

## Review Article

# Colonialism and Urbanization in Kano: The Experience of Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada, 1903 – 1966

Lawan Abdu'Allah Isa

<sup>1</sup>Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This paper examines how the British colonial economic policies and the subsequent settlement of Second World War Veterans facilitated the transformation of Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada wards to urban areas. It has been argued in the paper that migrants to Kano in post second World War period settled either in Gwagwarwa or Tudun Wada due to lack of space and/or high rent in Sabon Gari layout. The coming of people from different origins and culture during the 1950 and 60s did not only increase the demography and heterogeneity of Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada wards but also transformed the areas from villages to urban areas with enhanced social amenities and recreational facilities. In writing this paper both primary and secondary sources were utilized by the researcher.

**Keywords:** British colony, economic policy, Gwagwarwa, Tudun Wada

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## Introduction

Going by history, urbanization in *Birnin* Kano (Kano city) predates British occupation of the area. This is explicated by Clapperton<sup>i</sup>, Barth<sup>ii</sup> and Lander<sup>iii</sup> in their various reports. Indeed, since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of commercial and craft activities, Kano has been serving as an industrial and trans-shipment center and a final market for a wide variety of goods and services in central and western Sudan. As an economically productive area, Kano attracted immigrants that came and settled due to abundant opportunities. When Clapperton visited Kano in 1824, he was astonished by an ever increasing flow of human and animal traffic and trade. Richard Lander, who escorted Clapperton on his second trip to Kano in 1826, equally reported that Kano was a major city in the Sudan and its cloth was held in high esteem by all classes of people<sup>iv</sup>. By Barth's estimation Kano by 19<sup>th</sup> century, had become extremely wealthy and very powerful.

Indeed, the same way in which the Trans Saharan trade contributed to the emergence of new residential areas and facilitated urbanization of the Kano City, the advent of colonialism led to the transformation of Tudun Wada and Gwagwarwa residential areas in Kano urban complex. This paper is an attempt to bring into light on how colonial economic and educational policies and the subsequent settlement of the Second World War

veterans contributed to the expansion of Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada wards from semi-urban to urban areas.

## Geographical and Historical Background

Geographically, both Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada are located in Nassarawa Local Government Area of Kano State. Gwagwarwa is bounded by Sabon Gari on the west, Fagge further west, Gamar Tudun on the east, Gamar Kwari on the northeast and Tudun Wada on the Southeast. It lies between Latitude 12 22'' North and Longitude 8 32' 59'' East<sup>v</sup>. The area is generally flat, except in the northeastern part, which is a valley (*kwari*). The settlement has a land area of about six square kilometers and by 1976 the area had about 1,500 people per square kilometer<sup>vi</sup>.

The origin of Gwagwarwa is inter-related to the period of Kano civil war of 1893-1895<sup>vii</sup> when the followers of Tukur who were defeated were forced out of Kano city and settled near river Tukurwa, a tributary of river Jakara from where they moved to another area called Gabari Ta Waje (because there was another Gabari in the city)<sup>viii</sup> located in the present Noman's Land. Gabari Ta Waje was gradually accepted by the Kano traditional authority to be part of emir's jurisdiction. The name of the settlement was however, changed from Gabari Ta Waje to Gwagwarmayar Ruwa, which was also later, changed to Gwagwarwa<sup>ix</sup>. Since the end of the Kano

Civil War therefore, Gwagwarwa has been a small ward under the jurisdiction of the Emir.

As in the case of Gwagwarwa, it was the Kano Civil War that led to the establishment of Tudun Wada ward. The ward was carved out of Gwagwarwa and it is located in the southeastern part of Metropolitan Kano. It is bordered on the south by Bompai Police Barracks and Bompai industrial estate. On the north it shares border with Gama Hotel and Gwagwarwa market, which are in Gwagwarwa area. On the east Tudun Wada is bordered by other industries, firms, factories and companies. The earliest migrants to Tudun Wada were Kanuri who settled in the area in 1910<sup>x</sup> to work as unskilled laborers to the colonial industrial establishments.

