CONFLICT, CULTURE, AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA: A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

by

Chukwuma Godwin Onyia
A Thesis
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of
Master of Science
Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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Conflict, CULTURE, and poverty in Nigeria: A Theoretical Discussion and Empirical Analysis

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my twin brother Chijioke, his wife Ngozi and children; Akachukwu, Kelechi, and Chibuike Onyia.
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Special thanks to my family and friends whose goodwill and support I relied upon during this program. Chijioke and Ngozi were very benevolent and provided endless emotional and financial support. Mummy, Chi-chi, Ess-Tee, T.O, Oby, Chris, Eugene, Emeka, Chukwuka and Ebuka, thank you for your love. My friends Vigny Numubra, Dr. Douglas Irviner, Moley Tamper, Earnest Ogbozor, Rev. Fr. Innocent, Naris, and Rifat, you all are wonderful people. I love you. Drs. Rich Rubenstein, Ho-Won Geong, and Karyna Korostelina, your help is invaluable. Thank you. Finally, big thanks go to Merry Oberies and the team of Arlington library for their support during this work; and to Sally Evans for putting this thesis in the right format.
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This study examines the determinants of chronic poverty which is at the root of conflict in Nigeria. Violent conflict, most of which emanates from the northern region, is a defining feature of Nigeria dating back to its independence in 1960. Scholars have attributed this phenomenon to endemic, chronic poverty in the area. The situation has attracted scholars who seek to account for the continued economic backwardness amongst the northerners and to proffer pro-poor strategies as part of the peacebuilding components in Nigeria. We conducted our study into the causes of sustained economic backwardness from the perspectives of Oscar Lewis’ culture of poverty theory and tackled the problem through the citizens' viewpoint. We found that two significant, surviving mechanisms of the Sokoto Caliphate shape the attitudes of the mass commoners of Hausa-Fulani of northern Nigeria. We established that these produce seven distinctive traits that are inimical to economic prosperity, such as “beggarliness,” “limited parenting,” “women seclusion” “limited priority to education,” “lack of need-for-achievement motivation.” We report that above
findings support the “culture of poverty” thesis that the poor create, sustain, and generationally transmit unique values that apparently render them economically inviable within the modern society. This report shows that culture of the northerners ought to be considered seriously, especially in designing and implementing pro-poor policies geared towards stemming youth buy-in into radical extremism and recurrent conflict in that region. Such policies should include in their design, measures to engender an attitudinal change of both practices and viewpoints among the poor northerners towards prosperity-inducing behaviors.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Northern Nigeria is home to most of the nation’s poorest. Majority of them rely on social identity groups—churches and mosque—for sustenance. It is estimated that 60% of those are youths, most of whom live predominantly in the mosques; catered for by the resident Imams. Scholars have argued that, such situation gives some radical Imams the opportunity to indoctrinate and radicalize these army of unemployed youths (Wole Soyinka, 2012). Thus, the region has been a breeding place for radical Islamic extremist groups including Maitatsine (1980-1986), Gumi (1988-1992) and Jama’atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda’ Awati Wal-Jihad (aka Boko Haram) that unleashed terror on Nigeria and the global community since 1996. By abducting about 200 Chibuk schoolgirls in 2014, Boko Haram brought poverty in Nigeria and the ways in which it feeds into radical extremism in northern Nigeria to the center of global debate. The focus is on understanding the root of chronic poverty among the Northern Nigerians, and addressing it with sustainable pro-poor strategies to stem the spate of conflict emanating from that region.

Throughout recorded human history, economic prosperity has attracted much attention. While some societies/civilizations have been, and remain poorer than others, a universal challenge has been on how to conceptualize, measure, and accurately describe
the causes of poverty as a step towards designing and efficiently implement strategies likely to reduce and possibly eliminate economic backwardness. Pioneering research on poverty as evident in the work of Rowntree 1901 focused more on measurement, by evaluating individual families with nutrition and other requirements as the baseline, but has witnessed periodic shifts, however. Since 1945, scholarly attention has turned towards the understanding of the determinants of sustained poverty among individuals; and has offered various explanations, ranging from socio-structural to behavioral/cultural factors.

Among them, Oscar Lewis (1959) espoused the idea that, the poor have a unique set of values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices which distinguish them from the non-poors. He maintained that, these values by themselves may not account for the determinant poverty, however, they do explain why poverty remains generationally chronic among some families and societies. Oscar Lewis (1959) coined and utilized the “culture of poverty” thesis “which suggests that individuals create, sustain, and transmit to future generations a culture that reinforces the various social and behavioral deficiencies that ostensibly make them less economically viable within conventional societies” (Gregory Jordan 2004:19) to illustrate common traits he found among the Mexican poor families; characteristics he maintained are widespread amongst the poor globally.

Oscar Lewis’ “culture of poverty” thesis drew intense criticism and bifurcated the academia, policy makers as well as the public along two axes; with vehement rejection from those on the opposing side. They (the opponents) reject Oscar Lewis’ proposition because culture is relative, each unique in its right, neither to be compared
nor to be judged, particularly by outsiders. The ‘culture of poverty’ thesis affronted this position and therefore is not credible. Disheartening, however, is that, while this debate persists, the poverty level is rising globally, leaving in some regions a whole nation to peril and governments under enormous debt burden. Thus, raising the poverty question even to another whole new dimension to include why societies or groups fail to achieve political and economic prosperity?

In grappling with these challenges, proponents of the ‘culture of poverty’ thesis once again turned to culture for insights. In this respect, Lawrence Harris et al. (2000) applied basic principles of the ‘culture of poverty’ thesis to examine empirically political and economic backwardness of societies/groups. They concluded that “culture matters.” Just like five decades ago, the critics reject the idea that peoples’ belief system, ideation processes, attitudes, with their actions or inactions do influence their capacity to prosper.

Even as the academia engage themselves in this debate; faced with rising levels of poverty, concerned political leaders around the world committed their states to various poverty reduction strategies designed to engender pro-poor growths and reduce poverty for their citizens. Similarly, international donor agencies and cosmopolitan leaders mobilized resources and influenced policies in support of this agenda (David Hulme and Andrew Shepherd, 2003). Their ultimate focus was among other things, to halve global poverty by 2015. There is abundant evidence to suggest that these efforts were remarkably successful, at least in China where in the last two decades “half a billion people were lifted out of poverty” (World Bank Poverty Report 2009:5); on the other hand, in Africa, the report is different. Despite implementing numerous poverty reduction
plans, spanning over four decades, Africa’s poor is increasing, their condition worsening. Consequently, they have been described as the poorest of the poor (The World Bank report 2001). One question frequently asked, at least among the academia is, if China could achieve relative economic prosperity within this era of proliferation in poverty eradication strategies, why not Africa?

It has been reported that, the problem with some of these poverty reduction strategies is that rather than recognize and factor in their design the cultural peculiarities of individuals and groups, they lump the poor together and treat them as “those who are not effectively integrated into the marked economy” (David Hulme and Andrew Shepherd, 2003:404). The result is that such strategies fall short of meeting the needs of the various types of the poor, for instance, those in Africa. In these places, in the absence of social safety nets, the poor are abandoned to their fate, having to device coping mechanism for their survival. In Northern Nigeria, the nation’s most economically backward region, for example, one such coping mechanism is to buy-in to the promises and radical ideologies of Islamic clerics for the necessities of life they offer—food, clothing and shelter. It is therefore not surprising that economic backwardness of the North is said to be one of the primary drivers of conflict in Nigeria and the main determinant of youth buy-in into radical extremism in the region (Danjubu 2013).

Situated in the west of Africa, endowed with diverse natural resources, home to over 170 million people, Nigeria, is the continent’s most populous nation and largest economy; nonetheless, her people are poor with more than 75 percent living in abject poverty. Though the history of poverty in Nigeria predates 1914 when the regions
hitherto administered independently by the British Colonial Lords were put together, 1960, her year of independence marks the watershed for this discuss. During this time, only about 15 percent of Nigerians were said to be poor, the figure increased by 28 percent in 1980, by 1996, the prevalence of poverty was 66 percent, translating into over 76.6 million people. This number rose to 70 percent in 2001 with an estimated 10 percent increase per three (3) years (for further studies on this issue see Segun Oshewolo 2010; T. G Apata et al., 2010; Chukwuma Soludo, 2007 and John Anyanwu, 2005).

This time too, a closer assessment of the incidence of poverty across the regions indicated significant disparity. In the 1980s for instance, researchers found that, while the Northwest, Northeast, and Northcentral recorded 38 percent, 36 percent, and 32 percent below poverty line respectively, in the Southeast, Southwest, and South-south, poverty increased only by 13 percent (Lloyd Ahamefule Amaghionyeodiwe 2009). Latest study reports a general increase in the poverty rate in Nigeria, with national averages at 54 percent. However, its rate of increment in the Northern region is very alarming. According to Chukwuma Soludo (2007), data on Nigeria shows an average of 72.2 percent incidence of poverty for Northeast region, 71.1 percent in the Northwest, and 67.0 percent in the Northcentral. On the contrary, the Southeast recorded an average of 26.6 percent, South-south 35.1 percent, and Southwest 43.1 percent. The above statistics shows that economic backwardness in the Northern region feeds into the overall Nigerian poverty.

