



The 'Middle Belt' Historiography of Resistance in Nigeria

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Abstract

Existing studies on Nigerian historiography cover renowned historians, major historical writings and prominent historiographical traditions of the major ethnicities such as Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, with little or no attention paid to the multiple ethnic minorities in the Middle Belt area. Using a range of sources, from oral interviews with historians and activists, and a textual analysis of the writings of Middle Belt intellectuals, this study maps out the textual tradition of Middle Belt historiography, its ideological background and political undertones. This article argues that the writings of Middle Belt intellectuals represent the tension between distinct intellectual trends and political agendas in postcolonial Nigeria. Animated by a discourse of marginality and resistance to the dominant interpretations of northern Nigerian historiography, the article advances a fresh approach to the Middle Belt as an epistemic struggle by the ethnic minorities of northern Nigeria to reassert their 'historical patrimony' or reclaim their 'historical dignity' through the creation of projects that highlight their historical past.

Résumé

Les études existantes sur l'historiographie nigériane couvrent des historiens de renom, des écrits historiques majeurs et des traditions historiographiques importantes des principales ethnies telles que les Hausa, les Igbo et les Yoruba, avec peu ou pas d'attention portée aux multiples minorités ethniques de la région du « Middle Belt ». En utilisant plusieurs de sources, à partir d'entretiens oraux avec des historiens et des militants, et d'une analyse textuelle d'écrits d'intellectuels du « Middle Belt », cette étude retrace la tradition textuelle de l'historiographie du « Middle Belt », son contexte idéologique et ses nuances politiques. Cet article soutient que les écrits d'intellectuels du « Middle Belt » illustrent la tension entre les tendances intellectuelles

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distinctes et les agendas politiques du Nigeria postcolonial. Animé par un discours de marginalité et de résistance aux interprétations dominantes de l'historiographie du nord du Nigéria, l'article propose une nouvelle approche du « Middle Belt », de lutte épistémique des minorités ethniques du nord du Nigéria à réaffirmer leur « patrimoine historique » ou récupérer leur dignité à travers la création de projets qui mettent en valeur leur passé historique.

Introduction

On the morning of 22 April 1990, Nigerians woke up to the sound of martial music on their radios. A BBC World News item read by Loise Carr at 6:15 am reported heavy gunfire in the centre of Lagos. The main body of the story said that the French News Agency had monitored an 'unidentified' voice in a broadcast from Lagos:

On behalf of the patriotic and well-meaning people of the Middle Belt and the Southern parts of this country, I, Major Gideon Gwaza Orkar, wish to happily inform you of the successful ousting of the dictatorial, corrupt, drug baronish, evil men, sadistic, deceitful, homosexually (sic), prodigalistic, unpatriotic administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida . . . we wish to emphasise that this is not just another coup but a well conceived, planned and executed revolution for the marginalised, oppressed and enslaved people of the Middle Belt and the South with a view to freeing ourselves and our children yet unborn from eternal slavery and colonisation by a clique of this country.¹

Since the end of colonial rule in 1960, Nigeria had experienced a number of military coups, but this was the first time that a coup was purportedly executed on behalf of a section of the country, that is the Middle Belt and southern Nigeria.² However, what is relevant in Orkar's broadcast was the rhetoric of the military insurrection, which embodies a popular dissident narrative among the non-Muslim, largely Christian minorities of northern Nigeria. The Middle Belt narrative of resistance evolved against the background of a set of complex memories of conquests, victimhood and resistance associated with the nineteenth-century Danfodio Jihad, which led to the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate³ and a new historiographical tradition that sought to delegitimise prevailing religious and political practices in Hausaland and beyond. Attempts to conquer the non-Muslim communities of the Middle Belt region provoked stiff resistance.

The advent of British colonialism in 1903 heralded the beginning of colonial historiography in which the indigenous peoples were dispossessed of historical agency and dignity. Against the backdrop of colonial epistemic violence, Africanist historians inaugurated a series of critical research

projects intended to disabuse Africa of colonial stereotypical narratives, leading to the creation of the Ibadan, Dar es Salaam, and A.B.U. nationalist schools of history. Between the 1960s and 1970s, nationalist historians were mainly preoccupied with the histories of the major ethnicities such as the Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, thereby consigning the ethnic minorities to the footnotes of dominant national and regional narratives. The dogged attempt at producing a national narrative quickly unravelled under the impact of regionalist identity politics, military insurrection against democratic institutions and corruption, allowing for the powerful assertion of the historical narratives of regional and ethnic identities. As a consequence, a historiographical initiative was launched in the 1970s by a group of Middle Belt scholars who created a distinctive textual tradition as a counter-discourse to nineteenth-century Sokoto Jihad historiography, as well as to the colonial and nationalist literature. Although the works of these disenchanted postcolonial historians deal largely with particular cases of local histories, they fit into a wider tradition of discursive dissent among Nigerian ethnic minorities.⁴

This article is an attempt at mapping the textual tradition of Middle Belt historiography and the politics motivating it. It begins by interrogating the meaning of the term 'Middle Belt' as an intangible identity category. Then it examines the representation of the Middle Belt in the mainstream historical discourses of northern Nigeria. Finally, the discussion is widened to the Middle Belt historiography of resistance and its identitarian–sectarian and political undertones.

Defining the 'Middle Belt'

Although the term Middle Belt is widely used in popular and scholarly discourse, it is not clear what it means or signifies ontologically. There is, however, a corpus of literature, which attempts to delineate the boundaries of the area in terms of geographical, climatic and demographic factors.⁵ According to Moses Ochonu the Middle Belt comprises Abuja (the capital of Nigeria), Benue, Plateau, Kwara, Kogi, Southern Kaduna, and parts of Niger, Adamawa and Taraba States. This conservative regional approximation of the Middle Belt is 'opposed to the idea of a Greater Middle Belt, which is a largely political construct appropriating all non-Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri peoples of northern Nigeria'.⁶ This political delineation is, however, problematic because of the presence of a sizeable number of Hausa–Fulani and non-Hausa–Fulani Muslims in all of the areas.⁷ Even the predominantly 'Muslim states' of Katsina, Kano, Kebbi and Gombe also contain pockets of non-Muslims. The Middle Belt, therefore, is a contested

space, which does not correspond to a clear geopolitical or ethnic unit, but is usually understood vis-à-vis its main (real or imaginary) adversary, i.e. the so-called Muslim Hausa–Fulani culture, which allegedly constitutes the main hegemonic culture of northern Nigeria, and the latter's corresponding pre-colonial political institution, the Sokoto Caliphate.⁸

In terms of physical geography, it is 'taken as an area roughly inscribed by the Hausa-speaking area to the north, and the Yoruba, Edo, and Igbo-speaking areas to the south'.⁹ In human geographical terms, the Middle Belt is sometimes used interchangeably with Central Nigeria, because most of the ethnic minorities in northern Nigeria are geographically located at the 'centre' of Nigeria.