The year 1930 was epochal in the history of Tudun Wada. During that year, the colonial government under Resident Carrow made a plan survey of the area and allocated plots to former government employees including retired cooks and servants, soldiers, police and night soil collectors in the area. During the period, Mahman Yelwa, both a Hausa and a former soldier from the district of Minjibir, who, before now was in charge of recruiting casual laborers for the colonial authority, was appointed village head. At the same period, a ward head was also appointed for the Babur and Bura peoples, who came from Borno and Adamawa States respectively. Another person was appointed to head those immigrants who came from Niger, who locally were referred to as *Buzu*<sup>xi</sup>. The year 1945 was remarkable in the history of Tudun Wada: it was the period when Second World War Veterans from Burma were settled in the area. The Veterans were initially given a place in Geiza (present Bompai) but were later moved to *Gana* (the present Tudun Wada) where plots of land were allocated to them<sup>xii</sup>; and, the name of the settlement was changed from *Gana* to Tudun Wada<sup>xiii</sup>.

### **Colonialism the Expansion of Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada**

For centuries before the British conquest, Kano was the most prosperous of all the Hausa States. Kano city with its large Kurmi market enjoyed a position both as a trading town of great importance and as a center of producing handicraft materials, especially textile goods. Kano also possessed reputed military strength. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Emir of Kano was reported to have been in a position to raise an army of 7,000 horses and more than 20,000 footmen.

Indeed, the combination of economic importance and military greatness of Kano attracted the British soon after the declaration of Northern Nigeria as a British protectorate. The British regarded Kano as a potentially rich market which would remain under their influence or protection. The fact that the British had a special interest in Kano explained why its occupation was one of the most detailed episodes discussed in the history of British conquest of Northern Nigeria.

It was soon after the conquest of Kano that Lugard raised the issue of the inefficiency of the transportation network. Lugard therefore from the onset believed that if and when the railway reached Kano, it would put silver in circulation and thus make taxes realizable. Consequently, the construction of railway to Kano began in August 1907, from Baro on the Niger. The railway reached Kano in 1911 and the line was opened to traffic on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1912.<sup>xiv</sup> The opening of the line cemented a link between the social formation of Northern Nigeria and the International system of capitalist relations of production and exchange which remains unbroken to the present.

Indeed, with the opening of the rail line, several European and non-European commercial firms moved to Kano to partake in the groundnut and cotton trade. By 1915, there were fifteen European trading companies in Kano metropolis, namely: Paterson Zucchini Limited (PZ) of Manchester; G. L. Gaiser of Hamburg, John Holt of Liverpool; Niger Company; Tin Areas of Nigeria; the Lagos Stores; and the French Company. The other trading companies were four Syrians, three African non-indigenous and thirty-five Arab firms who were all actively engaged in the import-export trade<sup>xv</sup>. Indeed, the coming of large scale commercial firms together with the involvement of Syrio-Lebanese in industrial production became the conduits through which Kano's economy became gradually integrated into the global Capitalist system.

The advent of European companies in Kano attracted immigrants from Southern Nigeria and from former British West African colonies of Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. However, because of high rents and lack of accommodation in Sabon Gari especially after the Second World War period, quite a number of immigrants were forced to settle in Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada wards.<sup>xvi</sup> Similarly, immigrants from other parts of northern Nigeria such as Babur and Bura from Borno and Adamawa States; Atyab, Java, Kaje, Kagoro, Ninzim, etc., from Kaduna State; Tiv and Idoma from Benue State; Ibira and Igala from Kogi State and, *Gwadogwado* from Chad Republic also settled in either Gwagwarwa or Tudun Wada. Their choice to live in these two areas was borne out of their proximity to Bompai Industrial Area, which accommodated European companies and industrial establishments.<sup>xvii</sup> What this means is that immigrants to Kano as from the late 1940s were attracted to either Gwagwarwa or Tudun Wada where there is adequate space for expansion instead of Sabon Gari that became congested. Gwagwarwa also had availability of rented houses<sup>xviii</sup>, which were absent in Tudun Wada. Most settlers in Gwagwarwa worked as industrial laborers, house aides of Europeans living in Bompai or partook in other forms of unskilled jobs such as food and water vendors, selling electrical equipments and repairs of electronics, shoe making and mending, tailoring among others.<sup>xix</sup>

