Ibagwa Nkwo, Enugu Ezike and indeed other parts of Igboland. In the words of Isa Ahmed Ukwaba, many more than a half of five thousand strong Muslim communities in Ibagwa were of Igbo extraction. It was observed that Abdullahi Yusuf, a *Quranic* scholar whose doctoral thesis won the best prize in Saudi Arabia was an indigene of Ibagwa. Other notable Ibagwa Muslims included Ilayasu Ona of the Nassarawa State University and Abubakar Adamu (SAN), an outstanding legal luminary²⁹.

However, it must be emphasized that in spite of its early entry into the Nsukka area, its propagation remained somewhat slow. This can be accounted for by non-availability of missionaries charged with the responsibility of aggressively evangelizing the area. Consequently, most of the neighbouring villages and communities remained outside the fold of Islam. Furthermore, the Ibagwa and the Enugu Ezike like their Igbo neighbours fall into the matrix of the often-called ‘stateless societies’. It may be permissible to observe that this was contrary to what is obtained in other parts of Western Sudan where Islam started with the kings who subsequently dragged their subjects to the faith. Levtzion would appear to support this line of argument when he noted that “Islam ... hardly gained any ground among the loosely organized societies, those known as tribes without rulers”³⁰. However, two factors - the settlement of Ibrahim Adukwu, an outstanding horse trader and the colonial state-easily bolstered the fortunes of Islam not only in Ibagwa and Amufie but in the entire Nsukka area and Igboland as a whole.

The Role of the Colonial State in the Spread of Islam in the Northern Igboland

The question of the state has acquired particular importance both in theory and in practical politics. The state is a historical product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of classes. It is the organ of class rule, and organ of the oppression of one class by another. The state is a special repressive force. As Engel posits:

the state is, ... by no means a power forced on society from without; as little is it 'the reality of the ethical idea', the image and reality of reason' that Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonism which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, is the state³¹.

The state activities are coordinated and directed by a central body known as government and it is an agency of the state, but not the state.

The state is the embodiment of political power and as such, an instrument of the dominant class. The dominant or ruling class uses the state to encourage and promote socio-cultural development in accordance with its ideas and interests.

Like all changes, the spread of Islam in the northern part of Igboland took place as a result of struggles and contradictions in the colonial Nigerian society. Inevitably, they involved the colonial state as the most important instrument for economic exploitation and subjugation of the restive populace. The state intervened in the spread of Islam to make sure that the subjugated groups were pooling in the same direction. This desire for economic exploitation illustrated the plan to use religion as an instrument in the hands of the ruling class in taming the people.

Since the quest to penetrate the hinterland became great and since British took over the administration of Nigeria from the Royal Niger Company in 1900, the quest to consolidate their hold of the country took a new dimension. The penetration into the northern part of Nigeria was more difficult than had been envisaged by the British agents in Nigeria. Northern peoples' resistance was cooled in religious terms; the emirs who believed that Islam was the only true religion did not want anything to do with foreigners whom they regarded as infidels. They were not interested in any treaties of friendship. When persuasion produced no result, with the few number of men at his disposal, Lord Lugard began a systematic attack on the

northern emirates till all of the Fulani rulers were subdued. Islam as religion of the people was not subdued; rather it moved subtly towards the south particularly in the northern part of Igboland through commerce. Its spread went uninterrupted since that did not in any way truncate colonial interests. This was in a way how Islam in the northern most Igboland benefited from the colonial rule.