The continued economic backwardness of the north is the focus of this study. It provides the opportunity to evaluate the extent to which culture can aid our understanding
of why individual and societies achieve or fail to achieve economic prosperity. The goal is to explore the assertions that culture ought to be considered seriously in the issue of why certain individuals and societies achieve economic prosperity while others do not. Furthermore, this thesis explores alternative explanation of why northern Nigerians have been less successful in creating economic prosperity as their Southern neighbors. Most importantly, this thesis aims to show that cultural factors may be key to explaining the poverty disparity between the North and the South; understanding this is also central to designing poverty alleviation programs aimed to build peace in Nigeria.

1.1. Statement of the problem

The devastating effects of poverty motivated scholars to ponder over its challenges. For Nigeria, most studies focused on analyzing the relationship between the utilization of political power and wealth creation and distribution; and how these forces influence the impoverishment of individuals, and groups within the country (See for instance Mohammed Sanni Abdulkadir in Mustapha C. Duze et al. 2008; D.O. Ajakaiye and V.A. Adeeeye 2003; and Fidelis Ogwumike 2003). Nigerian scholars avoided inquiries that relate to a cultural root of poverty partly because of its complexity and criticism, especially for a heterogeneous state like Nigeria, in which ethnicity is a volatile issue. Those who attempted considered it from the perspectives of national attitude geared towards boosting people's coping mechanism during poverty; espoused by the government, to placate bad governance (Edlyne Anugwom 2002). Given the multidimensionality of poverty, it is evident that socio-structural factors by themselves may not explain the economic backwardness of the Northern Nigeria; or the poverty
disparity between the autochthonous Northerners and Southerners, since these factors are constant for both groups. There is the need to examine the culture-poverty link among the Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria within the context of broader determinants of prosperity because their world-view (culture) which shapes their behavior appears to be the foremost factor that differentiates their economic progress from those of other constituent groups.

Studies related to the factors behind a sustained group poverty within a state system tends to approach the ways in which a given people create or fail to create economic success for themselves in one of the three ways: First, most studies treat group’s poverty mainly as dependent on the interrelationship between the political and the economic affairs of the state. These studies mostly analyze the production and distribution of power, and wealth within countries, and how these factors influence individual and groups' ability to create wealth (e.g. Gabriel Ngbea and Chukwuka Achunike 2014, and Gregory Jordan 2004). The second approach focuses on its structural underpinnings. Proponents of this school of thought argue that the root of most poverty lies in the structural and situational factors intrinsic to a nation’s economy and to many other numerous interconnected institutional environments that function to favor groups over others. These institutions often centered on class, gender, or race (see Gregory Jordan 2004) (for such studies see Amartya Sen 1997, 2000; Charles Tilly 1998, 2000, and 2003; and Sam Hickey and Andries du Toit 2007).

Globally, these two approaches have been employed to scrutinize the causes of poverty among a given social group within a state system. The findings are almost
uniformly consistent in demonstrating that groups/regions that are excluded from the political and/or economic life of a state; or are adversely incorporated into the world capitalist system, are often chronically poor (see for example David Mosse, 2007; Sam Hickey 2007; Andries du Toit 2007; and Bob Shenton and Bill Freund, 1978).

The third set of method investigates the root of poverty among individuals and groups within a state system by evaluating persons’ or group’s attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and underlying assumptions. Proponents of this school of thought—culture of poverty—claim that the attitudes, values and beliefs of people shape their behavior and (political and economic) progress (for this group, see Oscar Lewis 1959; Orlando Patterson 2000; Samuel Huntington, 2000; and Francis Fukuyama 2000).

Very few studies (e.g. Thomas Weisner 2000, Lucian Pye 2000, Lawrence Harrison 1985, Daniel Moynihan 1965, and Edward C. Banfield 1958) have explicitly tested whether ‘the culture of poverty theses has an explanatory value as claimed. Only a handful of these have exclusively been conducted on communities/states in Africa.

While the degree to which the culture of a given group of people can influence their ability to achieve economic prosperity remains an open question, given that Africa is one of the poorest continents, why this thesis is barely tested in the Sub-region begs for answers. Northern Nigeria, one of the major constituent of the region’s largest state that remains economically backward despite numerous development projects spanning over six decades presents a good case to test the culture of poverty thesis. The dearth of data on the explanatory advantages of the culture of poverty thesis, particularly for an ethnically diverse state like Nigeria is unfortunate because it is the type of evidence
interveners appear to be calling for to enable them successfully design and implement poverty eradication programs that could form the basis for peacebuilding interventions in the region.

1.2. Objectives and research questions

1.2.1 Objectives

This study aimed to evaluate the extent to which the culture of poverty thesis has explanatory values in helping to account for the case of persistent poverty in Northern Nigeria. To be able to accomplish above objective, this inquiry will explore the hypothesis that: Nations or societies are poor in part because their cultural value system—those traits they emphasize and those they don’t—tends to reward behaviors that inhibit economic prosperity.

Research Questions:

a. To what extent does the culture of poverty thesis advance our understanding of some of the underlying factors of chronic poverty in Northern Nigeria?

b. What has the Southern region done by contrast to the North that helped them transcend persistent poverty?

1.2.2. Purpose Statement

This inquiry attempts to contribute to the knowledge base of poverty, and conflict by exploring the explanatory potentials of the culture of poverty thesis using the case of Northern Nigeria. This study presents the case of Northern Nigeria, where apparent widespread poverty is feeding into conflict. It explored how the culture of the people of this region affects the degree to which, and the ways in which they accomplish or fail to
achieve economic prosperity. As such, it is not about the group Boko Haram. As noted earlier, a mono-causal explanation of poverty is deceptive. Nevertheless, my interest is in exploring the relevance of culture of poverty thesis using a case study—Northern Nigeria. I do not claim to explain it all here. If accomplished, it could be a stepping stone for further research on the link between poverty and conflict, an issue of debate in the field of conflict analysis and resolution, especially since the end of the cold war.

1.3. **Theoretical discourse**

This inquiry builds upon Oscar Lewis’ (1959) ‘culture of poverty’ thesis. The culture of poverty thesis is a product of Lewis’ decades of interest in the chronically poor and study of peasant communities in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and India; published in three volumes—Five Families: Mexican Case Study in the Culture of Poverty (1959), La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty (1965), and The Children of Sanchez: An Autobiography of a Mexican Family (1961). In these volumes, Lewis created the expression “culture of poverty” thesis, applied it to explain distinct, phenomenal, common traits he had discovered among the poor, which he believed “transcends regional, rural-urban, and even national boundaries” (Oscar Lewis 1965: xliii). This theory understands “poverty and its associated traits as a culture or, more accurately, as a subculture with its own structure and rationale, as a way of life which is passed down from generation to generation along family lines” (Oscar Lewis 1959: xliii).

Oscar Lewis operationalized the concept of a culture of poverty and represented it with about 70 apparent variables. He wrote:

People with a culture of poverty produce very little wealth and receive very little in return. They have a low level of literacy and education. Usually, they make very
little use of the banks and hospitals. They lack or at best possess minimal organizational capacity and rarely organize beyond the levels of nuclear and extended family. Furthermore, a strong manifestation of the culture of poverty is the absence of childhood as a specially prolonged and protected stage in the life cycle, early initiation into sex, a relatively high incidence of the abandonment of wives and children. Finally, the people in the culture of poverty have a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependency, of not belonging, and of inferiority. They possess a strong present-time orientation, with relatively little ability to defer gratification and to plan for the future, a sense of resignation and fatalism, with a widespread belief in male superiority, and a high tolerance for psychological pathology of all sorts. People with a culture of poverty are provincial and locally oriented and have very little sense of history. They know only their own troubles, their own local conditions, their own neighborhood, their own way of life. Usually, they do not have the knowledge, the vision or the ideology to see the similarities between their problems and those of their counterparts elsewhere in the world (Oscar Lewis 1959: xlv-xlsviii).

Lewis contend that, the poor develop the sub-culture of poverty as an adaptation and reaction to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated, capitalist society; and that the culture tends to perpetuate itself from one generation to another even long after the institutions, structures, and situations that gave rise to it had ceased. The culture of poverty is transferred from grandparents; parents to their offspring such that, by the time slum children are age six or seven they have typically internalized the essential values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically prepared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increasing opportunities likely to occur in their lifetime (Oscar Lewis 1956).

