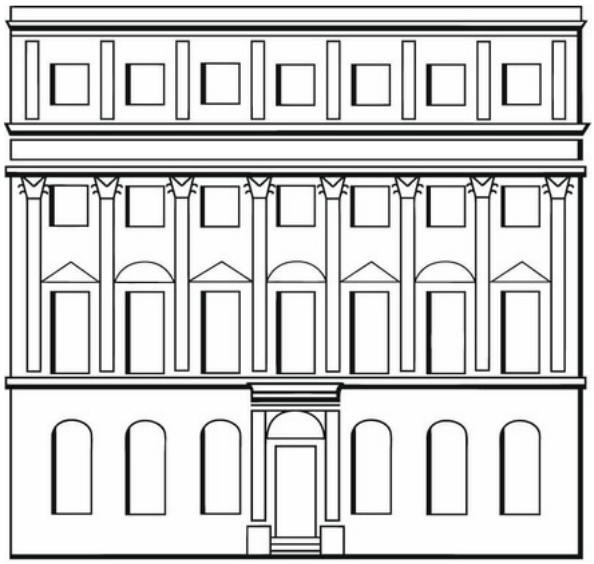
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The Slave Trade as Enforced Migration in the Central Sudan of West Africa

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The Slave Trade as Enforced Migration in the Central Sudan of West Africa

PAUL E. LOVEJOY

The slave trade was a specific mechanism of enforced migration. Although the slave trade has sometimes been likened to the Holocaust, a more appropriate analogy would be to the uncertainties and terror of refugees who are forced to move. In the case of the slave trade, the process of enslavement created conditions that produced refugees, as well as the enslaved victims who were forcibly removed. Such an approach to the slave trade highlights the extent to which enslavement and the movement of individuals through the slave trade were consciously pursued as reflected in government policy and political and religious ideology. In order to consider the slave trade from this perspective, this essay focuses on that dimension of the slave trade in Africa specific to the Muslim regions of West Africa centred on what today is Nigeria and which in the nineteenth century was the Islamic state known as the Sokoto Caliphate. This focus allows a consideration of the policies of a major African state towards the slave trade and towards the use of enslavement as a mechanism of enforced migration and social engineering.

The Sokoto Caliphate was the largest independent state in Africa in the nineteenth century, and had an enslaved population of several million people at the time of the colonial conquest (1897–1903).[1] As is argued here, the Caliphate consciously pursued a policy of enslavement as a means of consolidating political control, economic development, religious conversion, and social planning. Although the process of enslavement entailed risks to the enslavers and untold hardship and suffering for targeted populations, religious and political ideology justified this form of

[1] Paul E. Lovejoy, *Slavery, Commerce and Production in West Africa: Slave Society in the Sokoto Caliphate* (Trenton, NJ, 2005).

enforced migration through the call for jihad against unbelievers. The fact that implementation resulted in considerable loss of life and the destruction of property was an inefficiency that may have been troubling to some, but was tolerated in the interests of the Muslim community.

The essay first considers the relationship between enforced migration as a phenomenon and slavery as a means of enforcement. It is argued that this migration was reflected in the degree of urbanization in Muslim areas of West Africa, and especially in the Sokoto Caliphate, which is reflected in surviving biographies.[2] Although it is not often recognized, there were many towns and cities in the nineteenth century. This urbanization demonstrates two aspects of slavery as enforced migration: namely, the necessity of congregating in walled towns for defence in the face of the insecurities of slave raiding and war, on the one hand, and the fact that much of the congregated population was enslaved and brought from elsewhere as a means of economic and political consolidation. People were moved around and they were enticed to gather in defensible locations behind walls. People generally moved to farming communities and plantations outside the towns, according to season and safety. The purpose of slavery in Islamic West Africa then had to do with demographic planning, however brutal in its implementation. The impact of enforced migration in this setting, it is argued, was softened through various institutions and practices that were intended to ease the introduction of the enslaved into the state. The official and religious policies of assimilation included practices of *murgu*, in which slaves were allowed to work on their own account in exchange for a payment, and various methods of achieving emancipation. Such ameliorative practices stand in stark contrast to the brutality of enslavement, the callousness of the slave market, and the tribute payments in human bodies.