Middle Belt consciousness is deeply connected to the history of Christianity and the Pentecostal drive in northern Nigeria, which gave stronger voices to non-Muslim groups.¹⁰ The establishment of missionary schools, hospitals, dispensaries, and churches in non-Muslim communities served to engender a shared religious identity, which fed into conceptions of a social and political identity that was seen to be different from dominant Islamic patterns in politics and society in northern Nigeria.¹¹ In their attempt to win converts, Christian missionaries reactivated memories of victimhood and local sentiments among non-Muslim groups. Mathew Hassan Kukah re-echoes this view when he states that 'the products of these missionary efforts were gradually chipping away at the foundation of Anglo-Fulani hegemony and their education served to provide an escape route for those that this class held bondage for many years'.¹²

There is thus a strong connection between Christianity and Middle Belt consciousness¹³ on the one hand, and the production of Middle Belt historiography on the other.¹⁴ According to Okpeh Okpeh, there is a consciousness called the Middle Belt which is defined by a history of resistance to Islamisation and marginalisation in the way British colonialism was conceived and applied to northern Nigerian ethnic minorities.¹⁵ As a form of consciousness, it represents a string of historical grievances and a response to the spectre of 'Hausa–Fulani' cultural transgression on non-Muslims of northern Nigeria. In other words, Middle Belt consciousness can be defined as the aggregate of historical grievances of the non-Hausa–Fulani and non-Muslim communities of northern Nigeria, who resisted Islamisation and incorporation into the Hausa–Fulani religious and cultural matrix. These grievances were originally articulated by religious leaders, politicians and activists, and eventually transposed into universities and scholarly texts.

The approach to the Middle Belt here departs markedly from preceding renditions, which seek to define and locate an ontological Middle Belt

within the purviews of geography, culture and politics. In contrast it sees the Middle Belt as a 'discourse community', which transcends the limitations that space and time impose on ideas. The Middle Belt is treated in this article in a Foucauldian sense, as a 'society of discourse',¹⁶ comprising a cohort of practitioners – politicians, activists, academics, journalists and publishers – who have identified with the struggle for the emancipation of ethnic minorities in northern Nigeria. This community of intellectuals has authored a large volume of literature, which constitutes the Middle Belt historiography of resistance.

The Middle Belt on the Margins of Nigerian Historiography

In his book entitled *Nigerian Perspectives: An Anthology*, Thomas Hodgkin acknowledges the histories of the Middle Belt communities such as the Tiv, Idoma, Birom and Anaguta as 'interesting secondary themes'. Apart from this dismissive remark, none of the ethnic minorities in the Middle Belt are featured in his seminal text on Nigerian history. Hodgkin rationalises his exclusion of the minorities on the pretext of shortage of space, time and knowledge.¹⁷

However, the historiographical exclusion and classification of ethnic minorities into lower cultural hierarchies has a longer trajectory, going back to the nineteenth-century works of Islamic writers in the Sokoto Caliphate, European travel narratives and the writings of colonial officials. These early writings were framed around themes of isolation and resistance by non-Muslim minority ethnicities against their Muslim neighbours. The writings of Muslim scholars from Bauchi Emirate, in Hausa and Ajami scripts, offered some historical accounts of the Sokoto Jihad around the Middle Belt areas, albeit largely from the perspectives of the Emirs, with the Middle Belt societies mentioned only in so far as they happened to be the objects of Muslim slave raids and conquests.¹⁸

David Tambo, one of the early historians to write on the ethnic minorities, traces the origins of this historiographical exclusion of the minorities to a regime of textual practices associated with the Sokoto Jihad, European travel accounts in the nineteenth century, and the writings of colonial bureaucrats and anthropologists in the twentieth century. Tambo's analysis of these writings 'reveals a stereotyped conception of the region which has existed since the initial comments of the nineteenth century European travellers'.¹⁹ European travel narratives represent the earliest published accounts, which provide some glimpses into the histories of some Middle Belt communities. European travellers wrote the stories of 'isolated, warlike hill-refuge groups' on the Plateau. This fascination with the 'primitive' customs of the Plateau

societies was shared by early twentieth-century observers.²⁰ Despite the empirical details they contain on the Muslim societies, references to the non-Muslim areas of the Middle Belt are sketchy and based on secondary sources. The travellers rarely ventured beyond major trade routes.²¹

For instance, Heinrich Barth, who visited parts of northern Nigeria in the mid-nineteenth century, documented a lot of information on the institutions, political organisations and economies of the Muslim societies. Barth's travel narratives have been treated by Nigerian historians as 'first-hand observations' of nineteenth-century histories in the region. However, his reports were mainly confined to the areas of the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno Sultanate. About the non-Muslim areas of the Middle Belt, he could not offer any 'first hand' information since he did not travel to those areas himself.²² The glimpses he provided of those areas were based on second-hand information furnished by his informants, mostly Muslim traders, who described the non-Muslim minorities in 'unfavourable light'.²³ So, their works too, like those of the Muslim writers, were tainted with exotic views of the ethnic minorities. Through these narratives, a view of history evolved in which Middle Belt societies were represented in derogatory metaphors such as 'backward-looking', 'stateless', 'pagan', 'hill-top people', 'heathen', 'barbaric' and inimical to civilisation.²⁴ By the turn of the twentieth century, these pejorative descriptions were transposed into colonial anthropological and ethnographic literature on northern Nigeria.