The Adukwu Factor in the Expansion of Islam: 1909-1931

Among the Nupe Muslim traders that finally settled at Amufie Enugu Ezike was Ibrahim Adukwu who came down with his mother and other siblings³². Earlier, he had always squatted with one Nkpozi Agboke Nwoma of Umu-Ogodo kindred each time he was on a business trip to Enugu Ezike. As his name suggests, he had embraced Islam “and acquired Quranic education under a mallam versed in the Arabic language in Bida - his home town”³³. As noted earlier, C.K. Meek had described him as “an ambitious and powerful Nupe”. It is not unlikely that he provided accommodation and succour to other Muslim traders coming from the northern part of Nigeria to Amufie, Enugu Ezike. The settling of Adukwu coincided with the period of effective occupation of the Nsukka Igbo by the British. This culminated in the creation in 1908 of Okwoga Division which comprised the Idoma, the Igala and the Nsukka Igbo; a development that overtly favoured the expansion of Islam.

In order to fill what seemed to them as leadership vacuum, the British through S.W. Sproston, the District Officer of the Okwoga Division issued warrant certificates to some strong-willed and bold personalities in the Nsukka area. In the opinion of A.E. Afigbo “in the early years of the Okwoga Division, the administration depended mainly on a number of Nupe people who knew Nsukka well for contact with the people.”³⁴ Ibrahim Adukwu was one of such bold and courageous personalities used by the British in the process of governance in the Nsukka area. His appointment as a warrant chief, in a way, helped in deepening and expanding the frontiers of Islam in Enugu Ezike. Seemingly in agreement with this statement, Trimingham argues that “they (colonial rulers) not only confirmed muslim chiefs over ‘pagan’ communities but gave them greater authority”³⁵.

When, “in October 1918 the Native Court of Enugu Ezike was formed”³⁶ with Adukwu as a principal member, the event proved to be the greatest facilitator of Islamic propagation in the area. Adukwu’s towering personality not only dragged his one hundred and twenty (120)

servants³⁷ to Islam but was also a source of assurances and guarantees to many more muslim immigrants. It is within the matrix of reason to argue that they converted to Islam in order to secure Adukwu's protection from harsh and intolerable hardship wrought by colonial administration. It can also be said that some regarded Islam as "a religion of success and upward mobility"³⁸ hence they readily embraced the faith.

What seems to have checkmated the unmitigated spread of Islam in the area under investigation was the presence of Christianity. The Christian missionaries established schools which also became centres of religious instructions. In Amufie, Adukwu is credited with the introduction of St. Luke's Anglican School with Rev. Asekwu from Asaba as its pioneer teacher³⁹. This development demonstrated a point of departure from what obtained elsewhere. This was so as some of his sons who were ready for western education provided by the mission school had to take Christian names in order to actualize their ambition. It has to be noted that such sons like "Johnson Bawala C. Adukwu, William Momoh Adukwu, Alfred Abubakar Adukwu as well as Richard Audu Adukwu dominated the public positions open to Africans in the Enugu Ezike Native Authority Area"⁴⁰.

Analyzing the success of Islamic propagation in both Ibagwa and Amufie, one informant rather unkindly but probably correctly, blamed the dwindling fortunes of Islam on Adukwu's involvement with the mission school. In contrary at Ibagwa, many Muslim parents withdrew their children from mission schools for fears of such children becoming christianized; it did not matter how much they were disadvantaged by their action. This situation was only reversed with the government take-over of schools after the Nigerian civil war.

Sustenance of Islam in Ibagwa and Enugu Ezike

The British infrastructure of exploitation turned out to be a factor for the expansion and sustenance of Islam in Enugu Ezike and Ibagwa. The network of roads that traversed the two towns eased off the movement of streams of Muslim traders into and from the towns. There followed means of transportation such as bicycles, motor cycles and other motor vehicles which transported larger wares than human portage as well as reduced the distance between Northern Nigeria and the market centres of Ibagwa and Enugu Ezike. According to Sule Abubakar, lorries were loaded at Ibagwa *en route* Kano to bring down horses, *aka* and *ijigida* (beads) by muslim traders long before Nigerian's independence⁴¹.