Ethnicity was an important factor in considerations of enslavement and enforced migration, which is examined below as a means of understanding the relationships among peoples who were involved in enslavement, opposition and resistance, and demographic and cultural transformation. Identification according to ethnicity and origins was a dynamic factor in a political

[2] Id., 'The Urban Background of Enslaved Muslims in the Americas', *Slavery and Abolition*, 26/3 (2006), 347–72.

economy in which enslavement and enforced demographic change were state policies. In this study, the Sokoto Caliphate is the focus because its policy towards enslavement was a major reason that a jihad was consolidated into a confederation of thirty emirates and many sub-emirates that stretched from Burkina Faso through Niger and Nigeria to Cameroon and the Central African Republic. As the reference to 'caliphate' indicates, this was a state whose foundation in jihad was a factor in succession to leadership, with each 'caliph' a direct relative of the founder, 'Uthman dan Fodio (d. 1817). The state emerged during a series of campaigns between 1804 and 1808 that swept aside the governments of the main walled towns in the central Sudan, and state policy subsequently extended the initial successes through expansionist wars and slave raids that effectively lasted until European conquest by a combined assault from Britain, France, and Germany, culminating in complete colonial occupation in 1903. The focus here is on the nineteenth century and the policies of this Islamic state with respect to demographic restructuring, a process that lasted until the colonial era and, indeed, set the demographic landscape of the northern region of Nigeria today.

Slavery and Demography

The process of enslavement implies a demographic model in which areas that are attacked lose population and the aggressors force people to return to their own centres. The slave trade involved enforced migration, and hence resulted in the removal of populations, but we are faced with a number of anomalies. The slave trade is usually considered a conscious commerce, in which individuals are commoditized. People are moved as goods, appropriate for the extraction of labour, their sexuality, productive and reproductive capacities, and valued according to the market for specific needs and services, including sacrifice at funerals or employment in high government office. What happens to individuals where they end up can be called the 'arrival factor'. This essay is not only concerned with the phenomenon of removal itself, but also the impact of enforced migration through slavery in terms of demographic change.

Enslavement forced people to move, and those who resisted were killed or otherwise dispersed. Forced migration by walking in fetters, sometimes carrying loads, having to survive injuries, hunger, disease, and sexual abuse, under conditions in which mortality was high—this was not an efficient means of reallocating human resources across geography. The only market that operated was the treatment of humans as commodities, which is far from an efficient means of reallocating labour and, in fact, precludes other forms of marketing arrangements. The inefficiency of this mechanism of demographic 'planning' offers insights into the imperfections in planned demographic change, which in the case of slavery have their own specific political, ecological, and economic implications.

The model of slavery as a form of enforced migration and population removal requires an understanding of what has been called the 'enslaving frontier', which has variously been defined on the basis of religion, ethnicity, and politics. Implicitly, the concept implies population removal and dispersal.[3] Movement characterized the displacement of enslavement in which distance was a factor that reduced the risks of resistance and escape. In the enforced removal of people through slavery, inevitably, individuals were distanced from their natal homes, which were often left in a mangled condition in the consequences of the enslavement of its people. The idea of a 'frontier' also reflects the fact that people abandoned territory that was raided, if they were not captured or killed. Consequently, there was often a buffer zone, largely uninhabited, between states.

The context of slave raiding and warfare raises questions of who moves and why, and the degree of consciousness in defining those who could be enslaved. On the most superficial level, this requires an understanding of specific historical circumstances and the interplay between politics, ecology, and economy. The

[3] See e.g. P. Burnham, 'Raiders and Traders in Adamawa: Slavery as a Regional System', in J. L. Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Oxford, 1980), 43–72; J. S. Hogendorn, 'Slave Acquisition and Delivery in Precolonial Hausaland', in B. K. Schwartz and Raymond E. Dumett (eds.), *West African Culture Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives* (The Hague, 1980), 477–93; Paul E. Lovejoy (ed.), *Slavery on the Frontiers of Islam* (Princeton, 2004); Michael Mason, 'Population Density and "Slave Raiding": The Case of the Middle Belt of Nigeria', *Journal of African History*, 10/4 (1969), 551–64; Joseph P. Smaldone, *Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1977); Femi James Kolapo, 'Military Turbulence, Population Displacement and Commerce on a Trading Frontier of the Sokoto Caliphate: Nupe *c.*1810–1857' (Ph.D. thesis, York University, 1999).