The earliest evidence regarding the historicity of the technologies of this textual exclusion can be located in a popular Hausa mythology, the Bayajidda narrative, which classifies northern Nigerian communities into two distinct cultural enclaves, i.e. the *Hausa Bakwai* (Kano, Katsina, Daura, Rano, Zazzau, Biram, Gobir) described as the seven 'legitimate' Hausa states; and the *Banza Bakwai* (Kebbi, Zamfara, Yawuri, Nupe, Yoruba, Gwari, Jukun/Kwararrafa, Ilorin) derogatively labelled as the 'illegitimate' states. The cultural meaning of the word *Banza* includes 'any person who is outside the table of affinity'.²⁵ Going by this definition, it is little wonder that the Middle Belt peoples, who happen to be traditionally outside the Hausa cultural universe, were labelled as *arna* or *gwarawa*.²⁶ The nineteenth-century Sokoto Jihad and the emergence of the Caliphate widened the division between Muslims and non-Muslims. Indeed, the earliest recorded evidence of the Hausa–Banza discourse is contained in Muhammad Bello's *Infāq-al-Maysur* (1813) and the *Raudat al-Akfar* of Abd al-Qadir al-Mustafa (1824).²⁷ Although historians of modern Nigeria have long questioned the epistemological veracity of the narrative, communities in the former category are usually designated as culturally backward and 'stateless' due to the absence of centralised authorities and their vulnerability to foreign domination.²⁸

The Bayajidda narrative has continued to be repeated and reproduced in different shades in school texts and popular historical discourse. While the narrative is still popular among Hausa–Fulani Muslims, the Middle Belt communities, which correspond roughly to the *Banza Bakwai* cultural and spatial imaginary, would outrightly dismiss it as negative cultural profiling. Although the intellectual derivation of the narrative remains problematic, it replicates the division between Muslims communities and the non-Muslim Middle Belt societies in northern Nigeria.

The textual violence and cultural profiling of the non-Hausa, non-Muslim communities continued well into the dominant discourses of the twentieth century. The early part of the century saw the influx of Arabic and English books, and most importantly, the publication of colonial ethnographic and anthropological surveys, which set the phase for the incorporation of local histories into the universe of Western hegemonic knowledge production. This, coupled with intensive Bible translation into local languages by the missions, heralded what can be called the anthropological/ethnographic phase of Middle Belt historiography, as well as the rise of vernacular Christian literature.²⁹ With grants from the British Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, on the recommendation of the British Colonial Social Science Research Council in 1945, an intensive ethnographic project was launched for Africa. This was aimed at providing, in readily comprehensible form, an outline of available knowledge concerning the location, environment, economy, social systems, religion and political organisations of local communities under British colonial rule. A number of research institutions in Europe and Africa as well as anthropologists were deployed to supervise the research.³⁰

The result was the publication of monographs on ethnic minorities in the Middle Belt: *Pagan Peoples of the Central Area of Northern Nigeria*; *People of the Middle Nigeria Region of Northern Nigeria*; *Peoples of the Plateau Area of Northern Nigeria*, among others. Even in the colonial ethnographic enterprise, communities such as the Tiv, Idoma, Igala and Nupe received more coverage compared to the smaller ethnicities. For example, micro-ethnicities such as Agatu, Akpa, and Etulo in Benue on the one hand, and Amo, Chen and Firan in Plateau on the other, were only covered in detailed information in the field reports of colonial administrative officers, 'prepared especially during the 1920s and 1930s in connection with local administrative organizations'.³¹ The view of the Middle Belt as the abode of 'primitive people' or 'pagans' within the Emirates was reproduced in colonial writings. For example, while describing Plateau communities as 'virile pagans', Margery Perham also designated the Tiv in Benue as 'brutally

primitive'.³² It is important to note that the colonial epistemic transgression was not exclusive to the Middle Belt communities. The Muslim societies of the Sokoto Caliphate were equally derogatively typecast as 'primitive' and 'Mohammedan Emirates' in colonial historiography.

The methodological and conceptual approaches of each succeeding generation of observers, and their selection of certain types of subject material to the exclusion of others,³³ had the cumulative effect of amplifying the view of the Middle Belt as 'marginalia' – the denigration of the minorities to the margins of Nigerian historiography.³⁴ The intertextuality between the discourse of Muslim writers, European travel narratives and colonial anthropological accounts, coupled with a shared history of resistance against the Hausa–Fulani Muslims, formed the epistemological premise against which Middle Belt historiography of resistance subsequently emerged.

From ABU to UniJos: The Threshold of Middle Belt Historiography

The earliest writings on Middle Belt minorities were produced by scholars based in the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, School of History where a group of radical historians such as Yusufu Bala Usman, M. M. Tukur, Abdullahi Mahdi and Sule Bello wrote on different aspects of northern Nigerian history. These ABU scholars have been frequently described as a group of 'Islamist' or 'Jihadist' historians who were recruited to extol the virtues of the Sokoto Caliphate.³⁵ Although the School was initially patronised by the northern establishment under the auspices of the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and the Scion of Danfodio, the Islamic and Jihadi labels mischaracterise, rather than typify, the scholars at ABU.

The ABU School was founded in 1962 as the first History Department in northern Nigeria at a time when the country was going through an endemic ethno-religious conflict. The political regions of the country – Northern, Southwestern and Eastern – founded and supported historical projects in an attempt to support their political and cultural claims in the country. In 1956, an inter-disciplinary project for the study of Benin culture and history was put in place. In the same year, Saburi Biobaku launched the Yoruba Historical Scheme, and the Northern History Research Scheme (NHRS) took off in 1964. A third scheme for the study of the history of Eastern Nigeria was inaugurated in 1965.³⁶ In the creation of these regional history projects, ethnic minorities were relegated to the background.³⁷

While the claims about historiographical exclusion are plausible in the absence of overt intellectual solidarity with the minorities, the pioneer historians of ethnic minorities such as Charles Gonyok, John Agi, T. Makar,

Monday Mangwvat, John Nengel and Stephen Banfa were all products of the ABU school.

These scholars wrote the histories of their local communities mainly from a class rather than from an ethnic or resistance perspective.³⁸ The social context was such that as ABU expanded, a large portion of the students were Christian and from the Middle Belt. They were certainly encouraged to research and write about their communities as they defined them, but there were limited possibilities for a minority-centred or ethno-centric historiography given the primacy of Marxist tradition among ABU scholars then.

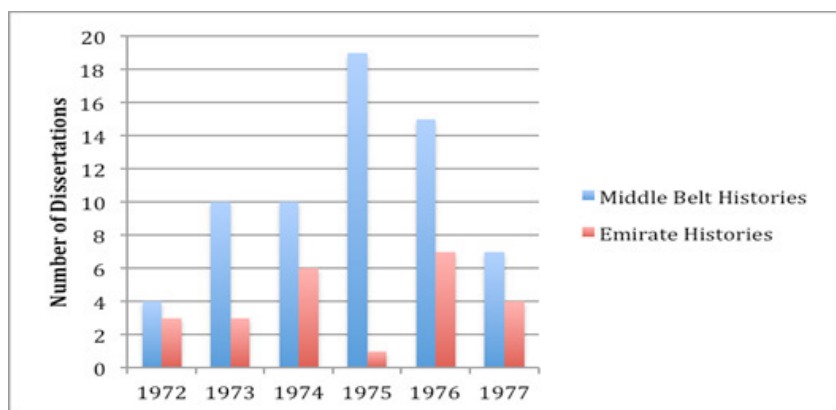


Figure 1: Chart showing the number of undergraduate dissertations on Middle Belt areas and Northern Emirates in the Department of History, ABU, Zaria

Figure 1 shows that undergraduate dissertations produced in the History Department at ABU between 1972 and 1977 concentrated mainly on the non-Muslim areas of the Middle Belt, especially Benue and Plateau States. However, slight thematic preference for Emirate histories is visible at the postgraduate level. For instance, between 1970 and 2004, 28 and 23 postgraduate theses were Emirate histories and on the Middle Belt communities respectively.