### **Second World War Veterans and development in Tudun Wada**

It was from 1945 ex-servicemen that were among the 90-100,000 Nigerian troops mobilized to fight on behalf of Britain during the 2nd world war started returning to Kano from Burma. As it was against the interest of Kano leadership to accommodate the veterans in the city due to the potential negative social consequences, they were allocated plots of land in Tudun Wada ward. Such a development became responsible for the rapid population increase in the settlement and its transformation to urban settlement.<sup>xx</sup> Further population increase of the ward took place in 1953 consequent upon the famous Kano riot that necessitated the expansion of the ward northwards along the new Airport road. However, the colonial government discouraged expansion in that direction as that would violate the International Sanitary Conventions Related to Air Travels of 1954. Thus it was directed by the colonial government that all development should be directed eastward<sup>xxi</sup>. Hence, new settlers were given plots eastward and their concentration was in Lungun Ruwa and the area they occupied was named *Layin Gwadogwado* i.e. the area occupied by Chadians. This is because most of the ex-servicemen were Chadians (Gwadogwado)<sup>xxii</sup>.

### **Colonial Education and the Expansion of Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada**

Further expansion of Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada and increase in their population took place due to the development of Western education. As the aim of the colonial government was to produce amongst the indigenes literate personnel to provide services to the colonial state as clerks, messengers and artisans, Provision of western education was the one of the earliest social service provided by the colonial government in both Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada. The products of the education system were expected to occupy those vacancies in the colonial administration and commerce that were either not possible or impossible to be filled with European personnel.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Most of the schools established by the colonial government in Kano between 1902 and 1939 were concentrated in Kano city and Nassarawa. As per Gwagwarwa, however, the earliest schools were established in 1938 by the Igbo Union that established the Igbo Union Grammar school and *Ansaruddeen* society that established the *Ansar-ud-deen* Primary School. The first government primary school to be established in Gwagwarwa was the Gwagwarwa Elementary School in 1956<sup>xxiv</sup>. Nevertheless, the school took off only in 1957 in Layin Pampo, in the house of Malam Akawu Mai-Mangwaro and the house of Nabegu (the father of Baba Nabegu).<sup>xxv</sup> A land was later allocated for building the permanent site of the school in 1956, by the Native Authority. According to available records, the land allocated to Gwagwarwa Elementary School ran from Airport road on the west to

Layin Pampo on the east. While in the south it bordered King's Garden Hotel and on the north it faced the Christian cemetery, popularly known as *Kabarin Raka* (Reccas grave). However, what is now left to the school is not up to 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the original land allocated to it. The remaining land was reallocated to private individuals.<sup>xxvi</sup>

The Gwagwarwa elementary school started with five teachers that include Alhaji Sa'adu Ahmed Ringim as the Head Teacher. Other teachers include: Malam Ibrahim Ayagi (Prof. Ibrahim Ayagi), Malam Guda Umar, Malam Muhammad Ghali Galadanci.<sup>xxvii</sup> Due to the upgrading of untrained junior primary school teachers at the School for Arabic Studies in Kano by the Colonial Government, there was rising number of trained teachers<sup>xxviii</sup>. Such teachers were posted to various government schools including Gwagwarwa Junior Primary School.

The first pupils' enrollment numbered about 80:70 boys and 10 girls.<sup>xxix</sup> The first sets of graduands passed out in 1960 and were absorbed into Kuka Senior Primary School in Fagge and Tudun Wada Senior Primary Schools. The same year Gwagwarwa Junior Primary was upgraded to senior primary school. Meanwhile, another primary school was built in Gawuna quarters, close to 'Yan-Kaji bus stop. The first intake of Gawuna Junior Primary School were pupils admitted into the junior classes of 1959 and 1960 of Gwagwarwa Senior Primary.<sup>xx</sup>