resort to enslavement was a viable and common political action in West Africa. Inevitably, the prevalence of slavery meant that the subject was hotly debated in Islamic areas of West Africa, as demonstrated in the written literature in Arabic, court records, and diplomatic correspondence. The issue of slavery and specifically complaints that free-born Muslims were regularly enslaved and thereby not protected by political authorities was one of the causes of the jihad that established the Sokoto Caliphate. Moreover, the diplomatic correspondence between the jihad leadership and the Muslim government of neighbouring Borno demonstrates that the subject of who could be enslaved was a contested subject among Muslims.[4]

The legitimacy of enslavement was also fundamental to the practice of ransoming, which was common in Muslim areas. Free-born often had to pay twice the market price of slaves to obtain their redemption. This practice provided some protection for Muslims in a situation in which slavery was endemic, thereby limiting the unrestricted movement of people. Whenever environmental or political factors forced people to evacuate their homes there was grave risk of enslavement, but these same conditions sometimes enabled people to escape, and if they claimed to be Muslims, it was difficult to dispute their status at birth. Therefore, warfare was both a mechanism for enslavement but also an opportunity for those who were enslaved to escape or otherwise alter their conditions. Inevitably, the discussion of who could be enslaved and resistance to enslavement were factors in the discourse of forced removal. While it has sometimes been alleged that the victims of slavery were passive and experienced a form of 'social death', to quote Orlando Patterson, the reality in West Africa shows that this approach is deceptive.[5] Instead, the extent of strategizing in terms of resistance and the public debate about legitimacy demonstrate that people were actively involved in the reality of enslavement. To avoid slavery, people stored food in caves, retreated to defensible hills, grew cactus fences, dug trenches, used divination, amulets, rituals and counter-rituals, and manipulated kinship, age, and gender relationships.

[4] Paul E. Lovejoy, 'The Bello–Clapperton Exchange: The Sokoto Jihad and the Transatlantic Slave Trade', in Christopher Wise (ed.), *The Desert Shore: Literatures of the Sahel* (Boulder, Colo., 2001).

[5] Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).

These were features of life and society in areas on the frontiers of Muslim slaving. Many enslaved boys died from castration, which was performed in frontier areas because of the high demand for eunuchs, which was a further incentive to resist.

Although moving enslaved people considerable distances was a feature of slavery, slaves sometimes came from places not so distant, as demonstrated in the origins of concubines in the Sokoto Caliphate. Court records from Kano, Zaria, and other emirates reveal that many concubines came from areas within 150 km of their place of enslavement.[6] Moreover, women were less likely than men to return to their homes because of the difficulties of escaping in areas dominated by Muslim men—it was impossible to join caravans, while children also limited the mobility of women. Hence age and gender were important factors in the movement of population. Women and children were targeted because of the relative difficulty of their escaping. This policy was further encouraged because it was thought that women and children were easier to assimilate and indoctrinate into the cultural norms of society than men. There was a conscious effort at assimilation, even if full incorporation was regulated and the reliance on enslaved labour entailed the continued settlement of newly enslaved. Although children were born into slavery, their numbers were not sufficient to sustain the slave population, which required steady replenishment from the frontiers.

Urbanization and Population Displacement

Muslim society in West Africa was urban, and the concentration of population through settlement of captives taken in raiding and warfare was a common strategy of state. The enslaved population was settled in agricultural districts near walled towns, and hence there was a process of movement from frontiers where people were enslaved to urban centres and their surrounding villages. In the nineteenth century there were hundreds of towns

[6] Paul E. Lovejoy, 'Concubinage and the Status of Women Slaves in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria', *Journal of African History*, 26/2 (1988), 245–66; and Lovejoy and J. S. Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery: The Course of Abolition in Northern Nigeria, 1897–1936* (Cambridge, 1993).

in West Africa, and at least 200 in the Sokoto Caliphate, with populations of at least several thousand people, and identified because they were walled, with market places, central mosques, schools, cemeteries, and government buildings.[7] The walls of Kano were enormous, with thirteen gates and defensive trenches. The capitals of the thirty emirates and numerous sub-emirates in the Caliphate were towns, and although less pretentious they were nonetheless each surrounded by satellite settlements, many of which were plantations.[8]