The production of dissident local histories in the Middle Belt began in earnest with the establishment of universities in the strongholds of the ethnic minorities in northern Nigeria. In 1975 the federal military government of Nigeria took over responsibility for the regional universities and established seven new ones.³⁹ Because it was difficult to get alternative forms of identification outside the northern establishment, the University of Jos (UniJos) was founded in November 1971 as a campus of the University of Ibadan, under the initiative of Joseph Gomwalk, the first military governor of Benue-Plateau State.⁴⁰ In October 1975, then Nigerian military government established the University as an autonomous institution.

This advent of UniJos was interpreted as an expression of Middle Belt ethno-cultural nationalism, an opportunity to search and give agency to the ancestral voices of the ethnic minorities in an increasingly competitive political and social space. Middle Belt intellectuals even accused the political leaders of northern Nigeria of initially sabotaging Gomwalk's efforts to have an ABU campus in Jos.⁴¹ The emergence of UniJos in 1975 opened up new institutional opportunities for the training of indigenous historians among minorities and the production of local histories. The historiographical focus on minorities was pioneered in Jos whence the tradition subsequently spread to other parts of the Middle Belt.

Between 1976 and 1981 Elizabeth Isichei, an expatriate from New Zealand, inaugurated a series of local research projects intended to challenge the dominant historical narratives of the area. She conducted a series of vigorous workshops and seminars and produced publications on the local histories of the Plateau and Benue communities. With a generous research grant from UniJos, Isichei started an oral history project generally referred to as the Plateau History Project (PHP). The project was launched in 1977 with a team of Plateau students who were deployed, as field interviewers, to various local communities such as the Birom, the Kulere, the Ron and the Goemai. After receiving some training in the techniques of oral interviewing, each took a cassette recorder to the field. Working in their native languages, the students produced a collection of recorded interviews along with English transcriptions. The students asked open-ended questions to extract as much information as possible from their informants, who spoke 'at length unchecked, eliciting almost a stream of consciousness'. Through this technique, a massive amount of data was collected on various themes of the oral histories of the Middle Belt, especially Plateau communities. These themes include the advent of the Europeans and the impact of colonialism; wars and relationships with neighbours; the missionaries and the coming of Christianity; and a few collections on traditions of migration. A distinctive feature of the oral histories is their overly local content and context.

In addition to spearheading the collection and documentation of oral histories, Isichei coordinated three major publications that covered wide areas and numerous ethnic groups, the two volumes of Jos Oral History and Literature Texts (JOHALT) and *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*. In her introduction to JOHALT, Isichei disparaged how the peoples and histories of the Plateau communities were relatively little known and little described.⁴³ The first volume of JOHALT covers the Mwahavul, Ngas and Mupun ethnicities, and includes materials collected by Sylvanus Mangtit Nsang, Joseph Kwatmak, Obadia K. Tumaon, Zakaria Damina

Goshit, John Gofwan Dyikuk, Lekyes P. Kwarkas and Naanshep Dagum. The second volume contains the oral history texts of the Ron, Kulere, Kantana, Mada and Arum communities, collected to serve as supplements to existing archival and published texts.⁴⁴ The initial drive towards collecting and documenting oral texts of the Plateau communities was envisioned as the nucleus of a much larger archive of recorded sound.⁴⁵ It was initially difficult to make these texts available to the wider scholarly community due to publishing constraints. And the use of microfilm by local historians was quite limited.⁴⁶

Another major academic exercise, which heralded the beginning of Middle Belt historiography, was the workshop on Plateau History and a weekly interdisciplinary seminar, both convened by the History Department of University of Jos. In 1982, the proceedings of these seminars were published as *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*. This work is concerned with the high Plateau and the Benue lowlands to its south, two areas that have always been linked economically and culturally. According to Isichie:

This study had its roots in something more than just the natural desire of scholars to study the area where they live and work. Nothing reveals the lacunae in Nigerian history more clearly than teaching the subject to undergraduates. Each year they complain that there is massive bibliography for Borno or Hausa land or Yoruba land or the Niger-Delta, while for the Plateau State area they are referred to a gazette written in 1933, and an ethnographic survey published in 1953. It is hoped that this volume will fill the gap.⁴⁷

In order to unpack the subtext of the Plateau History Project we have to analyse, as Foucault suggests, 'the truth of propositions and the relations that unite them'.⁴⁸ The roots of the PHP, as implied in the above quotation, were beyond an ordinary quest for establishing a repository of historical records. The project was implicated and fed into a broader agenda of Middle Belt cultural assertiveness and dissent in northern Nigeria. Underscoring the views of Isichei, Zakaria Goshit posits that, 'the main caveat of Isichei is that the history of the Plateau and by extension the whole of the Middle Belt has been marginalized, neglected and misinterpreted'.⁴⁹

Studies in the History of Plateau is essentially based on the Plateau oral history texts since most of the authors who contributed were students, who served as fieldworkers for the PHP. The emphasis on oral histories was a major departure from the official anthropological and ethnographic studies of the Middle Belt. The local authors struggled to avoid the use of both published and unpublished colonial records.⁵⁰ Although the publication covers a wide range of issues such as art history in Plateau, migrations,

proverbs among the Berom, inter-group relations, Islam and Christianity, mining and trade, and slavery, it is imperative to note that resistance against Jihadist penetration as well as British colonialism are the most recurrent themes. While J. H. Morrison wrote on Plateau societies' resistance to Jihadists penetration, Isichei focused on resistance against colonialism.

These efforts at producing alternative histories of resistance by Middle Belt historians were a turning of seasons in the historiography of northern Nigeria. With this, a region of discursive lacunae was identified, and the institutional space within which to activate a historical consciousness framed within the politics of marginalisation was mounted. Students of minority extraction were enrolled to research and write local histories from their own perspectives.

While the initial drive of the PHP was geared towards the collection and documentation of sources rather than actual historical writing, the 1980s witnessed the rise of a network of interwoven projects on Middle Belt communities beyond the local confines of the Plateau to areas as far as the Niger-Benue confluence and Borno.⁵¹ While Charles Jacob worked on the Gbayi communities in Niger State before he shifted focus to Plateau and Benue areas, John Nengel and Lawrence Walu produced their research degrees on the area north of Jos and on the Goemai respectively.