What again seemed to have sustained the tenor and tempo of the spread of the new faith was that its purveyors who were deep-rooted in Islamic tenets got integrated into their host communities through marriages. Such a development, as was to be expected, yielded rich harvests of converts as those spouses became Muslims. According to R. M. Adukwu, his grand father Ibrahim Adukwu had a harem of sixty wives from virtually all the villages of Enugu Ezike⁴². Some of them included Hadiza Idoko (Uroshi), Obochi Okoro, Fatima Enokpa (both from Amara), Omada Ogbo (Umuogodo), Obochi Attama (Olido) Nwada Ayogu (Amube) Ashibi Ekpe from Ette⁴³. In a similar manner, Alfa Abubakar had four wives all from within the Nsukka area; “one from Alor Agu, two from Ibagwa Nkwo and the fourth and youngest from Eha Alumona”⁴⁴.

On the other hand, Ahmed Ugwuoke Oyima Ukwaba is said to have been given a Muslim girl in marriage by Abubakar Sule; one of the earliest Nupe settlers at Ibagwa Nkwo⁴⁵. Such a gesture not only lured some poor non-muslims of the town to Islam but also went a long way in sustaining the converts’ zest for the faith. It is interesting to note that in some cases, it was not just the spouses that became Islamized but also members of their immediate families. What would appear to have encouraged such women into such marriages was the fact that all filial relations remained intact as they all domiciled within the same environment and culture. Through interaction and marriage, the non-Igbo Muslims were able to integrate themselves into the social milieu of their host communities. In other words, it can be said that marriage played significant roles in both conversion and sustenance of Islamic faith in the area under investigation.

At some points, Islamic religion is in agreement with the people’s traditional religious practices. For instance Islam like the African Traditional Religion (ATR) permits polygamy an institution which was a status symbol amongst the Nsukka Igbo. In the same manner, wearing of protective charms, talisman and divination were as permissible in the ATR as they were (and still are) in Islam. The ATR would appear to have held no inhibitions and restrictions whatsoever to the new faith as they shared similar practices. It is not unlikely that these similarities held out attraction for the first generation of Igbo Muslim who, it seemed, preferred Islam to Christianity that preached against these aged-long practices. Put succinctly, what has sustained Islamic fervour in the area is that it has become the culture of its adherents.

Business Interest and Social Mobility

Furthermore, it can also be said that pilgrimage to Mecca has upheld the converts' interest in the new faith. The passage to the Holy Land has always been associated with great wealth and influence *vis-à-vis* the Christian and Traditional Religions. This is in addition to boundless job opportunities which Muslim names have bestowed on the Igbo Muslims outside their home states. Those of them with good education have had good jobs in other parts of Nigeria especially in north; a fact that has not only integrated them into the wider Muslim world but also raised their social status far above their non-Muslim contemporaries back home. Danjuma A. Ukwaba seems to support this line of argument when he observed that Ibagwa had the highest number of Army, Customs and Naval officers throughout the Nsukka zone; an opportunity non-Muslims rarely had⁴⁶. Put differently, appointments into federal parastatals also encouraged Muslim adherents to stick to the religion.

On a balance sheet, it can be said that while Islam lost some of its adherents to Christianity, it has won some from the latter. Some Muslims who later deflected to Christianity included Joseph Nwa Oma (who was formerly known as Momoh Nwa Oma), Aliyu Sule, and Godwin Usman Adama Adukwu. On the other hand, Christianity lost Dominic Ugwuowo who converted to Islam as Mustapha Ugwuowo and another Mustapha Eze⁴⁷. It is interesting to note that no Nupe, Yoruba or Hausa/Fulani Muslim(s) had deflected to Christianity in the history of Islam in Ibagwa Nkwo. This situation would appear to contrast with the fate of the new faith in Amufie where some of Adukwu's sons and daughters abandoned Islam for Christianity. Notable among them included Felix Usman Adukwu, Johnson Bawala Adukwu and Sunday Adukwu⁴⁸.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, this paper has been able to establish that Ibagwa was the cradle of Islamic religion in Igboland. During its debut into the area under investigation, Islam remained, to a large extent, an alien religion. At this point in time, conversion to the faith was tantamount to 'de-Igbonizing' the converts or stripping them of their Igbo identities. This was perhaps because during '*sunna*'- the equivalent of Christian baptism, the new convert either renounced his Igbo name and or adopted entirely a Muslim one which always sounded Hausa-like. In other words, the fear of 'Hausanizing' oneself in one's own home would appear to have worked against the expansion of the frontiers of Islam then.