For defensive reasons, the jihad encouraged urbanization and the construction of fortified settlements, *ribat*, that were intended to be focal points of demographic concentration. In the Islamic context, the establishment of *ribat* played a major role in the consolidation of empire. Such fortified settlements provided security for nucleated populations and in some cases served as outposts from which to launch slave raids and war. These fortified settlements became focal points for newly enslaved people who had effectively been removed from one part of the central Sudan to another. Hence population removal to a great extent involved the forced transfer of people from hill retreats and distant places to the towns and surrounding agricultural settlements of the jihad states, the largest of which was the Sokoto Caliphate, but which was also characteristic of other Muslim states in West Africa.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Sokoto Caliphate had a considerable slave population, certainly on the same order

[7] In the British census of 1911, Sokoto Province alone had thirteen towns with populations over 6,000, the largest being Sokoto with 21,624, Isa with 18,919, and Kaura-Namoda with 13,067, while Bongudu, Gwandu, Moriki, Wurno, Gusau, Jega, Talata Mafara, Gummi, Argungu, and Birnin Kebbi had populations from 6,000 to 10,000. See Garba Nadama, 'Urbanization in the Sokoto Caliphate: A Case Study of Gusau and Kaura-Namoda', in Y. B. Usman (ed.), *Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate: The Sokoto Seminar Papers* (Lagos, 1979), 140–62. These estimates did not include dependent villages and plantations surrounding the towns that were integral to the urban landscape. For a discussion of the underlying official concern with urbanization as a strategy in planning, see Besim S. Hakim and Zubair Ahmed, 'Rules for the Built Environment in Nineteenth-Century Northern Nigeria', *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 23/1 (2006), 1–26.

[8] In Adamawa alone there were forty walled towns, including Cheboa, Tibati, Ngaundere, Banyo, Malabu, Rai-Buba, Song, Zummo, Gola, Holma, Pakorgel, Marwa, Bogo, Kobotshi, Laro, Belel, Daware, Mayo-Farang, Sorau, Madagali, Gider, Michika, Moda, Mubi, Uba, Mindif, Binder, Ridadu, Bibemi, Kalfu, Be, Demsa (Cisiga), Vokna, Tola, Agorma, Pette, Wuro Mayo-Najarendi, Mbere, Garwa, and Balala, besides the capital at Yola. For a discussion, see Lovejoy, *Slavery, Commerce and Production*, ch. 1 and the sources cited therein.

as the United States and Brazil and much larger than Cuba. The number of slaves may have approached two to three million by the 1860s, which was at least a quarter of the total population and perhaps as much as half. A considerable proportion of this population had been enslaved. In short, there was a substantial population displacement for at least fifty to sixty years after the jihad and, in fact, annual campaigns to enslave were conducted for the rest of the century. In addition to the enslaved population that was forcibly resettled within the Sokoto Caliphate, there were many slaves who were exported both across the Sahara and to the Americas. Perhaps 200,000 people were sent to Brazil, most of them before the middle of the 1830s, while unknown numbers, but certainly in the thousands, went to Cuba. Another 400,000 people were sent into the Sahara or to North Africa during the course of the nineteenth century, and unlike the trade to the Atlantic, which ended by the 1850s, the trade across the Sahara lasted until the colonial conquest, although abolition in the various Ottoman domains inhibited the trade after the 1840s.

As in the Americas, a substantial proportion of the population of the Muslim areas of West Africa was enslaved, which involved population displacement on a scale comparable to the transatlantic slave trade at its height. The estimated population of enslaved people indicates major population shifts through slavery, not only across the Atlantic and the Sahara, but within West Africa. The relatively high incidence of emancipation and the fact that the children of concubines were considered to be free-born, following their fathers, tended to limit the growth of the enslaved population. Certainly the number of slaves would have been much greater if slave-owners had been less willing to allow slaves to purchase their freedom and if the children of concubines had inherited the status of their mothers, as in the Americas, rather than the status of their fathers. The incidence of emancipation and claims of paternity over the children of concubines are indicators of assimilation, which mirrored the political and religious ideology. Enforced population displacement that began with enslavement was supposed to strengthen the Islamic state, which was achieved through demographic concentration.