The founding of Benue State University (BSU) in 1992 added greater impetus to the growth of Middle Belt historiography. Like UniJos, BSU articulated a deliberate community relations policy, whereby all disciplines would carve niches for themselves in practical relevance to the immediate community.⁵² The History Department at BSU, founded on the path of the local initiative drive, took a leading role in authoring the Middle Belt historiography of resistance in the Benue region. Some academic staff of the department such as Mike Odey, Okpeh O. Okpeh and J. E. Agaba received their training at the University of Jos where they were imbued with the local history tradition.

When Charles Jacob, another expatriate historian from Jamaica, left UniJos for the History Department at BSU, he arrived infused with the local history tradition as well as an aggressive passion for archival documentation.⁵³ Jacob went to the extent of deploying his personal resources to reproduce virtually all the copies of archival files in Kaduna dealing with Plateau and other adjoining communities. His large collection of primary sources also covered areas of Benue, laying the foundations of what became the Benue-Valley History Project.⁵⁴

The emphasis on local history at Jos and Makurdi has been described as 'a simulation of the Ibadan and Zaria Schools of historiography' and 'a new variant of history that gets facts from documents and juxtaposes that

with what the people say about themselves to create a new narrative'.⁵⁵ The novelty of the Middle Belt historiography is described in terms of resistance around the themes of warfare, agitation, valour, power and authority. According to Okpeh Okpeh 'it is not a history about Islam or subservience; it is a history of struggles against official history'.⁵⁶

Claims about novelty and shifts in historiographical discourse in terms of clichés like 'new narrative' or 'new variant' are open to multiple meanings and interpretations and are often difficult to qualify. If we take the notion of a 'new variant' of history, for instance, to mean 'a more thoroughgoing shift in the nature of historical practice',⁵⁷ what then is novel about a practice that privileges the deployment of orality in historical writing in the context of postcolonial Nigeria? In terms of empirical data collection and documentation of the histories of minorities in the Middle Belt region, there were major advances from the 1970s.

However, the Middle Belt historians have not properly articulated a theoretical or conceptual shift that we can translate as a paradigm shift. The scholarship is no doubt reactive as some of the Middle Belt scholars claim and supplementary in terms of sources.⁵⁸ In the latter it can be argued that it has broadened the frontiers of Nigerian historiography in terms of themes and geographical coverage, but certainly not in terms of a sustained ideology that pushes and redefines the Middle Belt in the light of contemporary historiographical debates.⁵⁹ It is, therefore, difficult to see the Middle Belt historiographical posturing as having inaugurated, paradigmatically and causally, an articulated counter-discourse.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, a close reading of the historical writings by Middle Belt authors reveals a particular mode of discourse and textual tradition standing apart from the established national and Hausa–Fulani-centred histories particularly in terms of intellectual agenda and narrative strategy.⁶¹ In the next section of this article a textual analysis is offered of the writings of Middle Belt historians and their discursive contours.

The Middle Belt Textual Tradition

The writings of Middle Belt historians have been described as 'reactionary (sic) historiography' in that they are essentially authored as a reaction to both colonial and Hausa–Fulani centred historiographies. For Okpeh Okpeh, they represent a 'historiography of resistance', driven, according to Sati Fwatshak, by 'ethno-cultural nationalism'.⁶² There are at least two discernible strands in Middle Belt historiography: 'macro' and 'micro' histories. While the former approach the Middle Belt as a wider regional phenomenon, and attempt to offer a broad ranging synthesis of the discrete histories of the minorities in order to engender a shared historical consciousness, the latter

project the histories of individual communities as microcosms of the larger narrative. Both, however, are committed to the discourse of resistance and marginalisation.

Paul Logam's *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study in Political Identity* represents the prominent text in the series of the macro literature. This book is widely celebrated by Middle Belt historians as an excellent historical exposition of the Middle Belt question. The book is described as a classic 'encyclopedia' of Middle Belt history, an essential monograph, 'which every true Middle Belter should read because it is the most detailed and profound history of the region'.⁶³ The book was published in reaction to some of 'the attempts by those who are opposed to the idea of a Middle Belt to wish it away, and the clear signs of ignorance of what Middle Belt is all about'.⁶⁴ The roots of internal colonial relationships, according to Logam, 'were from a colonial system which the British incorporated with the Middle Belt groups in 1900. In the process of incorporation before 1940, British administration subordinated many Middle Belt groups into the Islamic society'.⁶⁵ Logam asserts that the internal colonialism perpetuated by Islamic society under the supervision of the British was responsible for the activation of minorities' consciousness and the rise of the Middle Belt movement.⁶⁶ This book represents the *Magnum Opus* of Middle Belt resistance scholarship, from which most Middle Belt histories, particularly the macro texts, draw.

On a similar discursive footing, Yusufu Turaki writes on 'The Institutionalization of the Inferior Status and Socio-economic Role of the Non-Muslim Groups in the Colonial Hierarchical Structure of the Northern Region of Nigeria'. Turaki attempts to show the ways in which the British colonial administration entrenched and institutionalised a regime of Hausa–Fulani cultural and political supremacy over non-Muslim groups of the Middle Belt. Although his analysis is limited to Southern Zaria (now Southern Kaduna) he deployed the textual strategy of internal colonialism, which isolates and treats the non-Muslim groups in the Middle Belt as the exclusive victims of colonialism. For Turaki the consolidation of Hausa–Fulani hegemony was premised on 'false histories, ethnographies and racial theories, which exacerbated pre-colonial rivalries and animosities' between non-Muslims and Muslims of northern Nigeria.⁶⁷

In 1993, Mathew Hassan Kukah further blazed the trail of Middle Belt resistance historiography with his *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*. Kukah, a Roman Catholic Priest, examines the methods used in the entrenchment of Hausa–Fulani hegemony and the manipulation of religion for political purposes in northern Nigeria.⁶⁸

This work represents another case of the deployment of the narrative of internal colonialism from the vantage point of religion. The author traces the origin of Hausa–Fulani hegemony to the Sokoto Caliphate and argues ‘that the ascendancy of Hausa–Fulani hegemony has coincided with the alienation of the non-Muslims’. According to Kukah: ‘studies on Northern Nigeria have tended to concentrate on the caliphate and Islam, with the rest of the region consigned to insignificance’.⁶⁹ Although the term Middle Belt is not reflected in the title of this work, the subtextual ideas resonate with Middle Belt grievances and narrative of resistance against Hausa–Fulani hegemony.

