
CHAPTER 13

Islam and Modernity: A Case Study of Yorubaland

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Introduction

While there is uncertainty about the exact date that Islam was introduced into Yorubaland, there is some historical claim that Islam had become known in Yorubaland by the mid-16th century, with Al-Ilūrī (1990, p.54) chronicling, by reference to Crowder (1962), that Nupe Muslim preachers lived and built a mosque in Old Oyo around 1550 during the reign of King Ajiboyede. It is acknowledged, however, that Islam was well established next only to the indigenous traditional beliefs in Yorubaland before the advent of colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa (Adetona, 2010, p.99), and that by “the second half of the 19th century, Islam had become a significant factor that could not be dissociated from the social, political and educational life of the Yoruba people” (Oladiti, 2014, p.36). Today, Islam continues to play an important role in the general social order of Southwestern Nigeria and its influence, particularly on the life of Muslims in Yorubaland, is very obvious. Apart from a few areas such as Ekiti and Ondo States, a significant percentage of the population in Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Lagos and Kwara states are predominantly Muslims whose lives are substantially influenced by Islam.

Over these past centuries, there have evidently been significant social changes in Yorubaland in the context of modernity and its challenges, with particular reference to Islam and its growth in the area. Obviously, Islam has been part of the social changes either by way of contributing, challenging or adapting to the different forms of modernity in Yorubaland over this long period. Thus, this chapter aims at examining the role of Islam as a form of social order, from both a retrospective and prospective point of view, with regard to the role it has played over the years and the role it could or should still play in relation to modernity in Yorubaland. Incidentally, the question of the relationship between Islam and modernity is not a localised one. Rather, it is a topical global question that has been raised and continues to attract interest in different parts of the Muslim and western worlds. There has been a substantial number of

literature on “Islam and modernity” or “Islam and the challenges of modernity”, examining the issues from different perspectives. One of the well-known early bold works on the subject is Fazlur Rahman’s *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (1982) in which he argues that Muslims cannot shut their eyes to the realities of modernity around them and highlights the need for a transformation in Islamic intellectual tradition to enable Islam effectively respond to the challenges of modernity in the context of a continually changing world. He asserts that:

To insist on a literal implementation of the rules of the Qur’an, shutting one’s eyes to the social change that has occurred and that is palpably occurring before our eyes, is tantamount to deliberately defeating its [i.e. the Qur’an’s] moral-social purposes and objectives (p.19).

Essentially, Fazlur Rahman addresses Islam and modernity as an Islamic jurisprudential question (*mas’alah fihiyyah*) that must be dealt with from a contextual rather than a literal understanding of the Islamic sources in relation to the changes in time.

Another interesting work, with particular reference to Nigeria, is Ousmane Kane’s *Muslim Modernity in Post-Colonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society of the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition* (2003) in which he examines the activities of the Nigerian Islamic reform movement *Jamā’atul Izālatul Bid’ah Wa Ikāmatu-s-Sunnah*, arguing that “in postcolonial West Africa, they attempted to promote modernity” in Islam through the promotion of abandonment of innovation (*bid’ah*) and reinstatement of the Prophet’s *Sunnah* (p.1). He asserts that “unless we see the Western trajectory to modernity ... as one of many, we will not make any significant headway in understanding modernity in its diversity and complexity” (p.2). On his part, Ousmane Kane addresses the question from a pluralist perspective of modernity, not limited only to the Western trajectory of modernity.

Generally, there are three main perspectives to the question of how Islam should engage with modernity. The first perspective is a hard-line conservative approach that goes to one extreme, and it is advocated by some Muslims who perceive modernity as a negative phenomenon in relation to Islam. They take the position that Islam should shun modernity and isolate itself from it completely, calling on Muslims to transform backwards to the past and follow the ways of pious predecessors completely without any adaptation in the name of modernity. This position often arises from an understanding of the concept of modernity as an aspect of western civilisation and a vehicle for, on the one hand, promoting Christianity and, on the one hand, for encouraging values that are contrary to Islamic teachings.

The second perspective is also a hard-line secularist approach that goes to the other extreme, and it is advocated by those who also perceive modernity strictly from western cultural persuasions and as the ultimate path to social advancement. They take the position that Islam should abandon its values, isolate itself from its past and conform completely with western civilisation, absorbing both its positive and negative aspects. They consider the first perspective as modernising backwards in time, if that could even be considered as modernity at all. This position often arises from a distorted understanding of Islam, its principles and values, combined with a superlative estimation of western civilisation, seeing it as the only way for social development in the modern world.

The third perspective is the moderatist or balanced perspective advocated by those who perceive modernity as a variable social necessity from which Islam should not, and really cannot, isolate itself. They take the position that modernity is neither monolithic nor static and Islam can maintain its values while also adapting to every type of modernity as a necessary means of progressing into the future. They identify that we live in a continually changing world, which Islam, as a religion and way of life for all times, is able to accommodate and adapt to within the context of the *sharī'ah*.