The leadership of the Sokoto Caliphate actively promoted population concentration through the construction of a system of walled towns as a defensive system. The establishment of fortified

settlements is associated specifically with the policies of Muhammad Bello, the son and close adviser of Shehu Uthman dan Fodio, who not only was a leading officer of the jihad, but also founded the capital at Sokoto. In *Jawab shafi' wa-khitab minna kafin ila Muhammad al-Jaylani*, a treatise written in 1815, Muhammad Bello advised the Tuareg leader Muhammad al-Jaylani how to manage a Muslim community among nomads in the wake of the jihad.[9] For Bello, the issue was how to settle the nomads. In *Kitab al-ribat wa al-hirasa*, Bello elaborated on the merits of working and living in defensive settlements, and such *ribat* were interpreted in the context of Islamic tradition and history.[10] Bello's influence was enormous, both while his father was alive and when he became the first caliph of the empire upon his father's death in 1817. He reigned until 1837, was responsible for the construction of numerous settlements, and inspired the emirs of the various provinces to do likewise. According to Murray Last,

> The establishment of *ribats* was a part of the policy of stabilising the frontiers and providing strongholds round which settlement could flourish despite the raids of the Kebbawa, the Tuareg, the Gobirawa and their allies in Zamfara. Likewise Bello encouraged the building within the frontiers of walled towns where mosques and schools could be opened and trade and workshops started: with scholars appointed to those towns as Imams, judges, *muhtasibs* (legal inspectors), and teachers, Bello hoped to maintain both the practice of Islam and the military control of the area.[11]

Muhammad Bello always lived in *ribats*. After founding Sokoto, he established himself at Karindaye, then Magaria, and finally Wurno. Bello established dozens of other *ribat* in the Sokoto area. In some places, existing towns were reinforced, so that every walled town effectively became a *ribat*, but Bello encouraged the foundation of new communities away from the pre-jihad towns. Some of these *ribats* became major settlements, which in turn became focal points of smaller *ribats*. Eventually,

[9] The *Jawab shafi' wa-khitab minna kafin ila Muhammad al-Jaylani* was 'a complete and adequate response to Muhammad al-Jaylani', MS dated 1230/1815, according to John Hunwick, *Arabic Literature of Africa*, ii: *The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa* (Leiden, 1995), 121, item 30.

[10] Cited ibid. 123, item 44. Also see Hakim and Ahmed, 'Rules for the Built Environment', 2–3.

[11] Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London, 1967), 79–80; and id., 'An Aspect of the Caliph Muhammad Bello's Social Policy', *Kano Studies*, 1 (1966), 56–9.

whole areas were consolidated in this fashion, as, for example, in the countryside between Sokoto and Wurno, which became densely inhabited, second only to the closely settled zone around Kano city.[12] Kano, with its forty walled towns, was even more pronounced in the extent of urbanization, with each town surrounded by a belt of dependent villages and plantations. Free merchants and craftsmen were encouraged to settle, and they bought slaves, so that the concentration of population was achieved through the settlement of slaves on the lands of the aristocracy and their clients. The acquisition of land sufficient to employ slaves depended upon patronage. In this context, political factors governed the incorporation of captives. Who was retained, who was sold, who was killed, and who escaped were decisions affecting every slave raid and military campaign.

In following Bello's lead in founding settlements, the governments of the various emirates pursued a militant military policy of conducting annual raids and reinforcing each other in combined military action against the pockets of resistance that formed in the central Sudan. These campaigns were conceived as part of a conscious economic policy of settlement and population management. The focus was not only on slaves but also on the nomadic population of Fulani cattle herders and Tuareg transporters. Incentives were extended to these people, often in the form of low taxes and proximity to walled towns, so that besides a forced migration of the enslaved population there was free immigration and settlement. Nonetheless, the largest immigration was the subjugated population, which involved the dispersal of communities and the removal of people from homelands to nucleated areas within the Caliphate.

The demand for slaves encouraged enslavement, and therefore government decisions to target particular populations. There was a desire for women because Muslim societies sanctioned marriage to four free women and the subjection of enslaved women as concubines in whatever number could be afforded. There was also the need for manual labour, also performed by concubines.