Niels Kastfelt, in his book *Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Study of Middle Belt Christianity*, brings out the role of Christian missionaries and Protestant churches in the emergence of Christian Westernised and bureaucratic elites opposed to the traditional Muslim elites in northern Nigeria. This book is primarily concerned with the Adamawa axis of the Middle Belt but its overall narrative framework fits within the narrative strategy of marginalisation and resistance.

With support from Moses Orshio Adasu, the then governor of Benue State, the Tiv Senior Staff Association at ABU initiated the Tiv Studies Project to document key aspects of Tiv history and culture. According to Tor Tiv IV, the cultural leader of the Tiv community, the project was aimed at correcting the ‘misinformation and misrepresentation of the Tiv people and their cultural heritage, which is capable of marginalizing their socio-political fortunes in Nigeria’.⁷⁰

As the politics of identity escalated following the return to civil rule in 1999, Middle Belt scholarship grew in thematic scope and intensity. Some thirty young scholars decided to put together the results of their fieldwork, which were published in 2001 as *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*. This volume, supported financially by the various state governments of the Middle Belt, marked the empirical saturation of Middle Belt historiography. The book opens with a major caveat:

Until recently, the Central Nigeria area has been looked upon by researchers as a residue region that only reacted to events happening outside it such as the impact of the Sokoto Jihad. Of the impact of the Jihad, much has been written but strictly from perspectives not emanating from Central Nigeria area. Reactions of Central Nigeria peoples to both the Sokoto Jihad and British have been largely discussed from the perspectives of the conquerors.⁷¹

As the search for a ‘proper identity’ of the diverse peoples of the Middle Belt was intensified, *The Right To Be Different: Perspectives on Minority Rights, Cultural Middle Belt and Constitutionalism in Nigeria*⁷² made its appearance in the historiographical landscape. This was the result of a three-day

conference on the peoples of the cultural Middle Belt, which was held in Jos in 2001. The book is made up of eleven chapters authored by Middle Belt scholars, activists and former military and police chiefs. Although the overriding theme of the book is the 1999 constitution vis-à-vis the position of Middle Belt minorities, the various chapters speak to diverse issues around identity, resistance, economy and politics in the area.

In 2007, *The Middle Belt in the Shadow of Nigeria* was published in Makurdi, Benue State. Edited by two historians and a sociologist, the book is a collection of chapters by scholars from the disciplines of history, drama, languages, political science and economics. In his foreword, Olayemi Akinwumi, former President of the Historical Society of Nigeria, notes that, 'Since the publication of *Studies in History of Central Nigeria Area*, scholarly attention on the peoples of this region (i.e. Middle Belt), can be said to have increased'. He identifies three overlapping consequences of this development for Middle Belt historiography. First, it opened up a new vista for a critical interrogation of the histories, cultures and politics of the peoples. Secondly, and as a corollary to the preceding point, the new scholarship is challenging hegemonic historical narratives of the Middle Belt communities in the light of new evidence. The third consequence was the decolonisation of Middle Belt historiography, which in turn is facilitating the drive towards 'mainstreaming the Middle Belt in the broader Nigerian history'.⁷³

The latest addition to Middle Belt historiography is Moses Ochonu's *Colonialism by Proxy: Hausa Imperial Agents and the Middle Belt*. In this work, Ochonu offers a nuanced discussion of the encounters between the Middle Belt and Muslim northern Nigeria by conflating British colonialism with the Sokoto Caliphate. He invents terms like 'Anglo-Caliphate rule' and 'Hausa-Fulani subcolonialism' to describe a colonial template of Anglo-Caliphate rule, which took shape 'against the background of a canon of colonial and caliphate knowledge that viewed the cultures, religions, and political traditions of the Middle Belt as obstacles to be overcome in the interest of cheap, uniform colonial rule in Northern Nigeria'. Like the other works discussed previously, *Colonialism by Proxy* raises fundamental issues associated with the British colonial consolidation of Hausa-Fulani hegemony and the reactions of the Middle Belt peoples. Although he acknowledges the limits of the 'Hausa-Fulani colonials' within the larger colonial political and ideological orbit in which they operate, Ochonu recognises the 'unique decision-making agency of the Hausa-Fulani colonials', particularly outside their colonial administrative districts.⁷⁵

The micro works usually deal with ethnic histories rather than the Middle Belt as a wider regional or cultural phenomenon. Within the Middle Belt

itself, some ethnicities have received more scholarly coverage than others. In the Plateau axis, for example, the Berom, Anaguta, Mwaghavul and Tarok have attracted more attention, compared, relative to the Gamaye, Mupun, Ron, Kerang and Mpan. The Tiv and Idoma, as the largest ethnic groups in the Benue Valley, have attracted more attention from historians than their neighbours such as the Igede. It is interesting to note that these individual histories share the approach of the macro texts, which present the minorities as victims of Hausa–Fulani politics and hegemony. For example, Okpeh Okpeh deploys the discursive strategy of internal colonialism in his 'The Idoma and Minority Group Politics in Northern Nigeria 1944–1960: A Study in an Aspect of the National Question',⁷⁶ where he blames the British for 'harboring a deep-seated prejudice against the Idoma' and endorsing 'Hausa–Fulani' hegemony by superimposing 'alien chiefs' from the Muslim north on the Idoma people.

Moreover, in the struggle for the production of history, historians in the Middle Belt are gradually losing out to non-professionals, who have taken to producing community histories. For example, Sen Luka Gwom, a seasoned civil servant, has authored over ten books on different aspects of the history of Jos.⁷⁷ Stephen Mallo, a mining engineer, wrote a history of Ron in Plateau State. Nendimma Gonet wrote '*The Rudiments of Kingship in Yil-Ngas*' in 2013 as a bold attempt to preserve and project Ngas culture for future generations.⁷⁸ The rise of these 'amateur histories' and other textual genres in the Middle Belt is associated with the settler–indigene question, identity politics and the struggle for representation. The macro and micro texts of Middle Belt histories are conceptually and textually within a narrative framework of resistance against the legacies of Islam and colonialism in the region.

Conclusion

Through a textual analysis of the writings of historians and other scholars of Middle Belt extraction, this article has attempted to show the ways in which Middle Belt historiography has been motivated by the politics of marginality, retribution and resistance, suggesting an intimate connection between history-making and politics. The narrative of marginality and resistance was inspired originally by a group Middle Belt activists and clergy in the course of the nationalist struggle against British colonial rule. Academic production of Middle Belt historiography was originally inspired by the Plateau and Benue History Projects under the auspices of the History Departments at University of Jos and Benue State University. With the emergence of universities in the region between 1970s and 1990s, these ideas were subtly transmitted into scholarly texts, heralding the Middle Belt discourse of resistance.