1.4. Methodology

To be able to address the research questions, the researcher employed a qualitative exploratory design with an in-depth interview in Nigeria and literature review. Here, the researcher utilized a purposive sampling method which centers on intensity sampling (Patton 2001 cited in Ahma Mohammapur et al. 2012). Purposive intensity
sampling method emphasizes the selection of participants who possess intensive experiential knowledge of and with the phenomena in question, in this case, poverty—its prevalence and disparity in Nigeria and among the people of northern extraction. Research designed in this format has key advantages: First, it allows the subjects to provide their understanding of the topic and views in a well reflective and interpretative manner. In this inquiry, the participants demonstrated detailed comprehension of the Nigerian society vis-à-vis poverty, its root causes, and disparity among the constituent groups. Second, it avails the investigator the opportunity to gain a holistic comprehension of the concept(s) and rich data that makes comprehensive analysis possible. This inquiry gathered evidence of the determinants of poverty among Northern Nigerians through a combination of empirical research and desk review. The use of field data collection through interviews availed the researcher an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the perceptions and understanding of Nigerians towards poverty in the country and its disparity between the regions.

1.4.1. Access to the field

It is imperative to state herein that the researcher is a Nigerian with a good knowledge of the country. Thus, getting access to the area of study posed a limited challenge, though there was an ongoing crisis (Boko Haram attacks) in the Northeast of the country at the time. Furthermore, the location for this inquiry—Abuja, Northcentral—was carefully chosen in some measure to eliminate potential challenges of field accessibility. Given the above, the investigator traveled to and spent two months (April 10-May 16, 2015) in Abuja.
1.4.2. Qualitative design: A theme analysis approach and the usage of case study

In the social science tradition, there are three approaches to research—qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (see John Creswell 2014). According to Creswell (2014), these approaches are neither discrete nor are qualitative and quantitative methods dichotomous or polar oppositions. Rather, they are different ends of a continuum, while the mixed method is the middle ground. While the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research concerns the use of words rather than numbers, or open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions) instead of close-ended questions (quantitative hypothesis), the clearest distinction between them is in:

The basic philosophical assumptions researchers bring to the study, the type of research strategies used in the research (e.g., quantitative experiments or qualitative case studies), and the specific methods employed in conducting these strategies (e.g., collecting data quantitatively on instruments versus collecting qualitative data through observing a setting) (John Creswell 2014: 4).

Simply put, qualitative approach seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of meaning persons or group ascribe to social problems and to interpret them, while the quantitative method examines a relationship between variables, often statistically (John Creswell 2014). In this study, the qualitative method is utilized. Here, the researcher relied on a desk review of documentary sources such as academic literature, conference proceedings, media reports available in newspapers, magazines, audio and videotapes, government reports; and primary research which involved the conduct of interviews. Furthermore, on-line resources were accessed and utilized for this inquiry.
Every study begins with an idea. Scholars then relate Ideas to theories in one of the two ways: First, the deductive approach sometimes referred to as the research-before-theory model. In this method, the theory provides the orienting lens or perspective for the researcher; shapes the type of questions s/he asks and informs the strategy for data collection and analysis. The second is the inductive model. In this approach, the researcher builds his inquiry from the data and develops it into broad teams or generalized theory (see John Creswell 2014; and Ingrid Skogseth and Karianne Kasi 2014). The grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1960s is often inductive in nature. Here the researcher begins with the idea, and then goes to gather data from participants, and then progresses to sort the information collected into categories or themes. He then develops these themes into theories, comprehensive patterns, and generalizations; these are then compared with the researcher’s (field) experience or existing theory the researcher may have started with (John Creswell 2014).

Similarly, this study began with an idea, the research objective(s) turned out differently, however. The eventual outcome of this inquiry is in part because as the survey deepened, new knowledge gained, the researcher realized that the initial idea was too broad and over ambitious. Finally, the researcher used a qualitative for this study because he aimed to gain an in-depth knowledge of perception of Nigerians on poverty, its causes, and the disparity between the northern and southern region.

1.4.3. Sampling strategy

Once in the field, the researcher used a snowball sampling technique to select the subjects. This method involves identifying one participant with sound knowledge of the
concepts and issues that the research deals with; that person would then refer the researcher to another potential participant he feels would also be valuable to the study. That goes on and on in a ‘snowball’ manner (Creswell 2014). Issues of poverty are both sensitive and complex such that though most people hear about it, and in the case of Nigeria over 70 percent of its population are considered poor; not many of these could grasp its roots, prevalence, and disparity among the regions. Thus, samples for this inquiry were carefully designed to be persons expected to have acquired considerable knowledge and a good understanding of the issues that this inquiry deals with; are twenty years or older, have obtained 14 years of education at least, and have lived in Nigeria for ten years or more. Note that these criteria do not necessarily qualify these subjects to be non-poor as most of them are civil servants, graduate students, or both. A few of them are private small scale entrepreneurs.

The researcher began by visiting an old schoolmate in his office at the National Library Abuja. The schoolmate agreed to participate in the study, he also referred the researcher to his colleagues. Some of whom agreed to partake. Likewise, the author was directed to another scholar at the University of Abuja who had conducted a similar study. The meeting with this professor snowballed into meeting some of his students and colleagues who participated in the inquiry too. The researcher also met and interviewed a few young entrepreneurs/traders, who recently graduated from college but chose to be self-employed. These subjects cut across the ethnic, religious, regional, and gender divide in Nigeria.
1.4.4. The interview process

Within the social science, there are three distinct ways to conduct interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. For this study, the researcher utilized an unstructured, open-ended key informant interview (KII). This method gave the investigator room to be flexible and the interviewee the latitude to express himself or herself freely. A significant advantage is that the process leads to natural conversation. Each interview began with a presentation of a one-page summary of the research objectives and assumptions to the respondent; followed by an elaborate explanation by the researcher, as most of the respondents asked for it. Satisfied that the intended subject understands the purpose of the research, the investigator then administered the consent form to the person. When this is done, the interview follows immediately, or one to two days later in a few cases.

The interview consisted of seven (7) open-ended questions, oriented towards getting detailed knowledge about the issues and questions central to this research. The first of these sets of question seeks to evaluate the respondent’s understanding of the concept of poverty in general and in the context of Nigeria as well as its disparity among the constituent groups. Most of these interviews took place in the offices of these interviews; a few others were carried out in the ordinary reading room of a university college. Each session was audio recorded with a tape recorder. At the end of each session, data collected is immediately transferred to a file in the investigator’s personal laptop; the tape is then wiped clean, ready for another session. An important aspect of the interview process worthy of note here is that the researcher applied the “uncomfortable silences”
technique. This method emphasizes a little break between questions, rather than hurry to the next. In some cases, this silence does urge the respondent to elaborate (Ingrid Kvinge Skogseth and Karianne Kåsin 2014). Given the fact that the researcher is experienced in this technique, he employed it frequently throughout the interview process.

Initially, the design of this inquiry was to interview fifty participants. Nonetheless, the investigator had to stop the interview process when it reached a theoretical saturation point. “Theoretical saturation is a criterion for determining the number of informants interviewed to fully answer the research questions. When no new information is produced, data saturation is reached” (Ahmad Mohammadpur et al., 2012:5).

1.4.5. Observation

A key advantage of the interview process is that it gives the investigator the opportunity to observe the countenance and body language of the respondent. This body movement says a lot regarding the reliability of the verbal response offered by the interviewee. All through the interview process, the investigator observed in detail body movements and eye expressions of the respondents. He also took (written) notes and remarks in some unique instances. These notes were later used to compare and support or reject the participant’s position during the analysis.

For example, while speaking about the poverty disparity between the North and South, one respondent shook his head vehemently. This kind of expression adds a lot to enrich the data collected during the field work.
1.4.6. Challenges in the field

A major challenge the researcher faced is related to the sensitivity of issues of poverty. In Nigeria, among the various constituent groups, poverty is often culturally and relatively contextualized. Moreover, given the fact that Nigeria is a mosaic of multi-ethnic groups with marked cultural differences, the understanding of economic backwardness, and its disparity among these groups are often mixed with emotion, and frequently triggers conflict each time there is a public debate on poverty. Therefore, out of fear, some people declined the invitation to participate in the research. Others were skeptical about the research. This category thought that it was one of the politicking processes. That is, that the research is sponsored by a political group whose interest is unclear to them. For that reason, they refused to participate.

Being a Nigerian, conversant with these challenges skilled in how to navigate the identity terrain; the researcher was able to build on his experience and social networks to identify and bring people to participate in the study.

1.3.7. Ethics

Ethical issues which refer to the protection of the subjects and communities from harm are always at the center of every research. The Human Subject Review Board of the United States of America mandated investigators to ensure that the rights and privileges of participants in their study, as well as their communities are protected. Also, to make sure that their inquiry will not pose threats of any form to the subjects and their communities. The “informed consent” which demands that the researcher informs the subjects of their rights as interviewees, as well as the purpose and details of the research,
is one form of this obligation. During the interview processes, the investigator explained
the usage of the data, its storage, and the confidentiality of their response plus their
anonymity to the subjects. He also stressed the fact that the respondent has the right to
quit at any stage of the process should s/he deem it necessary. It is important to state
herein that though the investigator had prepared an informed consent form for
participants to sign, experience in the field is such that people are reluctant to signing
documents in Nigeria. They often view it as an entrapment. Most the subjects declined to
sign the consent forms, though they read and understood it. They gave their consent
verbally, however.