There are examples of each of these three perspectives in practice in different parts of the world today. In Yorubaland, conservative groups such as the old Bamidele Group and the recent Salafī group can be mentioned as reflecting the first hard-line perspective. However, the moderatist perspective is the most reasonable and balanced approach favoured by most Muslims and is the approach advanced in this paper due to its rational validity based on the concept of *tawassut* (moderatism) as enjoined in Qur'an 2:143 - "And thus We have made you a moderately balanced nation (*ummatan wasatan*) so that you may be the bearers of witness [exemplars] to people". This moderatist perspective is the best approach that facilitates a harmonious relationship between Islam and modernity. It enables Islam to maintain its laudable values while at the same time meeting the realities of the ever-changing world in which we live. Although there are some fringe minority groups in Yorubaland who promote the hard-line and conservative view, the general approach adopted by most Muslim jurists and scholars globally, including Yorubaland, is the moderatist perspective, which enables Islam to flourish effectively within the different transformations in the modern world and allows Muslims to hold on to their religious values without losing out from the advancement of modernity and its benefits. This is consistent with the injunction of Allah in Qur'an 28:77 - "And seek, by means of what Allah has given you, the abode of the hereafter, and do not neglect your portion of this world, and do good as Allah has done good to you and do not seek to make mischief on earth, surely Allah does not

love mischief-makers”, which enjoins Muslims to seek the best of both worlds by holding on to Islamic values but also not to sacrifice their worldly aspirations.

Over the years, in addressing the question of Islam and modernity in Yorubaland, it is the moderatist approach that tends to prevail over the hard-line approaches, and this has ensured that Islam and Muslims in Yorubaland do not lose out from the advantages of modernity but are able to contribute positively in shaping the modern transformations taking place in their society. This is important in view of the fact that Islam is striving in Nigeria and in most parts of the world today against many odds to demonstrate its relevance in dealing with the different challenges confronting the modern world. To appreciate the veracity of this moderatist approach in addressing the relationship between Islam and modernity in Yorubaland, it is important first to have a proper contextual understanding of the concept of “modernity” as a natural part of life and of “Islam” as a complete way of life.

Modernity in Context

Modernity is a derivative of the term “modern” and thus it basically means the state of being modern. The term “modern” is derived from the Latin word “*modo*”, which means “current”, as distinguished from “dated”. Thus “modern” is defined in the *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* as “recent times as opposed to the remote past”, “in current fashion; not antiquated”. Modernity therefore relates to time and it connotes that times are not static. Times change and so does human understanding of things and the way we do things based on better knowledge and experiences over time. This connotation is better reflected in its Yoruba translation as “*Aiye Igbalode*” (“the new world”) or its shortened form “*Igbalode*” (“new times”). Thus, essentially, modernity is transformation from old times to new times, which is an undeniable and unstoppable fact of human existence driven by knowledge and human dynamism. Evidently, changes in time are natural and factual phenomena that we cannot seek to isolate ourselves from; we can only engage with them one way or another. From an Islamic perspective, the natural phenomena of changes in time are inferable from Qur’anic verses such as Qur’an 3:140 – “... those are days, We [Allah] rotate it amongst people...”, Qur’an 10:3 - “Surely your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and earth in six periods, and He is firm in power, [He] changes affairs...”, and Qur’an 10:6 - “Certainly in the variation of the night and the day and what Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for a people who are God-conscious”.

However, modernity as transformation or social change is not necessarily monolithic, and thus it is sometimes expressed in the plural as “modernities” (Al-Azmeh, 2009). Historically, we can identify different periods of modernity involving different civilisations. For example, the “golden period” of Islam, from the 8th to the 14th century,

is acknowledged as a period of significant modernity in human civilisation. It was a period of great transformation in human knowledge and development when, apart from religious knowledge, science, economic development, technological inventions and Islamic cultural advancement flourished greatly. It was a period of modernity driven by Islamic civilisation because, apart from phenomenally transforming the periods before it, it also laid the foundation on which future modernities after it would be built. During that period, scholars, scientists, artists, sociologists, philosophers, jurists, astronomers and merchants in the Islamic world contributed to advancements in different fields of knowledge, innovations and inventions that transformed the world at the time. Having mastered the skill of papermaking from the Chinese in the 8th century and improving the techniques, which revolutionised development and spread of knowledge at that time, the Muslim World became the centre of modernity for the whole world including Europe. Jonathan Bloom (2017, p.52) notes that “[b]y the late eighth century paper was being manufactured in Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid caliphate in central Iraq, and its use and manufacture was soon disseminated throughout the empire” and that the “European Christians learned about paper making from the Muslim (“Moors”) who then ruled Spain and who established the first paper mills in Europe” (2001, p.1). The craft of papermaking, which revolutionised documentation and the spread of knowledge, was exported from Bagdad to Europe around the 12th century. This “golden period” of Islamic civilisation lasted for a period of about 600 years, during which Islam provided a lead in modernity to other civilisations of the world then. It was a modernity driven by Islamic civilisation that combined social transformation with Islamic religious and ethical values.