[12] John Edward Philips, 'Slavery on Two Ribat in Kano and Sokoto', in Lovejoy (ed.), *Slavery on the Frontiers of Islam*, 111–24; Ibrahim Muhammad Jumare, 'Land Tenure in the Sokoto Sultanate of Nigeria' (Ph.D. thesis, York University, 1996); Mohammed Salau, 'Growth of the Plantation Economy in the Sokoto Caliphate: Fanisau, 1819–1903' (Ph.D. thesis, York University, 2005).

The distribution of people was commoditized on the basis of skill, attraction, and perceived need, both economic and social, and indeed sexual. Slaves were employed extensively in government and the military. Hence what happened to individuals upon settlement was intentional integration. In the urban context of Muslim society, assimilated slaves with skills could work on their own account through arrangements known as *murgu*, in which slaves paid their owners regular and set fees but otherwise were on their own, even being allowed to set aside money to purchase their own freedom. In effect, removal was further commoditized through a form of alienation that is parallel to the alienation of labour through capital formations of production. State policy promoted the 'individualization' of slave labour in a market economy in which wages were a means of reimbursement that slaves could obtain but wage labour was not a preferred mechanism of income. People sold their services, they collected things from the common for sale, and otherwise worked for money, if they had to, and this usually applied to slaves who were working on their own. In effect, slaves were forced into wage employment, a further dimension of 'removal' that had begun with their seizure. In some ways, the results were similar to the enclosure of land that forced the resettlement of people and the reallocation of labour in Britain. Hence removal did not only result in shipment to the Americas to work on sugar plantations, but was an integral feature of developing Islamic urban society in West Africa. Individuals who were enslaved faced the extremes of plantation labour in the Americas and religious subjugation in Islamic areas of Africa. The employment of slaves for wages through *murgu* and the commissions that could be acquired through petty trade and agency provided income for slave-owners and incentives for slaves. Hence, once removed, slaves did not necessarily want to return to their homes, which they might suspect had been destroyed anyway.

Ethnicity and Enforced Demographic Change

There was a strong correlation between ethnicity and slavery, and efforts to protect identity and therefore safeguard against enslavement included the use of facial and body scarification.

Free-born Muslims marked their children with distinct patterns that were recognizable and could be distinguished from those used by groups targeted for slavery. Scarification was a specific badge of identity that was visual and could not be altered. People could learn new languages, but not change their scarification. Children born into slavery, by contrast, were given markings of their master or more general markings indicating where they were born, whether in Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, and so forth.

In the Sokoto Caliphate, slaves came from many different ethnic backgrounds, but they were grouped broadly into categories that continued to have currency because new arrivals kept coming. In Kano, slaves of the same ethnic background had often been enslaved under similar conditions, such as those identified as Warjawa and Gwari. The Warjawa and other people inhabited the Ningi hills to the south-east of Kano, which served as a retreat for political and religious dissidents who raided Kano as well as suffering invasion. The Gwari lived in scattered villages south of the Hausa cities in the Kaduna river region. The removal of people from these areas into slavery, therefore, did not necessarily entail loss of contact with others of the same culture and language, although Hausa was the language of communication in the Sokoto Caliphate. The political elite, which was mostly Fulani, also spoke Fulfulde. Some were even fluent in Arabic and many people could read at least some Arabic. Thus the use of language and ethnic identification were complicated and reflected the interactions among peoples.

An expansive state like that of Sokoto, which based its demographic growth on enslavement and the integration of the descendants of slaves, pursued an ongoing and annual campaign to obtain new captives, as if there was a 'slaving frontier' that separated the nucleated regions of the state from the peripheral areas that were not Muslim. Because of the necessity of retreating to defensible locations, the hills where people lived were densely inhabited, such as those of Ningi, already mentioned, and the region of the Jos Plateau, the Tangale hills, Tula, and other places in distant Adamawa. In addition, slaves came from the wars of expansion and consolidation, including the foundation of several emirates in Nupe, the destruction of the Oyo Empire, the resulting wars that led to a massive population displacement among the Yoruba, including the shipment of a million Yoruba

to the Americas between 1817 and 1840, the abandonment of the capital district of Oyo, and the incorporation of Ilorin as an emirate within the Sokoto Caliphate.