Besides, the investigator is a Nigerian from the region or ethnic group that has the
least prevalence of poverty, erroneously; some assumed that his choice and design of the
study is inherently biased. In the field for example, at some points, the researcher was
asked what his take in this inquiry is. Few people were bold to say that a political group
sponsored the researcher for campaign purposes; thus, it has no significant utility.
However, it is imperative to state herein that, rather than political, economic
backwardness and its consequences are both moral and intellectual. The researcher
explained his role as purely academic, motivated by the desire to understand in a broad
perspective, chronic poverty among the people of Northern extraction and the best
intervention strategy capable of ensuring lasting peace in the region and Nigeria in
general.
1.4.8. Data Analysis

When the interview process was over, the researcher then began to transcribe the data. Here, the record of each respondent was played and meticulously transferred, word-for-word into a written form. The researcher used an open bracket—( )—to represent incomplete expressions, and where statements appear unclear. After a successful transcription, the investigator listened to these tapes again while examining the transcript.

When transcription was over, the coding process followed. To begin with, to permit effective coding, the researcher printed multiple copies (five or more) of the transcript. When coding, the researcher employed the “thematic analysis to analyze and interpret the data. Thematic analysis refers to using analytical induction to classify data in concepts and categories as these are found in the data and emerge through an interpretative process. In other words, themes come from the data and are supported by the data” (Ahmad Mohammadpur et al., 2012:5). This process was conducted in stages. First, the researcher focused on identifying emerging themes from the data. Thus, he read the transcripts repeatedly and used color highlighters to mark core phrases and ideas used by each respondent and those apparent from his/her body movement noted during the interview to indicate emphasis.

Second, the researcher then compared the emerging phrases and ideas among the responses of the participants and listed these ideas as superordinate themes/categories. Thirty-one (31) boxes were made and labeled according to these new broad superordinate categories. At this point, the color-coded transcripts were then cut piece by piece and were then sorted out and placed in the boxes according to their categories. These were
further reviewed and decomposed to produce a seven-item theme which were then examined vis-à-vis the theoretical foundation of this study; and explained in details with evidences from the literature, as well as the researcher’s fieldwork experience (RFW), with the intention to see how they support the theories used in this study or not.

1.4.9 The Core Objective

After coding and themes emerged, the researcher then related those themes to the theories that form the basis of this study. Here, the aim is to see how the emerging themes support or fail to support the theories. A deeper interpretation and analysis of the emerging themes, contrasted with the theory would show us how much explanatory value it has. Also, it will inform our conclusion as to whether cultural variables are at the root of poverty in Northern Nigeria.
2.0 Introduction

In chapter one, we introduce the themes and the major concepts that are central to this inquiry. This chapter takes a critical look at these concepts—inequality, poverty, violent extremism, and culture of poverty. It begins by providing a concise and comprehensive meaning more so as they apply to, and are used in this study. Furthermore, we engage available and relevant literature with the aim to discover various positions of scholars regarding these concepts in the past. These will guide us as we navigate this terrain. Finally, it provides the theoretical framework upon which we build our inquiry.

2.1. Conceptual discourse

Inequality, poverty, violent extremism, and culture of poverty constitute the key concepts in this inquiry. It is imperative at this juncture that we conceptualize them as they would apply to this study. It is to them we now turn.

2.1.1 Inequality

Poverty and inequality in societies have attracted the attention of scholars for some time now. While inequality has been a topic of great focus of researchers, particularly sociologists, not many of them have bothered to specify carefully what this concept means to them (Paul D Allison 1978).
Though Atkinson (1970) is credited with pioneering the studies on economic inequalities (Desai 1991), Peter Blau was among the first scholars to specify its meaning. He conceptualized inequality as “the average differences in status between any two pairs relative to the average status” (Peter Blau 1977b; cited in Allison, 1978:866). Similarly, Anthony Atkinson views inequality as “the distribution of annual disposable income among households with total household income being adjusted for household size and/or composition and each household being counted as many times as there are individuals” (2003:4).

Conceptualizing inequality vis-à-vis income distribution misses the point and often tends to equate income inequality to economic disparity. In consequence, income distribution-focused definition of inequality has been criticized for being narrow gauged, excludes notions of economic inequality, biased, and inadequate (Amartya Sen, 1997), and failed to address salient issues of inequality such as inequality of what, among whom, moreover, measured how? (Atkinson 2003). Therefore, Amartya Sen (1997) makes a case for greater attention to economic inequality in an appropriate broad sense. He, therefore, defines inequalities as the differences in the level of freedom one enjoys to doing things that s/he values doing, and achieving a state of being that s/he has reason to desire (Sen 1997). In another instance, Charles Tilly (2001) views inequality as a relation between persons or sets of individuals in which interaction generates greater advantages for one than for another (e.g. a warlord receives tribute from many local chiefs, who receive intermittent protection from exactions from rivalry warlords).
While above definitions illuminate our perception of social inequality in general, they center mainly on inequalities between individuals, however. So, they are inadequate for understanding the core interest of this study—inter-group and intra-group poverty disparity and conflict in Nigeria. To bridge this gap, Frances Stewart (2008) decomposed inequality into two categories: horizontal and vertical. While vertical inequalities refer to inequalities among individuals, “horizontal inequalities are defined as inequalities between culturally defined groups, or groups with shared identities in political opportunities, social access, economic assets, employment and income” (Frances Stewart 2008:12). This definition addresses the primary focus of this study and is herein applied.

2.1.2 Poverty:

Within the academia, there are four contending paradigms of conceptualizing and measuring poverty: the monetary approach, the capabilities approach, social exclusion, and the participatory approach (Caterina Ruggeri Laderchi et al, 2003). The above suggests that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. Given the multidimensionality of poverty, therefore, a concise and universally accepted definition is elusive. Moreover, Meghnad Desai and Anup Shah (1988) warned that defining poverty poses two related questions:

Do we mean by poverty some absolute state of existence at or below subsistence, visible to the naked eye or do we mean a state where some members of a community are relatively worse off? If the former, what determines the shopping list of minimum subsistence needs that must be met which will give us the cut-off point or the poverty line? If the latter, is there any way to avoid sinking into a morass of relativity and end up by defining poor in terms of subjective/ideological/political criteria? (Meghnad Desai and Anup Shah; 1988: 505).
So, to avoid the pitfalls warned about above, a few definitions herein would suffice.

From the monetary approach, Peter Townsend deems a family to be in poverty “if the joint income of the members, supposing it were all available and wisely spent, would not suffice to purchase for them the necessaries of life” (Peter Townsend 1954:133). Later, Peter Townsend expanded his definition of poverty to include societies. In this case, “individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged, or approved, in the societies to which they belong” (Peter Townsend 1979:31 cited in Pasi Moisio; 2004: 704). Likewise, poverty has been defined as lack of minimum standard of living, which entails the want of basic needs and services of life, including food, clothing, basic health care, education, and shelter Linderfield (1973), Haralamos (1980), and Giddens (1981) (see Duze 2013).

Though, the above definitions present various views of poverty, Amartyr Sen’s (1993) perception of economic backwardness from the capability approach appears more holistic and is herein applied. According to him, poverty is the “deprivation or failure to achieve certain minimal basic capabilities, where basic capabilities are the ability to satisfy certain crucially important functionings (human and civil rights, education, good health, and income) up to certain minimally adequate level” (Sen Amartyr 1993: 41).
2.1.3. Violent Extremism:

Due to the multiplicity of actors involved in the field of conflict resolution—scholarship/academic, government, security institutions, and military—the terms terrorism, political violence, radicalization, and Violent extremism have been used interchangeably (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). In this inquiry, ‘violent extremism’ would be adopted, however.