Subsequently, Europe then experienced its own renaissance around the late 16th century, that is 800 years after the beginning of the golden period of Islamic civilisation and modernity. After mastering the craft of papermaking from the Muslim world in the 12th Century, European scientists then went on to develop printing technology from around the 15th century. This further revolutionised knowledge in Europe through the mass production of books on various aspects of human endeavour. Francis Bacon is noted to have stated that printing was one of the major inventions that contributed to changing the face of the world. However, the Muslim *ulama*’ at the time, being very apprehensive about what they perceived as non-Islamic innovations (*bid’ah*), opined that the printing press was not Islamic and should therefore not be allowed in Muslim lands. They preferred to stick to the art of handwriting instead, as an Islamic tradition. In his 1993 article titled “Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print”, Francis Robinson (1993) notes that “[p]rint did not begin to become established in the Islamic world until the nineteenth century, four hundred years after it began to become established in Christendom”. He then interrogated why this was the case, noting that perhaps this would have been due to “the doubt which many pious Muslims

would have felt about associating with *kufir*, with the products of non-Islamic civilization” and more fundamentally, “that printing attacked the very heart of Islamic systems for the transmission of knowledge”, namely oral transmission of knowledge. It is also plausible that the rejection of the printing press by the Muslim *ulamā*’ then was to avoid the mass spread of evil (*fasād*) through print. It took 400 years for the Muslim world to change its position on this and eventually accept printing technology. This gap in technological advancement has not been bridged till today.

The development of printing technology and the consequent advancement in knowledge led to the period of Enlightenment in Europe around the 17th century, leading to great intellectual reform and resulting in phenomenal political, technological and developmental advancement that propelled the concept of western modernity that has transpired over the past 400 years, reaching its peak in the 20th century. Today, no society or field of knowledge has been able to escape the overwhelming effects of the European Enlightenment period. Its overwhelming effect is reflected in the fact that when we talk about modernity today it is often understood in the context of the western modernity that emerged from the European Enlightenment. Generally, this concept of modernity enthroned science and rationality above everything else and over time it has challenged traditional religious beliefs in various ways, with its extreme connotation seeking to push religion completely from the public sphere into the private sphere through promotion of the concept of secularism. With regards to ethical norms, it also advocates human freedom and liberty to act and live in whatever way one deems fit, subject only to provisions of the law and to the rights of others. Essentially, it is a modernity underpinned by western civilisation, which promotes rationality without much acknowledgment of religious values. Yet, based on the undeniable successes of its scientific and technological advancement enhancing human development in many spheres, western modernity poses different perceivable challenges to other contending modernities and religions generally. Consequently, religion generally, and Islam in particular, is faced with the challenge of how to absorb the benefits of this overwhelming western modernity within the context of its own norms and values. The moderatist approach is a balancing act that ensures that while Islam should not absorb the negative values of western modernity, it cannot also avoid or reject its benefits completely. This is reflected in a well-known Islamic maxim: “Whatever [benefit] cannot be gained entirely should also not be discarded entirely”. This is what transforms the relationship between Islam and modernity into a jurisprudential question in Islam.

Islam in Context

For Muslims, Islam is more than just a religion. It is perceived as “a complete way of life”, encompassing every aspect of human activity. The sources of Islam contain

provisions regulating both the private and public aspects of human life. Thus, Ogunbado (Vol 57, p.2) rightly notes that wherever Islam spreads, “it has impact on the language, culture, outlook, behaviour and thinking of its adherents” and that when it was introduced into Yorubaland, it was accepted “not only as a religion but also as a general way of life” with significant impact in the society.

The all-encompassing nature of Islam is reflected in the juristic classification of its scope in relation to human undertakings into two broad aspects: (i) acts of devotion/worship (*aqā'id/ibādāt*) and (ii) civil or social acts (*mu'āmalāt*). Each of these two spheres is well regulated by the Islamic sources. However, in appreciation of the necessary changes in time, the jurists are agreed on the fact that the substantive regulations and juristic rulings on acts of devotion/worship are largely settled and permanent with their essence not subject to change or affected by transformations in time or by modernity. On the contrary, the juristic rulings on issues of civil or social acts are flexible and may change in accordance to social changes and may be affected by transformations in time and by modernity within the permissible limits of the *sharī'ah*, bearing in mind that the object and purpose of the *sharī'ah* itself is human benefit/welfare. In pursuance of this, the classical Muslim jurists developed different legal principles and maxims to facilitate a flexible adaptation of *sharī'ah* rules relating to civil or social acts in response to the dynamic nature of human life and the transformations of modernity. Two well established examples of such relevant maxims are as follows:

1. “The original position [i.e. the first principle] in respect of things [particularly social acts] is permissibility as long as there is no evidence of prohibition”

By this maxim, the Muslim jurists acknowledged the fact that the *sharī'ah* has, in respect of civil and social acts, made all things permissible based on the general Qur'anic provisions such as Qur'an 2:29 - “He [Allah], it is Who created for you all that is in the earth...” and Qur'an 31:20 - “Do you all not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and the earth and made complete to you His favours outwardly and inwardly? And among the people is he who disputes about Allah without knowledge nor guidance nor a book giving light”. Certainly, these favours of Allah would include the beneficial transformations brought by modernity in relation to the different developments leading to advancements in different areas of human life. Based on this principle, the onus would always be on those who argue that Islam totally prohibits the accommodation of modernity to provide valid authority for such claims. If the position were to be the other way round, life would have been very difficult and contrary to Allah's objective that He has not placed obstacles in our way in Islam as

stated, for example, in Qur'an 22:78 - "And [He] has not laid hardship upon you in the religion".

2. "It is not disallowed for rulings [on social acts] to change due to changes in time"

Through this maxim, the classical Muslim jurists acknowledged the reality of changes in time and the need for Islamic rulings to meet up with the challenges of modernity from time to time. It is through such acknowledgement of possible change in Islamic rulings in respect of social acts that Islam is able to operate as an effective social order in the life of Muslims wherever they live, be it in Yorubaland, Hausaland, Igboland, Europe, America, Asia or Arabia.

While the usage of these maxims is not to be abused, the maxims demonstrate the pragmatic nature of Islam in making it easy for Muslims to navigate their lives through the different challenges of time. Thus, in considering the question of Islam and modernity generally, one must always bear in mind the two broad classifications of human acts under Islamic law and engage with each aspect according to the respective principles applicable to each aspect, namely that, while the Islamic rules on acts of worship are settled, the rules on social acts are flexible and can change in accordance with changes in time and modernity. We will now consider each of the two aspects both retrospectively and prospectively in relation to Islam and modernity in Yorubaland.

Islamic Devotional Acts (*ibādāt*) and Modernity in Yorubaland

Traditionally, the Yorubas are a very religious and devotional people. Doi (1992, p.121) described the Yorubas as "incurably religious". Before the advent of both Islam and Christianity in Yorubaland, the Yorubas believed in one deity *Olohun Olodumare*, who they believed to be the creator of the heaven and earth but they worshipped him through different subsidiary intermediary *orisa* deities (Gbadamosi, 1978, p.3; Al-Ilūrī, 1990, p.30). This was similar to the belief and practice of the Arabs before the advent of Islam in Arabia. Islamic historians describe those times as periods of darkness or ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*), which Islam had come to correct through the liberation and transformation of humanity "from darkness into light" as asserted by different verses of the Qur'an (e.g., Q2:257). With its advent in Yorubaland, Islam challenged and discouraged the traditional *orisa* worship and those who accepted Islam were thus liberated and transformed from idol worshipping to the direct worship of the Supreme Deity, Allah.

For the effective performance of Islamic devotional acts, necessary apparatuses were established in different parts of Yorubaland where the religion had gradually spread

to. The first major apparatus was the mosque, which, apart from serving primarily as a place of worship, also served as an important centre for the social interactions of Muslims in the localities (Doi, 1984, p.186). Historically, Al-Ilūrī chronicles variously that mosques were built in Old Oyo around 1550, in Iwo around 1655, in Iseyin around 1770, in Lagos around 1774, in Saki around 1790 and in Osogbo around 1899. Qur'anic schools were also established in the mosques to teach the Qur'an, tenets of Islam and Arabic language. Consequently, Islam introduced Arabic literacy into Yorubaland long before English literacy was introduced by the European colonialists. Fafunwa (1974) notes that Islamic literacy and Islamic education were firmly established in Yorubaland long before the Europeans arrived. Yoruba language had no written form before the arrival of Islam in Yorubaland and thus *Ajami* Arabic was introduced by Muslim scholars for writing Yoruba while many Arabic words were introduced into Yoruba language, which enriched the language significantly. The early Muslims in Yorubaland also adopted Islamic norms for marriages, naming ceremonies and burials, which either totally transformed or partially reformed the traditional indigenous practices for those ceremonies.