Muslims in the Sokoto Caliphate debated the efficacy of the 'slaving frontier' in ethnic terms. The discourse on the subject arose within the literary tradition of Islamic Africa. One of the most distinguished scholars of the subject was Ahmad Bābā (1556–1627) of Timbuktu.[13] Ahmad Bābā was one of the most learned and respected scholars associated with the Sankore mosque, then part of the Songhay Empire of which Timbuktu was the most important city. A Moroccan expedition from Marrakesh crossed the Sahara in 1591 in a brazen attempt to conquer Songhay and extend a Muslim Sharifian empire into the heart of Africa. Ahmad Bābā was taken into captivity as a consequence of this invasion. Many Songhay citizens were enslaved, and even more Songhay slaves were effectively re-enslaved and taken to southern Morocco to work the sugar plantations that had been established there. Distinguished individuals such as Ahmad Bābā were held to ransom, enslavement befalling them should ransom not be forthcoming. In fact, he eventually returned to Timbuktu, where he wrote his famous treatise, *Mi'raj al-su'ud—The Ladder of Ascent Towards Grasping the Law Concerning Transported Blacks*, which was based on his experience and extensive knowledge of Islamic law. In his treatise, Ahmad Bābā engaged the historic Islamic literature on the subject of enslavement, in effect developing the concept of enslaving frontier with respect to Muslim regions.

Who is removed and why, and when. There was a sharp distinction between war between Muslim states, such as between Sokoto and Borno, and systematically attacking non-Muslim populations with the purpose of enslavement. In the case of the war and continued hostilities between Sokoto and Borno, the

[13] For a discussion of Ahmad Bābā, and the debate within Muslim circles about who could be enslaved and who should not be, see my 'The Context of Enslavement in West Africa: Ahmad Bābā and the Ethics of Slavery', in Jane Landers (ed.), *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque, N. Mex., 2005); Mahmoud A. Zouber, *Ahmad Baba de Tombouctou (1556–1627)* (Paris, 1977); and John Hunwick and Fatima Harrak, *Mi'raj al-su'ud: Ahmad Bābā's Replies on Slavery* (Rabat, 2000). Excerpts are also to be found in John Hunwick and Eve Troutt Powell (eds.), *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam* (Princeton, 2002). Also see J. O. Hunwick, 'Ahmad Baba and the Moroccan Invasion of the Sudan (1591)', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 2/3 (1962), 311–26; J. O. Hunwick, 'Further Light on Ahmad Baba al-Tinbukti', *Research Bulletin, Centre of Arabic Documentation*, 2/2 (1966), 19–31.

problem of slavery was exacerbated by the destruction of the capital district and dispersal of its population, in which case the population, at least the free population, was clearly Muslim. Yet many free Muslims were enslaved. In a region of enslavement, with a frontier exposed to Muslim encroachment, it was important that there was a system of ransoming which effectively enabled those who could afford it to achieve their redemption should they be unlucky and have been enslaved. Ransoming was a form of redemption which was allowed and encouraged under Islamic law, often involving third parties. This form of achieving or re-establishing free-born status was an alternative means of social ordering that affected the distribution of the population that was enslaved. In terms of transaction costs, the ability to ransom captives, usually at a higher price than the sale price, affected the market for slaves and served as a constraint on population dispersal. Ransoming was the brake on removal.

The proponents of jihad particularly targeted those associated with other religious beliefs, such as *bori* in the central Sudan and *orisa* priests among the Yoruba. In both cases, those considered 'deviant' were effectively deported as slaves. The *bori* practitioners were sent to North Africa, where they were able to reconstitute religious and social communities in Tunisia and elsewhere.[14] The rebellion of Muslims at Ilorin in 1817 and the subsequent prosecution of the jihad in Oyo, with Ilorin receiving recognition as an emirate in 1823, led to an attack on the *orisa* cult of *shango*, which was associated with the Oyo government. *Shango*, the god of thunder, required specific ceremonies and rituals, which included the use of *bàtá* drums, and therefore these adherents were targeted. Hence, the presence of *bàtá* drums establishes that Oyo Yoruba, and, specifically, adherents of *shango*, were sent into enslavement. The purge of religious opponents in Oyo was similar to the dispersal of *bori* adepts in the Hausa emirates, although the Yoruba were sent to the Americas, as is confirmed by the presence of *bàtá* drummers in Cuba and Brazil.[15] The *bàtá*

[14] Ismael Musah Montana, 'Slavery and its Abolition in the North African Regency of Tunis, 1730–1846' (Ph.D. thesis, York University, 2007); and id., 'Ahmad ibn al-Qādi al-Timbuktāwī on the *Bori* Ceremonies of Tunis', in Lovejoy (ed.), *Slavery on the Frontiers of Islam*, 173–98.