Notes

1. 'Major Orkar's Manifesto', *Free Nation* 3 no. 1 (1990), p. 14.
2. Ladi Shehu, 'After Orkar, what Next?', *Free Nation*, 3–4 (1990), pp. 6–7.
The coup plotters, led by Major Orkar, apart from excluding other military officers, especially those perceived as 'disciples of the Sokoto Caliphate', from the abortive insurrection, wrongly assumed that all the so-called Middle-Belters and the people of southern Nigeria had common historical and contemporary experiences, as well as a commitment to change. See Julius O. Ihonvbere, 'A critical evaluation of the failed 1990 coup in Nigeria', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 21 (4) (1991), p. 615.
3. There is a good literature on the impact of the Sokoto Jihad on the Jos-Plateau area, Niger-Benue and the Middle-Benue confluence. See Ahmed Rufa'i Mohammed's *History of the Spread of Islam in the Niger-Benue Confluence Area, Igalaland, Egbirraland and Lokoja C. 1900–1960* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 2014); Mahmoud Hamman, *The Middle-Benue Region and the Sokoto Jihad 1812–1869, the Establishment of the Emirate of Muri* (Kaduna: Arewa House, 2007); John G. Nengel, 'Echoes of the Sokoto Jihad and its Legacies on the Societies of the Jos-Plateau', in *The Sokoto Caliphate: History and Legacies, 1804–2004*, Vol. II, Hamid Bobboyi and A. M. Yakubu, eds (Kaduna: Arewa House, 2006); Mohammed S. Abdulkadir, 'The Effects of Extension of the Sokoto Caliphate on the Igala Kingdom', in *The Sokoto Caliphate: History and Legacies*, Vol. I, Hamid Bobboyi and A. M. Yakubu, eds (Kaduna: Arewa House, 2006); Mohammed D. Suleiman, 'The Sokoto Jihad, Sharia and the Minorities in Northern Nigeria', in *The Sokoto Caliphate*, Vol. II.
4. This is the frame within which contemporary intellectuals from the Niger Delta region are producing alternative histories of their respective communities that challenge the official version of Nigerian history. Niger Delta historiography is largely inspired by the agenda of resource control. See Peter Ekeh's 'The Mischief of History: Bala Usman's Unmaking of Nigerian History'; and Ben Naanen's 'Bala Usman, History and the Niger Delta', available at www.waado.org, accessed 8 June 2008.
5. Patrick Dawam, 'Aspects of the Geography of Central Nigeria Area', in *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria*; Baba Thomas Bingel, 'Historical Demography of the Nigerian Middle Belt'; J. A. Ballard, 'Historical inferences from the linguistic geography of the Nigerian Middle Belt', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 41 (4) (1971); Keith Buchanan, 'The northern region of Nigeria: the geographical background of its political duality', *Geographical Review* 43 (4) (1953); S. A. Agboola, 'The Middle Belt of Nigeria: the basis of its geographical unity', *Nigerian Geographical Journal* 4 (1), (1961); R. A. Pullan, 'The concept of the Middle Belt: a climatic definition', *Nigerian Geographical Journal* 5 (1) (1962).
6. Moses Ochonu, 'Colonialism within colonialism: the Hausa–Caliphate imaginary and the British colonial administration of the Nigerian Middle Belt', *African Studies Quarterly* 10 (2–3) (2008), p. 111.

7. Ochonu, 'Colonialism within colonialism', p. 111.
8. Samaila Suleiman, 'Exhuming passions: religion and the emergence of the Middle Belt struggle in Nigeria', *Annual Review of Islam* 11 (2012), p. 18.
9. Ballard, 'Historical inferences', p. 1.
10. Yusufu Turaki, 'The Institutionalization of the Inferior Status and Socio-Political Role of the Non-Muslim Groups in the Colonial Hierarchical Structure of the Northern Nigerian Region: A Socio-Ethical Analysis of the Colonial Legacy', PhD Thesis (Boston, 1982), p. 9.
11. Paul Chunun Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study in Political Identity 1949–1967* (Abuja: Centre for Middle Belt Studies, 2004), p. 116.
12. Mathew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993), 4.
13. See, for instance, Andrew E. Barnes, 'The Middle Belt movement and the formation of Christian consciousness in colonial northern Nigeria', *Church History* 76 (3) (2007), pp. 591–610; Niels Kastfelt, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Study in Middle Belt Christianity*; Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development*, pp. 155–224.
14. Interview with Professor Zacharia Goshit, Jos, 2012. This is particularly evident when churches began to sponsor publications not only for proselytisation, but also for their articulation of the religious histories of Middle Belt Christian communities within the discursive framework of marginalisation. According to Zakaria Goshit, the involvement of churches in the production of local histories is strongly connected to the 'invisible war' they are fighting with Islam. Besides the publication of journals and magazines such as *Jos Studies* and *Today's Challenge*, they also sponsor the production of books on the histories of Christianity among Middle Belt communities. *Jos Studies* is owned and published by St. Augustine's Major Seminary in Jos. Sometimes these religious histories of Middle Belt communities are sponsored by community organisations; at other times the churches directly sponsor the publications. The churches employ the services of professional historians to provide data, edit drafts of manuscripts or write prefaces for the books.
15. Interview with Professor Okpeh Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.
16. Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, in Robert Young, ed., *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan, 1981), p. 63.
17. Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Anthology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 3.
18. David C. Tambo, 'The hill refugees of the Jos-Plateau: a historiographical examination', *History in Africa* 5 (1978), p. 204.
19. Tambo, 'The hill refugees', p. 215.
20. *ibid.*
21. Tambo, 'The hill refugees', p. 202.