Thus, in relation to devotional norms, Islam introduced religious modernity to Yorubaland through prompting a transformation in the traditional mode of worship and the adoption of Islamic norms amongst Muslim Yorubas at the time. This was pursued, as early as the late 18th century, through "Islamic evangelisation and reformist preaching" that sometimes attracted concern and resistance from the indigenous traditional worshippers (Gbadamosi, 1978, p.7-8). The effort made by the early Muslims to spread Islam and its consequent establishment in different parts of Yorubaland ushered in a pre-colonial religious modernity in Yorubaland before the European colonial era, much of which continues to this day.

Western modernity was introduced into Yorubaland in the 19th century during the colonial period and it has continued to have substantial impact on the Islamic pre-colonial modernity that was already established amongst the Muslim community. However, since the last two centuries, western modernity has not changed the essence of the principal Islamic acts of worship, namely the five daily prayers, fasting, *zakāt* or *hajj* pilgrimage in Yorubaland; rather Islamic religious practices have been enhanced through the use of modern gadgets and approaches for their promotion. Gbadamosi (1978, p.104) indicates that "there were noticeable beginnings of a reform movement within Islam" from the late 19th century, whereby "there was the feeling that the Yoruba practice of Islam could be made 'to look more modern', by accepting such Western ideas as were compatible with Islam". He cited, for example, the celebration of the *Eid al-Fitr* by Muslims in Lagos with public tea parties in 1895, which symbolised "Western habit and taste" at the time. Despite this acknowledgement

of the need to accommodate relevant western modernity from the 19th century, there later arose some controversies among the Yoruba *ulamā'* about the extent to which Islam could be made 'to look more modern', even with regard to the use of modern gadgets to enhance some of the Islamic acts of worship. For example, towards the late 20th century, there was the controversy in some parts of Yorubaland about whether or not it was permissible to use microphones for amplifying the voice of the *mu'adhin* or the *imām* during call to prayers or during prayers in the mosque. There was divided opinion, with some hard-line conservative *ulamā'* holding the view that microphones should not be used. Over time, the controversy was eventually resolved in favour of the moderatist perspective, and the prevailing practice today is that the use of this modern gadget is fully accommodated as a useful tool in acts of worship across Yorubaland. It is noteworthy that this debate was not unique to Yorubaland but also arose in other parts of the Muslim world and was similarly resolved eventually. Another example was the debate about the permissibility of modern "Islamic music" initiated by members of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria during the late 20th century as a means of propagating Islam in Yorubaland. Similarly, while some hard-line conservative *ulama'* criticised it as a violation of Islamic religious norms, many *ulama'* considered it a permissible alternative for preventing Muslim youth from falling prey to other types of music that promote immorality in society.

While modernity should not affect the essence of the acts of worship in Islam, it can certainly contribute to the improvement of different apparatuses of worship, such as the administration of mosques and the local schools attached to them. Different modern innovative approaches have been adopted in different parts of the world, such as the UK, to promote better mosque management for enhanced effectiveness. For example, in the UK there are initiatives such as the "Best Run Mosque" and "Developing Better Mosques" projects organised by the Muslim Council of Britain, which is the umbrella body of Muslim organisations in Britain. The projects are aimed at promoting better management of mosques in line with modern good administrative techniques to ensure that mosques are not mere buildings or places of worship but serve the Muslim community as efficiently as it should for modern times.

Apparently, most mosques in Yorubaland are still run traditionally today in the same way they have been run for centuries. It is proposed that the Muslim Ummah of South Western Nigeria (MUSWEN), as the umbrella organisation for Islamic organisations in Yorubaland, should, following the examples of the Muslim Council of Britain, look into the possibility of establishing similar projects aimed at promoting better mosque management across Yorubaland to ensure that mosques serve the Muslim community as efficiently as they should for modern times.

Islamic Social Acts (*mu'āmalāt*) and Modernity in Yorubaland

The developmental trajectory of modernity is generally aimed at achieving three main objectives, namely: (i) human development, (ii) socio-political development, and (iii) economic development. Each of these three spheres consists of different elements of modern advancements aimed at the full realisation of each sphere. Most elements of these three spheres fall within the scope of *mu'āmalāt* in Islam's engagement with modernity. For the sake of brevity, I will focus on one element for each of these three spheres in relation to Islam and modernity in Yorubaland. I will look at Islam and education in relation to human development, Islam and good governance in relation to socio-political development, and Islamic banking and financing in relation to economic development. Each of these three elements falls within the scope of *mu'āmalāt* in Islam, and thus enjoys some flexibility with regards to modernity.

Islam and education in Yorubaland

In the context of modernity, education is an important social factor, particularly for human development. Education and new knowledge have been the engine of modernity over the centuries, and modernity has in turn improved the quality and possibility of education today in ways that could not have been imagined some 100 years ago. Traditionally, Islam is itself a religion that exalts education and does not hinder its adherents from benefitting from educational advancements. As earlier mentioned, Islam brought religious education and Arabic literacy from its inception in Yorubaland, with local Qur'anic schools attached to the mosques in different parts of Yorubaland. However, the Qur'anic schools concentrated only on traditional Islamic religious education, which, although very beneficial, did not prepare the students for the impending challenges of western modernity.