[15] Henry Lovejoy, 'Drums of Retention: *Bàtá* Drums and the Symbolic Reestablishment of the Oyo Empire in Colonial Cuba, 1817–1867', Major Research Paper, York University, 2006.

drummers are evidence that the politics of deportation resulted in the symbolic re-creation of Oyo in Cuba. Hence jihad involved enslavement, and in the process the war spelled the collapse of Oyo. This is recounted in numerous biographies, a degree of specificity that documents displacement and chronicles the consciousness of the removal.[16] The results, which had parallels in the western Sudan, resulted in the extension of Islam, the displacement of non-Muslims, such as the *orisa* practitioners, and the re-creation of new communities both in North Africa and the Americas.

The community of Islam was a constantly changing construction that involved complex interactions in this setting. The perpetration of jihad was used to justify enslavement that had as its intention the formation of a community on a national scale that would protect its own citizens from enslavement. The protection of Muslims included the institutionalization of ransoming, so that those who were 'wrongfully' enslaved might regain their freedom. However, persecution and the threat of alienation resulted in ethnic ordering. Through reference to local Islamic practice and legal tradition, individuals and communities were defined as insiders or outsiders, and as 'good' Muslims, apostates, or 'pagans'. The debate between Muhammad Bello and Sheikh al-Kanemi and political confrontation between Sokoto and Borno focused on the significance of identity, dependence, and mechanisms of insurance against enslavement and oppression. The debate was cast in terms of Islam, but the problem was that there was no guarantee against enslavement. Despite the possibility of ransom and redemption for the enslaved, the removal of many opponents of jihad to the Americas and North Africa undermined these flimsy safeguards.

As the case of the central Sudan demonstrates, removal inevitably required acculturation to a new setting, a process which can be considered a form of 'creolization' or even a process of cultural 'hybridization' through social interaction in a new society. However, removal through enslavement involved violence that shaped the structures of the new social formations that were created. The scale and intensity of the enslaved migration in the

[16] Paul E. Lovejoy, 'Biographies of Enslaved Muslims from the Central Sudan in the Nineteenth Century', in H. Bobboyi and A. M. Yakubu (eds.), *The Sokoto Caliphate: History and Legacies, 1804–2004* (Kaduna, 2006), i. 187–216.

central Sudan influenced the extent and pace of incorporation, while the legacy of slavery had various influences on cultural survivals, identity reformulation, and mechanisms for interpreting subjugation. As in other migrations, the extent of coercion or degree of incentive involved affected the survival and reinterpretation of culture, often expressed through religion and ritual.

On the basis of an analysis of the central Sudan, it is possible to conclude that there was no 'normal' or 'typical' pattern of forced removal and exploitation through enslavement in Africa. Muslim regions have to be distinguished from other parts of Africa. But in virtually all cases, the impact was devastating, although localized, time and place specific. The enforced nature of transatlantic slavery allows comparison with other migrations, serving as a test of the impact of migration on population when geographically separated from homelands. This study distinguishes between the impact of enforced migration within Africa and external deportation. The impact on the consolidation of a particular religion demonstrates religious change and patterns of ethnic identification. An appreciation of the cultural manifestations of identity can be gleaned from music, language, and religious expression. The examination of enslavement and the slave trade in the central Sudan reveals a form of forced removal that targeted specific populations, in which jihad was used as a justification for enslavement of both those who were not Muslims and those who resisted the imposition of Islamic government as defined by the jihad governments. From this perspective enslavement was politically motivated and therefore comparable to other situations of enforced exodus, with the qualification that the conditions of forced migration through slavery varied greatly. The legacy of this violent past is clearly evident in the political problems that have faced Nigeria into the twenty-first century.