The concept of violent extremism came into the conflict resolution lexicon through the Australian National Counter-Terrorism Committee Framework in 2004. Again, due to the multiplicity of usage among various actors, “the term violent extremism means different things in different contexts” (Georgia Homes, 2013: 2; see also Alex P. Schmid, 2013). Moreover, while ‘counter violent extremism’ feature regularly in literature, “no actual definition of what ‘violent extremism’ constitutes is provided” (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011, cited in Alex P. Schmid, 2013:11). In their usage, The Australian National Counter-Terrorism Committee Framework 2014 defines violent extremism as “a willingness to use or support the use of violence to further particular beliefs, including those of political, social, or ideological nature” (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011:9). Similarly, violent extremism is defined as “the demonstration of unacceptable behavior by using any means or medium to express views which foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs—including those which provoke violence (terrorist or criminal) based on ideological, political, or religious beliefs and foster hatred that leads to violence” (British Crown Prosecution Service, cited in Schmid, 2013:11).
By taking a historical, political, and thematic perspective in their conceptualization of violent extremists and extremism, Shchmid (2013), and Manus Midlarsky (2011) made the most meaningful contribution to the definition of the term, particularly as it relates to this study. “In terms of historical precedents (e.g. Fascism, Communism, Islamism), extremists can be characterized as political actors who tend to disregard the rule of law, and reject pluralism in society” (Schmid, 2013:8). Thus, “Political/violent extremism is defined as:

The will to power by a social movement in the service of a political program typically at variance with that supported by existing state authorities, and for which individual liberties are to be curtailed in the name of collective goals, including the mass murder of those who would actually or potentially disagree with that program. Restrictions on individual freedom in the interests of the collectivity and the willingness to kill massively are central to this definition” (Manus Midlarsky, 2011, cited in Shchmid 3013:8-9).

Above definition applies to this inquiry.

2.1.4. Culture of Poverty

From his observation of the five Mexican families, Oscar Lewis (1959) enumerated about 70 traits that characterize the poor, sustain trans-generational transfer of poverty, and embodies the culture of poverty. The culture of poverty “is the modus operandi of the chronically poor that, when followed, produces poverty. It is the system of beliefs of the chronically poor—comprised of their attitudes, habits, customs, traditions, time orientation, and day-to-day actions” (Jeremi Brad Brewer (2012:5). It is also, a:

Design for living that is passed on from one generation to the next. Individuals feel marginalized, helpless, and inferior, and adopt an attitude of living for the present. They are fatalistic. Families are characterized by high divorce rates, with mothers and children abandoned; they become matrifocal families headed by women.
People adopting this culture of poverty do not participate in community life or join political parties; they make little use of banks, hospitals and the likes (Oscar Lewis 1965: xviii).

2.2. **Review of literature**

2.2.1 **Conflict**

Social conflict is as old as human history (Ho-Won Jeong, 2008), its dynamics, process and solution have been a subject of inquiry among early thinkers—Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hume, and Rousseau. Conflict is defined as “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources” (Boulding 1962:5 cited in Ho Won Jeong 2008:5). Efforts at understanding the causes and dynamics of social conflict have yielded various typologies. One such typology is the correlate of War (COW) which focuses on inter-state related wars. Within this approach, conflict is defined as “involving at least one member of interstate system on each side of the war, resulting in a total of 1,000 battle-deaths per year” (Singer and Small, 1972:381-2; cited in Oliver Ramsbotham et al., 2008:56). Another classification, the AKUF work group perceives conflict as “a result of the new forms of production, monetarization of the economy and the resulting dissolution of traditional forms of social integrations” (Wallenstein, 2002b; cited in Oliver Ramsbotham et al., 2008: 57).

Ramsbothan et al (2008) decomposed various typologies (as they are numerous) into three categories: ‘Non-interstate conflict’ which refers to all forms of non-classic wars between two states; ‘factional conflicts’ that covers military coups d’état, brigandage, intra-elite power struggles, criminality and warlordism, aimed to usurp power, seize, or retain state power for economic gains; and ‘revolutionary/ideology
conflicts’ often geared towards changing the nature of government in a state (Ramsbotham et al, 2008). Despite these classifications, a clear insight on the determinants of conflict remains a challenge due in part to the multivariate factors; one of which is poverty.

- Poverty-conflict nexus

Although, the intersection between poverty and conflict has been the focus of many inquiries, how they influence each other is yet to be clearly understood. In some ways, scholars attribute this gap to the multi-causal nature of post-World War II conflicts, which involves the interplay of a range of factors including economic, both at the short and long term. Thus, the challenge here lies in isolating and evaluating the various risk factors. Also, it requires us to ask in-depth questions which, according to Jonathan Goodhand, relate to whether “poverty is a permissive or causal factor? Is it a structural cause, a trigger or an accelerator of violent conflict?” (2001:24). These challenging questions sharply polarize scholars along two axes.

On the one end of the spectrum are those who contend the utility of poverty as a causal factor of violent conflict. Leading this pack is Paul Collier, a mainstream economist. In an inquiry designed to explain the association between economic variables and wars, Collier and Hoeffler (1996) reported that ‘income per capita, natural resource endowment, inequality, and ethnolinguistic fragmentation’ are the major risk factors for a civil war occurrence (cited in Cramer, 2003: 399). They concluded that rather than cause civil wars, (greater) inequality “significantly reduces the risk and duration of war” (Cramer, 2003, 399).
From their regression analysis, which showed an inverse relationship between inequality and conflict, Collier and Hoeffler (1996) argue that, a high degree of inequality in a state is indicative of the existence of dominant elite who for the sake of their attachment to the status quo, and desire to protect it, would permit the government to tax them temporarily to raise funds to execute a war. Knowing this fact would deter potential rebels because, they [potential insurgents] would figure out that the government would have greater capacity to quell any aggression from any quarter. Thus, inequality is not good for conflict (Cramer 2003). Later, Paul Collier (2000a) applied the same framework in his study. He concluded that greed not grievance is at the root of civil wars. According to him, “it is the feasibility of predation, which determines the risk of conflict. ... rebellion is motivated by greed so that it occurs when rebels can do well out of war” (Collier 2000a, cited in Goodhand 2001:26).

Collier and Hoeffler’s assumption that most governments depend on taxation for revenue appears over simplistic. Resource rich nations, particularly the developing ones like Nigeria rely rather on resource rents—crude oil. Consequently, the focus of political elites is often on the continued flow of the resources, and rents. Studies, as well as empirical evidence shows that successive Nigerian government, particularly the military regimes collaborated more with foreign governments and oil multinational corporations in the security and governance of the oil sector, and Nigeria at large, rather than with the dominant elites. For example, the role of SHEL BP in the execution of the human and environmental rights activist Ken Saro-Wi Wa, and his twelve comrades in 1994 corroborates this fact. Also, Collier and Hoeffler’s use of the term ‘inequality’ was only
in the vertical sense (inequality among all individuals or households in society), in this case between the elites and the poor. They ignored inter-group poverty disparity which fuels grievance and animosity in a multiethnic state like Nigeria. Such grievances when combined with ethnic politics as often witnessed, has been identified as part of the cause of conflict in Nigeria (for further studies on this see Eghosa Osaghae and Rotimi Suberu 2005).

Collier’s conclusion of greed as the driving factor for rebellion may not explain the situation in northern Nigeria in which insurgent leaders and groups like the Maitatsine 1980-1986, Gumi sect 1988-1992 among others coveted no natural resource, nor territory, yet exploited chronic poverty in the region (see N. Danjibo 2014). Above all, their conclusion that knowing that government has a greater capacity to finance a military campaign against them would deter prospective rebel groups may not explain why, until recently, insurgent groups with simple weapons like bows, arrows, matches, and club sticks arise in northern Nigeria recurrently. Goodhand’s conclusion that “the ‘greed’ argument is persuasive, but to argue that conflict is only about greed is wrong-headed and has dangerous policy implications” (2001: 27) as a major critique of the greed thesis suffices.

In their study of conflicts in Africa, Fearon and Laitin (2003) relied on “series of individual-level statistical proxies, including the Gini coefficient” (Cederman et al., 2011: 480). Their study yielded no evidence that economic inequality increases the risk of conflict. In another inquiry, Laitin (2007) summed up their conclusion that:
Ethnic grievances are commonly felt and latent; the factors that make these grievances vital and manifest differentiate the violent from the non-violent cases. Ex-ante measures of grievance levels are not good predictors of the transformation of latent grievances into manifest ones. And it is the factors that turn latent grievances into violent action that should be considered as explanatory for that violence (Cederman et al., 2011:480).

Like Collier and Hoeffler, their [Fearon and laitin] reliance on individual-level statistical data to assess inter-group phenomenon appears inherently defective. It is not surprising that their study yielded no result. Even so, individual-level (vertical inequality) could lead to in-group conflict. The French Revolution (1789); the Habe (mass public of the Hausa-Fulani) rebellion frequent in Hausaland: Southern Kano after 1850, in the Katsina city under the Emirship of Abubakar, 1887-1905 (Smith 1964; in Ejiogu, 2005), attests to this.

At the other end of the divide are scholars (Stewart, 2008; Auvinen & Nafziger 1999; Alesina & Perotti 1996; and Booth, 1991) who espouse that inequality and poverty, particularly when they coincide with ethnic, religious, regional, and language boundaries add up to growing grievances, likely to explode to conflict if triggered by external shocks (Goodhand 2001). This poverty-conflict link is found in two closely related models—frustration-aggression theory and relative deprivation theory. According to Dollard et al. (1939), “the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression” (cited in Draman 2003:9). Similarly, relative deprivation thesis
emphasizes that sometimes a group perceives itself deprived relative to other groups. This feeling of deprivation, anchored on economic disparity eventually creates inter-group hostility which ultimately culminates into violent conflicts.