With the arrival of the Europeans, the traditional Islamic educational method was later challenged by the introduction of western-oriented Christian missionary schools in Yorubaland from the late 19th century onwards. The western-oriented Christian missionary schools were better organised, using western modern educational methods at the time. Apart from teaching Christian religious doctrines, the schools also covered modern secular education in the arts and sciences, subjects which were certainly necessary for human development at the time. The Yorubas generally acknowledged this form of education as an element of "*olaju*", that is, being modern or civilised. This was because acquisition of such secular education impacted on people's way of life and how they interacted socially. The Yoruba Muslims were therefore compelled by the needs and realities of modernity at the time to enrol their wards in the western-oriented Christian missionary schools but with the apprehension of exposing their

wards to Christian indoctrinations in the schools. Confronted with this challenge, Islamic organisations such as the Ahmadiyyah and Ansar-Ud-Deen started establishing similar western-oriented Muslim missionary schools to cater for the needs of Muslims in Yorubaland, with regard to modern secular education without compromising their Islamic faith. Also, modern centres for Arabic and Islamic studies in Yorubaland, such as the Markaz Arabic Centre in Agege, were later established with modern educational curriculum and progression classes in response to modernity.

The adoption of modern western-oriented secular education did not, however, go unchallenged by hard-line conservative Islamic groups such as the Bamidele Group who preached against the adoption of western culture and acquisition of western education by Muslims. The Bamidele Group was established in Ibadan in the 1930s and Doi (1984, p.285) notes that the group saw nothing good in Western education, with the founder strongly maintaining that Muslim children should have only the knowledge of the Qur'an and the Arabic language and the modern schools and universities only exposed children to western civilisation which was detrimental to Islam.

Despite the accommodation of modern western-oriented education by most Muslims as well as the modernisation of Islamic education in most parts of Yorubaland, it must be noted that a large number of the centres of Islamic learning still follow traditional learning methodologies in many parts of Yorubaland. In wanting to stick to what is considered as the traditional practices of Islam, and not being “adulterated” with perceived western modernity, many centres of Islamic learning in Yorubaland have not sought to take advantage of more effective modern teaching and learning approaches that can better enhance the learning experiences of students. Within the context of Islam and modernity, there is nothing in the Islamic sources that prohibit the adoption of better proven methods that can enhance learning. It is relevant to recall the rejection of the printing press by Muslim *ulamā'* in the 15th century on grounds that it was a product of non-Islamic civilisation, which then left Islamic modernity behind for 400 years before the then Muslim world later changed its position to adopt the printing press in the 19th century.

Another relevant example that could be cited is the creation of television in the 1950s. When the first television station in Africa was established in Ibadan in 1959, some traditional *ulamā'* in Yorubaland held the view that it was a “satanic” box, which could not be accommodated in Islam, a view that was gradually abandoned some years later when the *ulamā'* themselves could no longer resist its glamour and started owning television sets. This was not unique to Yorubaland, as the *ulamā'* in Saudi Arabia also gave a *fatwā* prohibiting television in Saudi Arabia in the early 1960s on grounds that

it was against *shari'ah* injunctions until 1965 when this was reversed and the first television station was established in the country. Today the television set, despite its many negative aspects, is an important medium of education globally and it has become one of the most effective means of dissemination of knowledge and Islamic propagation, with many Islamic television stations, such as the popular Islam Channel in London, spread across the world.

Today, the Internet and social media are the new trends in fast communication through which knowledge and information are spread swiftly. Definitely, they have their positives and negatives, and there are some *ulamā'* who hold the view that Muslims should not use these mediums of communication due to the perceived "evil" (*fasād*) that is promoted through them. Evidently, there is the tendency for some *ulamā'* to focus only on the perceived "evils" in modern inventions without considering their positive aspects and benefits to human development. Rather than emphasising the negative aspects of modern inventions, the better approach would be to embrace the positive aspects and warn against the negative aspects. For example, an Islamic solution for the spread of the so-called "fake news" on social media would be to abide by the Islamic injunction in Qur'an 49:6 - "O you who believe, if an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done". It would be a great contribution of Islam towards sanitisation of social media if every Muslim who uses social media, at least in Yorubaland, has this Qur'anic verse as a permanent signature to every message or information they pass across social media. This would, in no time, create awareness on the need to verify information before passing it on across social media.