Before the establishment of government school in Tudun Wada the settler's children attended Shahuchi Elementary School in the city, which was established in 1925<sup>xxx</sup>. Though, there were schools established in the township (present Sabon Gari), which was far closer to Tudun Wada than Shahuchi in the city but parents/guardians preferred Shahuchi because the schools in township were Christian Mission schools. By refusing their children/wards to attend Christian Mission Schools parents/guardians were taking precautionary measure against converting their children/wards to Christianity.<sup>xxxi</sup> However, the establishment of government school in Tudun Wada took place in 1941 but the school took-up in 1942. The first Head Teacher was Abdu Dan Barno. There were five teachers, beside the Head Teacher. But prominent amongst were Mal. Muhammadu Muhammad English Teacher and Muhammadu Sani Arabic teacher. They were regarded to be important because at that period primary school teacher taught all the subjects with exception of the two subjects. Nevertheless, by 1951 the Head Teacher was replaced by Garba Hadejia<sup>xxxii</sup> and 1956 Tudun Wada Primary School was not only a fully-fledged primary school but a senior primary school<sup>xxxiii</sup>. It is important to note that by this period, more especially, by early 1960, a lot of teachers from the south were recruited to teach in most primary schools. However, because of high rents and scarcity of

accommodation in Sabo Gari, many Igbo and other immigrants from the south settled in Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Similarly, immigrants from other parts of northern Nigeria found home in Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada.<sup>xxxv</sup> Hence, by the late 1950s many ethnic groups in Nigeria such as Babur and Bura from Borno and Adamawa States; Atyab, Java, Kaje, Kagoro, Ninzim, etc, from Kaduna State; Tiv and Idoma from Benue State; Ibira and Igala from Kogi State and; *Gwadogwado* from Chad Republic were represented in these two areas<sup>xxxvi</sup>.

By 1958, Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada had the highest growth rate per annum and a cosmopolitan character in metropolitan Kano as indicated by Paden in his assessment of urban growth in relation to some areas in Kano during the period from 1958 to 1962:

Kano City	11.50%
Fagge	14.50%
Sabon-Gari	5.60%
Tudun-Wada	28.90%
Gwagwarwa	33.00%
Township	11.50% <sup>xxxvii</sup>

### Conclusion

Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada were initially small wards that however, became gradually transformed into urban centers due to colonial activities. The extension of the railway line and proliferation of European commercial firms, coupled with the emergence of industries in Bompai Industrial Area attracted people who were ready to provide the needed unskilled services to these European enterprises. The choice of Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada by immigrants was due to their proximity to Bompai Industrial Area. Both Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada were also more spacious than the Sabon Gari layout that was established since 1913 to accommodate all categories of immigrant groups to Kano.

The arrival of World War II veterans towards the end of 1940s to Kano and their subsequent settlement in Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada was an important factor in the transformation of the settlements. The establishment of colonial government schools in the areas attracted more people from different parts of Nigeria to reside in the two areas. This accelerated the further urbanization of the two areas, though, the arrival of people of Northern origin who left Sabon Gari to Gwagwarwa and Tudun Wada during the 1953 Kano riot had contributed in no small measure in that regard (However, the 1953 Kano Riot is outside the scope this paper).

### Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> H. Clapper ton, (1829), *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa*, Philadelphia, USA.

<sup>ii</sup> H. Barth (1857), *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, New York, USA, Vol. 1, pp.511-512.

<sup>iii</sup> R. Lander (1966), *Journal of Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa*, London

<sup>iv</sup> Lander, *Journal of Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa*, p 200.

<sup>v</sup> The topography of Gwagwarwa is based on the interpretation of the topographical map Gwagwarwa, Tudun Wada and Gama published and printed by Federal Ministry of Lands and Survey, Nigeria, 1980, by Alhaji Abbati, Land Officer 11, Kano State Ministry of Lands and Survey.

<sup>vi</sup> The topography of Gwagwarwa, Tudun Wada and Gama published and printed by Federal Ministry of Lands and Survey, Nigeria, 1980,

<sup>vii</sup> For detail discussion on Kano civil war see, A M Fika, (1967), *The Kano Civil War and British Overrule, 1884-1940*, London, Oxford Press, Dokaji, A. A.(1978) *Kano Ta Dabo Cigari*, Zaria, NNPC

<sup>viii</sup> River Tukurwa was a tributary of river Jakara, which is now referred to Kwakwaci River by noman's Land along airport road.