With regards to empirical studies on the poverty-conflict nexus, there exist rich literature of empirical inquiries that have openly tested the role of intergroup poverty disparity in fueling ethnic/identity conflict and how in-group feelings of frustration have been mobilized for aggression and attacks against the perceived oppressor – the out-group. Among this category, Jonathan Goodhand’s (2000) report on an inquiry designed to investigate how poverty and conflict interact and influence each other stands out. He concluded that the core underlying factor of the conflict was chronic poverty. In the Midwest and West of Nepal the epicenter of the conflict, Goodhand observed that the prevalence of poverty is 2.6 percent higher than the national average, and/or urban areas. Furthermore, chronic poverty in the region is associated with various forms of social exclusion including caste, ethnicity, and gender. Over time, this prolonged poverty situation and deprivation consequent upon exclusion, generated feelings of frustration among the locals. Eventually, the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) exploited the feelings of frustration to cause conflict.

Goodhand’s observation and conclusion in Nepal are similar to the situation in Nigeria in which poverty level in the north is more than 30 percent higher than the national average, and 42 percent higher than the south. It differs markedly, however. First, southern migrants residing in the north create so much wealth for themselves within the same locality, while their neighbors live in relative poverty. Second, southern
migrants, rather than the northerners are subjects of social exclusion by the northerization policies of successive northern regimes beginning with Tafawa Balewa in 1964. Thus, much as it is plausible in explaining poverty-conflict nexus, its merit in the case of Nigeria has some shortfalls.

Likewise, Copson (1991) focused on the poverty disparity between the North and South Sudan, the role it played or otherwise in the country’s civil war. His inquiry revealed that central to the conflict are two factors: First, the disparity in the poverty levels between the regions (North and South), with sustained poverty in the South. Second, the people of the South felt marginalized, exploited, and abandoned. A common belief among the people of Southern Sudan is that the central government based in the North (Khartoum) is exploiting their resources without any meaningful return to their region. These two provided both the trigger and the support for the conflict in 1983 (cited in Draman, 2003). He, therefore, argued that people join rebel groups because they hope to obtain food, shelter, clothing, and perhaps opportunity for recognition, all of which are conspicuously not available to them in the farming villages, and/or city slums. Copson (1991) concluded that there exists a very high link between poverty and conflict.

Copson’s report mirrors the situation in northern Nigeria, where most youths and adults are chronically poor and lack necessities of life. Therefore, giving the absence of any social welfare or safety nets, they fall prey to radical Islamic clerics who woo them with shelter, food, and clothing in their mosques. Nonetheless, that would not explain why northern Christians rarely get involved in extremism. Moreover, political power and governance have been dominated by the people of the north since Nigeria’s independence.
in 1960; while the region has received more funding from the federal allocation than the South all these years (see Ehiemika Ifidon, 1998). Thus, a major question would be why then is the region so poor? What accounts for the sustained economic inequality between the regions? Also, how does this poverty disparity play into conflict in the region and Nigeria in general?

2.2.2 Inequality

Some scholars have alluded to the role of inequality—concept closely associated with issues of power and wealth distribution in society—in generating and sustaining social conflict (Davies 1962, Gurr 1970, Hogg and Abraham 1980). Meghnad Desai (1991), believes that, academic discuss on economic inequality began with Atkinson in 1970. Inequality was understood and measured for the most part as income distribution within a given society. For instance, Atkinson (1970) “assessed inequality of incomes by bringing in an overall social objective function and measured inequality of an income distribution through the social loss (in terms of equivalent income) from that distribution in comparison with a corresponding equal distribution” (Sen, 1997:386). That became the dominant pattern in (economic) literature in its first twenty (20) years. Thus, for Sen (1997), the assumption is always that someone is studying income distribution if he says he is working on economic inequality.

The inherent defect of this approach is that it takes individuals to be asymmetrical and pays no attention to what each person gets out of their incomes and other circumstances such as power (Sen 1979). Thus, its narrow focus attracted much criticism. However, Sen’s 1973 contribution to the measurement of poverty opened a new angle to
the inequality debate. Desai believes that, “Atkinson’s perspective and Sen’s contribution “together led to the development of a new welfare economics where the emphasis is on the rigorous measurement of macro poverty measures and welfare functions disguised as inequality measures” (1991:152).

Same decade, Political scientists (Gurr 1970 and Davies 1962) had begun to theorize about the role of inequality in conflicts. In what is now known as ‘relative deprivation theory,’ Gurr (1970) categorized most of the collective conflict as people’s reaction to frustrations arising from unsatisfied aspirations often related to material happiness (Cederman et al. 2011). Relative deprivation theorists assert that individuals who are frustrated with their immediate social situation are likely to trigger conflict. In its early stage, relative deprivation theory/theorists did “not focus explicitly on interpersonal or intergroup wealth comparisons” (Cederman et al. 2011: 479). From 1980s other scholars like Acmoglu and Robinson (2005), Muller (1985), and Muller and Seligson (1987), Ted Gurr (1993) adopted a structural perspective and directly linked various forms of inequalities clearly to conflicts (Cederman et al. 2011). In the early 1990s, Ted Gurr’s study of ethnic minorities in conflicts led him to conclude that ethnic conflicts correlate indirectly with communal conflict through ethnic mobilization (See Cederman 2011).

However, the contemporary field of civil war studies is pioneered and dominated by researchers from the economic discipline (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, Fearon and Laitin 2003, Snyder and Tilly 1972, Tilly 1978); whose world view of inequality is narrowed on economic. Moreover, an economic perception of inequality often leads to an
income distribution and disparity based measurements, which “gives a very inadequate and biased view of inequalities” (Sen 1997:384-385). The rejection of the inequality-poverty nexus mostly by scholars from the economic discipline is not unconnected to the above. For Collier and Hoeffler (2004), for example, the ubiquity of frustration globally robs relative deprivation its credibility.

Two factors account for the raging controversy on the inequality-conflict link within the academia. First, the inappropriate conceptualization of inequality that focuses on the individual level explanation of disparity, which obscures the effects of “popular perception of, and anxieties over differences in cultural status inequalities” (Amim Langer and Graham Brown, 2008:42) in group mobilization. Second, the burden of reducing inequality to such a measurable indicator like the Gini coefficient to be able to determine its relationship with conflict. In this intellectual gridlock, it is pivotal to ask: How do we measure inequality? What are the dimensions? How does it originate? Why does it persist? Moreover, how and when does it lead to conflict?

To address these concerns, Frances Stewart, et al (2008) decomposed inequality into ‘Vertical Inequalities’ defined as the disparity among all individuals or households in a society; and ‘Horizontal Inequalities’ conceptualized as “inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups or groups with shared identities” (Stewart 2008:3). Stewart et al. (2008) state that it is the horizontal aspect of inequality (hereafter HI) that bears the direct link to conflict.
• Horizontal Inequality

To facilitate simplification and understanding of how HIs operate, interact, and relate to conflict, Stewart (2008) further decomposed HIs into four categories: Economic aspects; Political participation; Social aspects; and cultural status. Each of which possesses various elements. For instance, HIs in political participation may be witnessed in the manner ministerial appointment is shared in a given country. In some cases, this may involve which ethnic/cultural group(s) gets a higher number of appointment, or the Juicy positions, such as minister of finance, or petroleum as in the case of Nigeria. It could also boil down to whom and/or which ethnic group gets lucrative employments in the federal civil service, or drafted and promoted in the military.

Similarly, HIs in the economic aspects involves “access to and ownership of assets, including lands, financial, livestock, and human and social capitals; employment opportunities and income” (Stewart 2008:13). Within the social aspects of HIs include access to various services including (sound and qualitative) education, health, sanitation, housing; and human outcome indicators such as measures of good health, quality education. Lastly, dimensions of HIs in the cultural status encompasses the level to which a state or society recognizes (or fail to recognize) groups cultural practices (Stewart, 2008:13). For instance, while the Muslim Hausa (majority ethnic group in northern Nigeria clamored for and had Sharia law implemented in some northern states from 1999-2007, the predominantly Christian minority ethnic groups and southern migrants felt deprived of their rights as enshrined in the constitution. There is evidence that some
of the conflict in Jos Plateau between the Jasawa and the Berome from 2000-2004 were linked to that (Onyia 2005).

Stewart (2008) noted that there are linkages and interactions both within and between these various categories of HIs. For instance, inequalities in the political powers such as which identity/ethnic group produces the President or Secretary of state often lead to economic inequalities such as who gets employment opportunities, and contract awards. He concluded that “the context in which HIs occur also matters. In particular, political conditions (including the nature of the state), cultural, demographic conditions and economic conditions all affect the likelihood of conflict for any given state of HIs” (Stewart 2008:19).