There is also a traditional view that certain areas of academic pursuit are un-Islamic and should not be undertaken by Muslims, which is still held by some *ulamā'* in Yorubaland. These views should also be treated with caution. As an inevitable means of human development, Muslims need to be much less conservative in their approach to the acquisition and advancement of knowledge for modern times. Rather, Muslims need to be more aggressive with seeking knowledge in all spheres of human endeavour in these modern times. The guiding principle should be that "no knowledge is ever a waste" with the Islamic caveat being that whatever knowledge one pursues, must be pursued with God-consciousness" in compliance with the very first Qur'anic verse revealed to Prophet Muhammad (saw) on his call to Prophethood: "Read, in the name of your Lord Who created" – Q96:1

Islam's focus should not only be in the area of religious knowledge but also recognise the importance of modern secular knowledge, which is needed for human development, advancement and well-being. With the significant historical contribution

of Islam to education and knowledge in Yorubaland in the past, it is most important to enhance that legacy through re-evaluating how to aggressively improve on the educational methodologies and approaches through the adoption of the great possibilities offered by modern technology in that regard. It is important that we learn from the deficits of rejecting the printing press for 400 years from the 15th to the 19th centuries and not be left behind again in the revolution of education and knowledge a second time. The Tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w) that “The Believer does not allow himself to be stung twice from the same hole” (reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim) is very pertinent in that regard.

Islam and good governance in Yorubaland

Leadership is a Trust and Islam enjoins the promotion of good governance by encouraging, *inter alia*, speaking truth to power. This is indicated by a Tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w) in which he said: “The best *jihād* is to say a word of truth to a tyrannical ruler” (reported by Ibn Mājah). Evidently, the early Muslims in Yorubaland demonstrated this courage of speaking truth to power as early as the 16th century. Gbadamosi (1978, p.6) chronicled that despite “their low, or at least middling, social position, some of the well-informed mallams felt strong enough to challenge openly political heads”. He then reported, by reference to Johnson (1957), that during the reign of Alafin Ajiboyede, “a certain Muslim *mu’alim* from Nupe appeared and launched a protest against him [The Alafin] for his cruelty in murdering his allegedly hypocritical nobles and chiefs [who he felt did not show sincere empathy for the loss of his son]”. The Muslim *mu’alim* is reported to have rebuked the Alafin on that occasion, saying: “This is a sin against God who took away the life of your son”, for which the Alafin then became remorseful.

Governance is an important aspect of socio-political development, and modernity has thought us over the centuries that good governance is the key to ensuring effective positive social development. In today’s world, western modernity advocates that democracy is the most effective system for ensuring good governance, as it promotes inclusiveness in governance through participation and accountability. Over time democracy has become overwhelmingly adopted as the preferred system of governance by most countries of the world today, including Nigeria. While the system has worked relatively well in the developed world, the opposite is often the case in the developing world, particularly Nigeria. Some hard-line conservative *ulamā’* in different parts of the Muslim world, including Nigeria, have advanced the view that democratic governance is not Islamic and thus Muslims must not participate in it. This has left Islam and Muslims on the periphery of governance in different countries. The better view, however, is that democracy is not contrary to Islam and Muslims can therefore participate in democratic governance and can bring Islamic social values into

the system to make it work better, particularly in countries such as Nigeria, which Yorubaland is a part of.

In Islam, God is the Controller of the heavens and earth, as is indicated for example in Qur'an 5:19 - "To God belongs the authority of the heavens and earth". God then created Adam and entrusted him with governance on earth as His vicegerent "*khalīfah*" as reflected in Qur'an 2:30 - "And your Lord said to the angels, I will place a vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on earth...". As descendants of Adam, every human being has a right to governance or leadership as an inherited Trust from Adam, but because we cannot all be leaders at the same time, we have a responsibility to delegate one of us at every point in time to exercise this Trust. This delegation is a socio-political process which every human being, including Muslims, has a responsibility to participate in with the objective of sustaining the Trust which God placed on Adam and which we as Adam's descendants subsequently inherited from him, in form of ensuring good governance on earth. Through this delegation, governance thus becomes a Trust for which those in authority are accountable, first to the populace here now and secondly to God, in the hereafter.

Evidently, the democratic system in Nigeria has not yet materialised into a system of good governance as one would envisage. Rather the system is ridden with corruption and bad governance at different levels, sadly with Muslim politicians soiled in it despite the Islamic injunction that governance is a Trust and that political leaders must be accountable not only to God but also to the populace they govern. This is reflected in Qur'an 4:58 - "Allah enjoins you to return the Trust back to those who entrusted you with it".

Based on the theory of delegated authority in governance, the classical Islamic jurists identified that governance must fulfil six main purposes, namely: (i) Protection of life, (ii) Protection of family, (iii) Protection of religion, (iv) Protection of the intellect, (v) Protection of wealth, and (vi) Protection of security and elimination of corruption, which all relate to good governance (Kamali, 2011, p.7).