<sup>ix</sup> Isa, L. A. (1994), "The Origin and Development of Gwagwarwa up to 1979", an unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, p17

<sup>x</sup> P. M. Lubeck (1986), *Islam and Urban Labor in Northern Nigeria: THw Marking of a Muslim Working Class*, London, Cambridge University Press, p 136

<sup>xi</sup> Lubeck, *Islam and Urban Labor in Northern Nigeria: The Marking of a Muslim Working Class*, pp 136-137

<sup>xii</sup> A. I. Frishman, (1977), "The Spatial Growth and Residential Location Pattern of Kano, Nigeria", North West University, Michigan, USA, p 113

<sup>xiii</sup> Lubeck, *Islam and Urban Labor in Northern Nigeria: The Marking of a Muslim Working Class*, pp 137

<sup>xiv</sup> Hopkins A. G. (1973): *An Economic History West Africa*, England, Longman Group Ltd pp 194-195

<sup>xv</sup> Bako A. (2006): *Sabongari Kano: A History of Immigration and Inter-Group Relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*, Sokoto, Usman Danfodiyo University Press pp 22-23

<sup>xvi</sup> A. Frishman, "The Spatial Growth and Residential Location Pattern of Kano, Nigeria", p 175

<sup>xvii</sup> M. U. Adamu (1999): *Confluences and Influences: The Emergence of Kano as a City-State*, Kano, Munawwar Books Foundation, p 167

<sup>xviii</sup> Alhaji Aliyu Usman Gwagwarwa, interviewed on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1992

<sup>xix</sup> Alhaji Aliyu Usman Gwagwarwa, interviewed on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1992

<sup>xx</sup> A. Frishman, "The Spatial Growth and Residential Location Pattern of Kano, Nigeria", p 117

<sup>xxi</sup> A. Frishman, "The Spatial Growth and Residential Location Pattern of Kano, Nigeria", p 167

<sup>xxii</sup> Group interview with Aliyu Usman, Baba Haruna, Mai Unguwa Alhaji Ado and Alhaji Muhammadu Mai

Daura on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1992, 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1992, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1992 and 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1992 respectively.

<sup>xxiii</sup> M. Crowder (1974), *The Story of Nigeria*, London and Boston, pp 376-379

<sup>xxiv</sup> KANONA/515, Gwagwarwa N A Primary Schools 1956

<sup>xxv</sup> Malam Guda (ex Head Master, died in the 90s at the age of 70) interviewed in his house on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1993.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Aliyu Usman Gwagwarwa, 68 years, interviewed in his office on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1992.

<sup>xxvii</sup> KANONA/515, Gwagwarwa N A Primary Schools 1956.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, p106.

<sup>xxix</sup> Alhaji Musa Garban Gawuna (69) and Asst. Police Commissioner (rtd) Aliyu Usman Gwagwarwa, 68 years

<sup>xxx</sup> Umar A. (1988), "The Establishment and Development of Tudun Wada (Kano), C. 1915-1987, p 82

<sup>xxxi</sup> Dahiru Kode Yakasai, Head Master Gwawuna Primary School, 1969-1975, aged 50 years, interviewed 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1994

<sup>xxxii</sup> Mal. Garba Hadejia (Baba Garba) aged 87 years, interviewed on 21/05/2019 in his House in Tudun Wada.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> LEA/MUN/PS/017, The Establishment of Primary Schools in Tudun Wada

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Frishman, "*The Spatial Growth and Residential Location Pattern of Kano, Nigeria*", p 175

<sup>xxxv</sup> J.N. Paden: "The Influence of Religious Elites on Political Culture and Community Integration in Kano, Nigeria", unpublished PhD Thesis, Harvard University, U. S. A. p 85

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Isa, L. A. (1994), "The Origin and Development of Gwagwarwa up to 1979", an unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, p17

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Paden J. N. (1968): "The Influence of Religious Elites on Political Culture and Community Integration in Kano, Nigeria", p 85.