Although, the above-mentioned dimensions of HIs are critical for conflict to occur, Langer and Brown (2008) are of the view that “an important link between culture and group mobilization, including violent conflict, is the extent to which cultural groups’ practices and customs are differentially recognized in and by the state” (Langer and Brown, 2008:42). The religious and cultural embargo the Tibetans witnessed during the cultural revolution under the Chinese occupation (1966-1970) and the duel that followed it is a clear evidence of cultural status inequalities conflict link. Cultural status inequalities relate with, and influence other dimensions of HIs in that they are often associated with exclusion and inequality in the political and economic dimension or state/public domain. Likewise, socioeconomic, and political HIs occur where there are cultural differences around which groups coalesce (Langer and Brown 2008).
Origin, persistence, and change

Though a reasonable volume of inquiry has been conducted on the concept of inequality, much of these have centered on its measurement, while so little have been devoted to the origin, determinants and why it persists in some societies or situations, and not in others. Recently, however, Charles Tilly (1999; and 2003) made meaningful contributions in these areas. In his ‘categorical inequality thesis’ he posits that “categories defined as “negotiated collective boundaries within interpersonal networks, produce durable inequality when repeated transaction across the boundary both (a) regularly yield net advantages to those on one side and (b) reproduce the boundary”” (Charles Tilly, 2003: 34). Categories produce disparity using primarily two mechanisms: exploitation and opportunity hoarding.

Exploitation occurs “wherever well-connected people control valuable resources from which they extract returns by deploying the effort of others, whom they exclude from the full value added by that effort. The value in question may, of course, be monetary, but it may also take the form of power, deference, perquisites, service, goods, or protection” (Tilly, 1999:91). The net effect of exploitation is that it produces an undue advantage to one category, by bequeathing a greater share of the surplus produced to them, while bestowing only a meager of this surplus to the other category. Likewise, exploitation generates vertical inequality among all individuals within any given social system, which in turn enriches the very few in one category, and pauperizes the majority in the other. Take for example the apartheid regime in South Africa, which categorized the people into the Whites and the Black Africans, economically and politically empowered the former,
and impoverishing the later. Alternatively, consider the pre-civil war racial categorization between the Whites and African Americans in the US with a similar result. Consider also the Caliphate system of the pre-colonial Hausa-land (1804-1904) which created the ‘Sarauta’ (royal rulers) and slaves (the ruled) categories, which exploited the ruled through various forms of slave labor and taxations.

Note that the political and/or economic assets and income, including financial capital, education, land, employment, etc. an individual or household has in the scenario above is a function of how much s/he or they got from the system that categorizes and allocates unequally. In this sense, inequality is measured vertically across a given system. However, “inequality between groups [HI] is then the consequences of inequality in asset ownership between groups and inequality in the returns to these assets” (Stewart and Langer, 2008:56). Moreover, intergroup inequality [HIs] also involves both access to and ownership of capital, and the productivity of those capitals which encompasses the extent of their use and their productivity in use as well (Stewart and Langer, 2008).

Stewart and Langer (2008) opine that inequality persists largely for five reasons:

I. Unequal rates of accumulation, due to inequalities in income and imperfect market.

II. Dependence on the return to one capital on the availability of other types.

III. Asymmetries in social capital.

IV. Present and past discrimination by individuals and non-governmental institutions.

V. Political inequality leads to discrimination by government.
They contend that, taken together, above factors “lead to the possibility of virtuous and vicious cycles: those groups starting in privileged positions being able to accumulate more fall into a virtuous cycle, having higher returns to assets and thus sustaining their privilege, while those who start in an underprivileged position fall into a vicious cycle, or poverty trap” (Stewart and Langer, 2008:64).

• HIs-Poverty link: evidence from case studies

The origin of the Black-White inequalities in the United States dates to 300 years of political, economic, legal, and social exclusion and exploitation of Blacks/African Americans. Rooted in the social categorization of Black (slave) and White (slave masters), which excluded the Blacks from the full value added by their labor, and appropriated these economic values to the Whites. The income and wealth gap between the groups is traceable to the above. For example, M.K. Brown et al. (2001) found that the “real median income of the black families was only about 62 percent of that of the Whites, only 10 percent higher than what it was 1947 when the ratio was 52 percent. Similarly, in absolute terms, the Black-White real median income gap doubled from $10,386 to $20,469 in the period from 1947 to 2001” (cited in Stewart and Langer, 2008:70).

This Black-White inequality also triggered wealth gap between the categories/groups. It essentially created wealth boom for the Whites and Poverty doom for the Blacks. According to Shapiro and Kenty-Drane (2005), “in 1999, the Black-White wealth gap was 0-10, with typical White households having an overall median net worth of nearly $81, 450 and Blacks a median of just $8000” (see Stewart and Langer,
2008:70). Above findings corroborate the fact that categories produce inequalities, which in turn creates and sustains poverty.

2.2.3 Poverty

- Causal analysis of poverty

Over the years, scholars have focused on various observable variables including income, labor, capital, deprivation, entitlement, social exclusion among others to explain poverty. Due in large part to the complexity of poverty, and partly to the nature, design, and limitations of this inquiry, focus of the literature review would be guided by the core interest of the research, while efforts would be made to present a balanced understanding of the various arguments relating to poverty, however.

"Thought about the conceptualization, measurement and accurate characterization of poverty has a long history, dating back at least to the codification of poor laws in medieval England" (D.O Ajekaiye and V.A Adeyeye 2001:1), and to the pioneering empirical studies of Adam Smith in the 18th century (M.J Austin 2006). Smith began the notion of economic ethics, in which he represented the ‘economic man’, as the major character in economic ethics whose altruistic rational behavior would influence others within the same economic system to react altruistically, this would then produce a positive effect on the whole economy (A. Smith, 1903). Since then, there has been an ongoing debate over the significance of one’s economic behavior in determining economic success (Hsiang-Yi Lin, 2013).

Scholars like Martin Luther, John. S Mills, Karl Marx, Max Weber, S.N Bulgakov, among others, evaluated economic growth from the labor production, and
capital increase perspectives. They emphasize the role of the human economic behavior (attitudes, beliefs, and values) on the economic productivity. On the other end, Amartya Sen, Charles Tilly, Sam Hickey and Andries du Toit contend that social relations of power can explain economic success of individuals and groups. In his essay “The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism” published in 1904-05, Weber theorized that “Protestantism—more specifically its Calvinist branches—promoted the rise of modern capitalism; that is, the industrial capitalism” (David Landes; 2000:11). Weber predicated his analysis on the Christian theology of the nature of man as a reflection of “Imagio Dei” (image of God); manifest in some of man’s characteristics, such as rationale, free will, and morality.

However, a major challenge to this notion is:

Can man’s mirror image of God, after it was destroyed by Adam, only be restored through salvation? Or although man is a sinner, can man’s mirror image of God remain intact and still be used as a link to God’s grace through salvation? Or did man’s mirror image of God only come into existence after the Original Sin, parts damaged, and parts intact? Based on the aforementioned sin and the relationship described in man-in-God’s image, the growing concerns of human freedom are again raised (Ott and Otte 2005, 146, cited in Yi Lin; 2013:194). The Christian theology has two divergent views in the above—the justification and predestination.

First, Martin Luther (a Catholic faithful) provided the solution to the quandary by arguing that, though man had the will, he certainly lacks the ability and freedom to redeem himself. By implication, man’s freedom is limited such that he can only take responsibility, but cannot be his own master (Yi Lin; 2013:195). Given this dilemma, Luther opines that man’s hope of salvation lies in his faith in Christ, his Redeemer. In
consequence, man attains salvation solely by waiting on God, and forsaking all self-directed activities (Ibid.). From the economic view and financial perspectives, Luther tends to suggest that:

When facing materials and necessities, our attitude should be as travelers in a strange place for a night, ready to depart the next day, for all the earthly materials, personal wealth, our daily requirements, and maintenance, income for life, the surplus materials, etc. are provided by God’s miraculous plan, provided our souls are free. In other words, after our personal and family demands are met, we should utilize, not accumulate, the surplus materials to help neighbors in need. This indeed displays a freedom of the soul, not subject to materialism (Althaus and Schultz 1972:176-178, cited in Yi Lin, 2013:195).

Second, the Calvinist viewpoint perceives man to be helpless and incapable of pursuing goodness, spiritual greatness, and salvation due to his sin. Man, would never be able to alter this situation (Weber 1958: 56-57; Hughes 1995:119-120). By God’s eternal decree, some men, those in harmony with the will, and glory of God and angels have been predestined to eternal life, while others would be rewarded with eternal damnation (Yi Lin 2013:195). Apparent in the Christian theology above; be it of the Calvinist predestination, or the Lutheran justification is that both religions are characterized by mystic intuition. “The religious lifestyle of the former leans toward mysticism and emotionalism, while the latter is inclined to ascetic behavior” (Yi Lin 2013:195). In Weber’s view, “the Lutheranism is closer to the former, while the latter fits the Calvinism” (Weber 1958:66-67; cited in Yi Lin 2013: 195).