In the modern political dispensation, the Muslim politicians in Yorubaland have an Islamic obligation to ensure that these Islamic principles are propagated and incorporated into governance in Nigeria to ensure good governance, particularly in Yorubaland. By doing so they would help in sanitising the political system and contribute positively to socio-political development in modern times. Similarly, the *ulamā'* in Yorubaland must emulate the courage of the Muslim *mu'alim* who spoke the truth to Alafin Ajiboyede in the 16th century despite the autocratic nature of governance at the time. Through the modern democratic system of governance in Nigeria today the

ulamā' can discharge this obligation of promoting good governance in Yorubaland more effectively.

Islamic banking and financing in Yorubaland

Banking is a modern financial mechanism that plays a significant role in modern economic and social development. However, the general system of banking in most parts of the modern world is structured on interest-based banking, which is frowned upon by Islam. Today, the concept of Islamic banking and financing has already “established itself as an emerging alternative to conventional interest-based banking” (Zaher and Hassan, 2001, p.166) globally. Although still a developing sector, global interest in the concept of Islamic banking and financing has increased progressively over the past 50 years since its formal introduction in the early sixties. This has been as a consequence of different social and economic factors.

The keenness of Muslims to have the option of legitimately transacting their commercial activities in line with the ethical principles of their faith provided the initial impetus for establishing Islamic banks in different parts of the Muslim world in the early sixties. On the one hand, recurring global economic crises such as the 1973-74 global stock markets crash, which affected all major stock markets in the world, and the 2008 United States subprime mortgage crisis, which led to the global economic downturn confronting most nations today, coupled with depressing poverty in different parts of the world and the difficulty faced by poor masses in accessing capital or flexible advances under conventional interest-based banking systems, have prompted a global desire for alternative forms of financial intermediation, with many commentators highlighting the potential of Islamic banking and financing in providing a viable and ethical alternative to the conventional interest-based financing methods. On the other hand, the remarkable growth and positive performance of Islamic banks and financial institutions in the past three and half decades, coupled with the high level of surplus funds available in oil-rich Muslim majority states seeking Shari’ah-compliant investment opportunities globally, has also kindled global interest in Islamic banking and financing.

As an alternative system of modern banking and financing, Islamic banking and financing is already contributing positively to economic development in many developing and developed economies of the world today (Daly and Frikha, 2016). However, despite recent legalisation authorising the establishment of Islamic banking in Nigeria, the system is yet to be fully developed in Yorubaland. Currently, only one bank, Jaiz Bank Plc, is providing Islamic banking and financing in Southwest Nigeria, with branches in Marina, Ikeja and Apapa, all in Lagos. Incidentally, the first Islamic Bank in Nigeria named Muslim Bank of West Africa Ltd is reported to have also been

established earlier in 1961 in Lagos and operated for a short period before it was closed down in 1962 (Orisankoko, 2011, p.76). While the opening of the three Jaiz Bank branches in Lagos is commendable, it is important to encourage further development of this sector in other parts of Yorubaland. This is a challenge that needs to be explored and which could possibly be pursued by MUSWEN to enhance the modern economic development of Yorubaland generally.

It is now acknowledged that Islamic banking and financing can greatly contribute to the economic development of developing countries in, at least, three main ways, if properly harnessed. First, it has the potential of attracting and mobilising funds from the Muslim population, many of whom may currently be “unbanked” for not wanting to patronise conventional interest-based banks on religious grounds. Second, the profit-and-loss-sharing principle in Islamic banking and financing has a high potential of ensuring that banking resources and finances are directed towards more productive activities favourable to economic and social development. Third, the economic behaviour of partners who are sharing profits and loss jointly in an enterprise is likely to be more favourable to sustainable economic development (Abdelrahman, 2015, p.8). Daly and Frikha have also observed that the Islamic participatory schemes of Islamic banking and financing have the potential of integrating the assets of lenders and borrowers and thereby enabling Islamic banks “to lend on a longer term basis to create projects with higher risk-return profiles and, thus, to support economic growth” (Daly and Frikha, 2016, p.1).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a general analysis of Islam and modernity in Yorubaland, from both a retrospective and prospective focus. From the three highlighted perspectives of the relationship as analysed, the moderatist perspective is identified as the most rational and divinely validated perspective within Islamic sources based on the Qur’anic principle of *tawassut* (moderatism). That is the perspective that has generally prevailed in Yorubaland, despite the presence of some hard-line conservative perspectives advocated by some conservative groups from time to time. It is important to reiterate that modernity is neither monolithic nor static but a phenomenon that will continue to evolve into the future. It must not be forgotten that Islamic civilisation was at one time in the forefront of modernity before being overwhelmed by Western modernity after the European Enlightenment period. Thus, Muslim intellectuals need to rise up to the challenges of current and future modernities and not to see modernity as something negative that should be neglected by Islam, particularly in Yorubaland.

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Islam and Modernity: A Case Study of Yorubaland

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