The Adukwu factor and the colonial state enhanced the fortunes of Islam in Enugu Ezike and Ibagwa. Islam blossomed as many indigenes including their harem of wives embraced the new faith. The community experienced continued influx of Muslim converts, traders and diviners who settled thereby boosting increasingly the numerical strength of adherents of Islam. It may be permissible to argue that Islam gradually changed from being a religion of immigrant traders to that of indigenous farmers and house wives.

In spite of the successes recorded by Islam as the first foreign religion to come to the Nsukka area, it has continued to play a second fiddle to Christianity. The mission schools provided western education which held irresistible attraction to the youths of the area. This development presented high prospects for the leaders of tomorrow as against Quranic education which emphasized more on Arabic literacy that was in no way to compete with the former. While Christianity promoted individual upward social mobility Islam remained more or less community-oriented.

ENDNOTES

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4. A Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation 1984) p. 167.
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6. O. Okoh, *The School of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Enolia-Itim Afikpo, 1958-2000*; A. B. A. Project submitted to the Department of History and International Studies, (UNN 2007) p. 1.
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8. As quoted in the Daily Trust, Tuesday January 17, 2006 p. 20
9. Oral interview with Sule Abubakar aged about 76 years on the 22 August 2010 at Ibagwa Nkwo.
10. As quoted in the Daily Trust p. 20.

11. Oral interview with Sule Lawal aged about 78 years on the 22 August 2010.
12. Oral interview with Danjuma Ukwaba aged about 56 years on the 22 August 2010. His account was corroborated by his elder relation Isa Ahmed Ukwaba.
13. Oral interview with H.B.O. Abugu (Garba Abugu's first son) aged 65 years on 7 July, 2010.
14. Oral interview with Saliu Abugu aged 56 years on 8 July 2010
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16. Oral interview with H. B. O. Abugu already cited.
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19. Oral Interview with Sule Abubakar already cited
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21. Oral interview with P. A. Eya aged about 78 years on the 13 June, 2010 at Amufie Enugu Ezike.
22. Oral interview with H. O. Eya aged 86 years on the 13 June, 2010.
23. As quoted in H. C. Adukwu, *Converted: A Biography of Paramount Ruler Chief Ibrahim Adukwu of Enugu Ezike*, 1909-1931, n.d, n.p.
24. Oral interview with Sule Abubakar already cited.
25. Oral interview with H. O. Eya already cited.
26. Oral interview with Alfa Abubakar aged about 77 years on the 21 August 2010.
27. Ozigboh p. 135.
28. Oral interview with H. O. Eya already cited.
29. Oral interview with Isa Ahmed Ukwaba, aged about 79 years on the 22 August 2010 at Ibagwa Nkwo.
30. Levtzion p. 17.
31. As quoted in O. Nnoli, *Introduction to Politics*, (Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd, 2003) p. 33.

32. Oral interview with R. M. Adukwu aged 60 years on the 1 August 2010 at Amufie Enugu Ezike.
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36. E. Uchendu, "Evidence for Islam in Southeast Nigeria" in N. P. Unnithan (ed) the *Social Science Journal*, vol. 47 No 1, (Elsevier January 2010 pp 172-18).
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39. H. C. Adukwu, already cited.
40. As quoted in Afigbo pp 1-26.
41. Oral interview with Sule Abubakar already cited.
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46. Oral interview with Danjuma Ukwaba already cited.
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