22. Heinrich Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa II* (New York: 1857), p. 572.
23. Tambo, 'The hill refugees', p. 202.
24. Tambo, 'The hill refugees'.
25. G. P. Bargery, *A Hausa–English Dictionary and English Hausa Vocabulary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 79.
26. This is the Hausa word for pagans – arna (plural) and arne (singular). Gwarawa can be translated as persons who are ignorant of Hausa culture or unable to speak the Hausa language. See Dahiru Yahya, 'Zazzau: The Bridge between the Hausa and Banza Bakwai: an Assessment', paper presented at a conference organised by the Axis Research Agency and Zazzau Emirate Council on 'History of Zazzau from Pre-Jihad Period to Date' at Arewa House, Kaduna, December, 2009.
27. Muhammad Bello, *Inf q al-mais r f ta r'kh bil'd al-takr'r*, in Bahijah Shadhili, ed. (Rabat: Ma'had al-Dirasat al-Ifriqiya, 1996). The manuscript copies of Raudat al-Akfar are available at the NHRS library, A.B.U., Zaria.
28. Abdullahi Smith in his seminal essay 'Some Considerations Relating to the Formation of States in Hausa land' cast serious doubt about the authenticity of the Hausa Bakwai legend. See: *A Little New Light: Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith* (Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, 1987), pp. 59–77.
29. For a discussion on how the Christian missionary translation project influenced the Bachama community of the Middle Belt, see Niels Kastfelt, 'The Politics of History in Northern Nigeria', paper presented at the Research Seminar of the African Studies Centre, Leiden, 27 April 2006, p. 5.
30. Laura and Paul Bohannan, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria* (London: International African Institute, 1969), p. v.
31. Ballard, 'Historical inferences', p. 291.
32. Margery Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria* (Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 132–53.
33. Tambo, 'The hill refugees', p. 215.
34. Interview with Professor Okpeh Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.
35. Paul E. Lovejoy, 'The Ibadan School of Historiography and its Critics', in *African Historiography, Essays in Honor of Jacob Ade Ajayi*, Toyin Falola, ed. (Lagos: Longman, 1993).
36. Northern History Research Scheme, *First Interim Report* (Zaria, 1966), p. 1.
37. See Robert Auker, 'Perspectives of Nigerian Historiography, the Historians of Modern Nigeria', PhD Thesis (Howard, 1971); Lidwein Kapteijns, 'African Historiography Written by Africans: The Nigerian Case', PhD Thesis (Leiden, 1972); Hamza Muhammad Maishanu, *Five Hundred Years of Historical Writings in Borno and Hausaland* (Macmillan: Ibadan 2008); Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010).
38. The classical case of this approach is Monday Mangwvat's *A History of Class Formation in the Plateau Province of Nigeria, 1902–1960: The Genesis of a Ruling Class* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2013).

39. Federal Government of Nigeria, Report of the Presidential Commission on Salary and Conditions of Service of University Staff (National Assembly Press, 1981), p. 9.
40. Interview with Professor Sati Fwatshak, Jos, 2012.
41. Interview with Professor Bala Takaya, Jos, 2012.
42. Elizabeth Isichei, 'The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas: An Introduction to their Oral History', *Jos Oral History and Literature Texts I* (1981), p. iv.
43. Isichei, 'The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas', viii.
44. David Tambo, 'The Pre-colonial Tin Industry in Northern Nigeria', *Jos Oral History and Literature Texts 2*, (1981), p. 1.
45. Isichei, 'The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas', p. ii.
46. Isichei, 'The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas', vi. A famous academic once confessed to Isichei that he had never read microfilm in his life.
47. Isichie, 'Preface', in *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. xi.
48. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 149.
49. Interview with Professor Zakaria Goshit, Jos, 2012.
50. Richard Fardon, 'Review: Plateau studies', *Journal of African History* 24 (3) (1983), pp. 386–87.
51. Isichei, 'The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas', p. iv.
52. 'Introduction', in *Benue State University at 20: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects*, Oga Ajene, Matiu A. Adejo and Member George-Genyi, eds (Makurdi: Benue State University Press, 2012), p. 10.
53. Mike O. Odey, John Nengel and Okpeh O. Okpeh, 'Immortalizing Professor Charles Creswell Jacobs', in *History Research and Methodology in Africa: Essays in Honor of Professor Charles Creswell Jacobs*, Mike O. Odey and Okpeh O. Okpeh, eds (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2007), p. 3.
54. Some of these documents were lost due to poor or lacking storage facilities. The good news though is that the British Library has recently begun digitising the documents under the Endangered Archive Project.
55. Interview with Professor Okpeh O. Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.
56. *ibid.*
57. Gabriel M. Spiegel, 'Revising the past/revisiting the present: how change happens in historiography', *History and Theory* 46 (4), (2007), p. 3.
58. Interview with Professor Monday Mangwvat and Professor Zakaria Goshit, Jos, 2013.
59. Interview with Professor Monday Mangwvat, Jos, 2013.
60. Interview with Professor Ibrahim Bello-Kano, Kano, 2013.
61. Zakaria Goshit, 'Trends and Patterns in Historical Research and Writing', p. 5.
62. Interview with Professors Zakaria Goshit, Okpeh O. Okpeh and Sati Fwatshak, Jos, 2013.
63. Chom Bagu, 'Ethno-religious Violence in Northern Nigeria and Reparations', text of a lecture delivered at the public presentation of the book *Boko Haram: How Religious Intolerance Threatens Nigeria* by John Isiyaku, *Sunday Standard*, August 8 (2010), p. 8.

64. Logams, The Middle Belt Movement, p. 1.
65. *ibid.*
66. *ibid.*
67. Yusufu Turaki, 'The Institutionalisation of the Inferior status', p. 421.
68. Kukah, Religion, Politics and Power, p. xii.
69. *ibid.*
70. 'Preface', in Phillip Terdo Ahire, ed., *The Tiv in Contemporary Nigeria* (Zaria: 1993), p. v.
71. 'Introduction', in A. A. Idrees and Y. A. Ochefu, eds, *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area* (Lagos: CSS Press, 2002), p. xxi.
72. *The Right To Be Different: Perspectives on Minority Rights, the Cultural Middle Belt Constitutionalism in Nigeria*, Nankin Bagudu and Dakas C. J. Dakas, eds (Jos: League for Human Rights, 2001).
73. Olayemi Akinwumi, 'Foreword', in Okpeh O. Okpeh and Sati Fwatshak, eds, *The Middle Belt in the Shadow of Nigeria* (Makurdi: Oracle Press, 2007).
74. Ochon, Colonialism by Proxy, p. 22.
75. Ochon, Colonialism by Proxy, p. 209.
76. Okpeh O. Okpeh, 'The Idoma and Minority Group Politics in Northern Nigeria 1944–1960: A Study in an Aspect of the National Question' (PhD Thesis, University of Jos, 1994).
77. Some of these titles by Sen Luka Gwom include: *History of Jos and Political Development of Nigeria* (Jos: Fab, 1983); *The Berom and Religion: Practices and Prospects* (Jos: Fab, 1995); *The Berom Tribe of Plateau State Nigeria* (Jos: Fab, 1992); *History of Wase Local Government Council of Plateau State of Nigeria* (Jos: Fab, 1994); *This is Shendam* (Jos: Fab, 1991).
78. Nendimma D. Gonet, *The Rudiments of Kingship in Yil-Ngas* (Jos: Willota Press, 2013), p. vii.

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