Borrowing from the spirit of asceticism depicted in the “Christian Directory” of R. Baxter, a Calvinist Presbyterian believer, Weber infers that, “by safeguarding a place in God’s grace for the believers, the Calvinist asceticism permits them to complete the work assigned to them by God. Thus, to the Calvinist Christians, labor is the main path of
asceticism as well as the purpose of life. In the same vein, commitment to a legitimate profession is accepted by the Quakers as a practice of asceticism, and a symbol of piety” (Richardson 1958:106-108; cited in Yi Lin 2013:195). “Therefore, if faith is the cause, then the effect would transcend labor into a calling. Similarly, if an employer’s business activity is regarded as a calling, then, the exploitation of such labor is justified” (Weber, 1958, cited in Yi Lin 2013:195). “Weber’s point is that Protestantism produced a new kind of businessman, one who aimed to live and work a certain way. It is the way that mattered, and riches were at best a by-product” (David Landes 2000: 11). Hence, one can conclude that Calvinism promotes capitalist development. In the 1960s and 70s, social science scholars, particularly those from sociology and anthropology began to apply Weber’s theory to explain especially urban poverty among African Americans. One such inquiry is by Oscar Lewis (1959).

To study and define poverty, Oscar Lewis hypothesized that there existed a common denominator among the poor across the globe irrespective of their region; ethnicity or religion. With the goal to identify and correlate the lifestyle (including daily decision-making process, beliefs, and practices) of the poor in Mexico and Puerto Rico, Oscar Lewis spent some time to live, observe, and document the daily routines of five poor Mexican families, and a Puerto Rican family. He reported that both the Mexican and Puerto Rican poor families have a common belief system and attitudes, which he referred to as “culture of poverty.” Oscar Lewis operationalized what he meant as the trans-generational culture of poverty with about seventy (70) variables that include a “provincial perspective, unemployment, absence of savings, lack of privacy,
gregariousness, frequent use of physical violence in child training, predisposition to authoritarianism, inability to defer gratification, fatalism, mistrust of government, and strong feelings of powerlessness, marginality, and helplessness” (Oscar Lewis, 1965: xiv)

He further decomposed these 70 odd traits into four basic categories by which those who have developed this subculture can be examined as follows (1) the attitudes, values, and character structure of the individual; (2) the nature of the family; (3) the nature of the slum community; (4) the relationship between the culture and the larger society (1965:xvi). Lewis reported that this “culture of poverty” is trans-generational in that, the attitudes and beliefs that generate, sustain, and reinforce poverty are socially transferred within the family and nuclear family system. The net effect is that by the time a child is of age six–seven, s/he has internalized the essential principles and mindset of his/her subculture, which incapacitates him/her from taking full advantage of changing conditions and/or increased opportunities that may happen in their lifetime. The underlying assumption of Lewis’ “culture of poverty” is that the chronically poor of Mexico and Puerto Rico, as well as those in Brazil, Nigeria, India, and the USA, share the same value system, attitudes, beliefs, customs, and sometimes religious values. In sum, Oscar Lewis concluded that: if the poor of Mexico look a lot like the poor of the India and Sudan, as well as the poor in Afghanistan, it then follows that the poor share a similar base culture which encompassed of attitudes, beliefs, customs, and traditions. This base culture is what Oscar Lewis (1959) referred to as the “culture of poverty”.

In the 1960s, through 1970s, Fraizier (1962), Patric Moynihan (1965), James (1972), and Stein (1974), and many other researchers tested this theory with the case of
urban city African-American dwellings. Their findings corroborated Lewis discoveries. They unanimously concluded that “poor people have values (sub-culture) unique to themselves that differ from those of the middle-class, and therefore the only way to change both values and behaviors is to change the poor person” (Kristin Frerer 2006:19). In his seminal paper “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action”, often referred to as “Moynihan Report” Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1965) put forth a strong argument that the African American families are suffering from systematic breakdown, characterized by high rate of marriage dissolution (divorce, separation, and/or living apart couples), very high rate of illegitimate births, and huge proportion of matrilocal/ female-headed families. The net effect of the breakdown of the Negro families is a “startling increase in welfare dependency”, by inference, growing poverty among the African Americans. These, in turn, produce a subculture that generates, sustains, reinforces, and transmits poverty from one generation to another. These factors identified by Daniel Moynihan parallels Oscar Lewis’ observation in the five Mexican and Puerto Rican families, and tend to confirm the “culture of poverty thesis.”

Moynihan’s report (1965) echoed Oscar Lewis’ proposition and to a degree influenced President Lyndon Johnson’s policy on poverty. It also heightened criticisms for Oscar Lewis and the culture of poverty theory.

Although this theory attracted as much criticism as accolades, it inspired development theorists who applied it to examine the prevalence of chronic poverty in developing world. In their edited volume, Harrison and Huntington (2000) utilized the “culture of poverty thesis” to evaluate how societies achieve or fail to achieve prosperity
in economic development and political democratization. They argue that, in the post-industrialization world, there are two distinct categories of cultures: the culture of Protestantism (of Weberian order) which supports economic development and political democratization, and the others. They concluded that the level of economic development and political democratization accomplished by a state/society correlates directly with the value systems and beliefs dominant within that social system.

Recently, a major contribution that credits the culture of poverty thesis is by Michael E. Porter (2000). His investigation of the complex links between economic culture—a subset of the culture of poverty—and economic progress made a relevant observation: “The question is not whether culture has a role, but how to understand this role in the context of the broader determinants of prosperity” (Michael Porter 2000: 14). He argues that the productivity with which a nation uses its human, capitals and natural resources is a major determinant of its prosperity or standard of living. Productivity, in turn, sets the level of sustainable wages and returns to capital, which is the principal determinant of national income per citizen. “Productivity then is the basis of competitiveness. The central issue in economic development is how to create the conditions for rapid and sustained productivity growth” (Michael Porter 2000: 1428). Moving beyond poverty requires a nation to upgrade its inputs, institutions, and skills to allow for more sophisticated forms of competition capable of increasing productivity. Upgrading such factors as human capital, improving infrastructure, opening to trade and foreign investments, protecting intellectual property among other things are preconditions for increased productivity.
However, then, certain beliefs, attitudes, and values support and promote prosperity. Such as prevailing beliefs about the basis for prosperity, and that wealth creation is anchored on insights and ideas, not on scarce resources, therefore, the potential for wealth creation is limitless. Therefore, “the most basic belief undergirding successful economic development is the acceptance that prosperity depends on productivity, not on control of resources, scale, government favors, or military power, and that the productivity paradigm is good for the society. Potter argues that “without such beliefs, rent seeking, and monopoly seeking would be the dominant behavior” (200:21). Porter concluded that “peoples’ belief about what it takes to be prosperous influences how they behave and that the way people behave in a society is influenced by the signals and incentives that are created in the economic system in which they live” (200:21). Also, that much economic culture is learned directly or indirectly from the economy. Nations fail because they have unproductive culture.

Porter’s cultural determinism of poverty tends to relegate other significant factors of poverty/[un]development like class structure, dominant political practices, the political economy of giving societies, and external influence to the background, while exciting differences in cultural dispositions between societies. There is ample empirical evidence that poverty is consequent upon the presence or a deficiency of; and the interaction of a combination of factors, including cultural dispositions. As such, cultural explanation of poverty in and of itself appears to be inadequate. However, Porter’s economic culture theory shines a light to the agency of the poor in creating and sustaining poverty. It drew attention to the unique role of attitudes, beliefs behaviors and ideation process of a group
in maintaining the poverty circle. Most importantly, it shifts the center of analysis from individual to the system, therefore, stimulates inter-group intra-systemic comparative discuss of poverty. By linking collective (economic) behavior of a given group to dominant (economic) signals and incentives existing within the same system, Porter made an invaluable contribution to the study of poverty. The utility of economic culture theory towards our understanding of causes and conditions of poverty would be appreciated when synthesized with other theories, such as those of categorical inequality, and social exclusion.

In another study, Mariano Grondona (2000) applied cultural theory to analyze the dangers and complexities nations face during progress from one economic cycle to another. He argued that the ability or inability of a nation to successfully progress from one economic cycle of prosperity to another depends on their dominant value system. According to him, there are two categories of values: intrinsic and instrumental values. Intrinsic values are those we uphold regardless of the benefits or costs, such as patriotism. While instrumental values refer to those we support simply because it is directly beneficial to us.

For instance, a nation that is committed to economic growth and prosperity may promote hard work, productivity, and investment. These values when uphold could propel such a nation to growth and prosperity, and increased wealth for the citizenry. The danger, however, is that, if decisions favorable to economic development are only of instrumental values of an economic nature, such as economic wealth, the country’s efforts will decline as soon as prosperity is achieved. Whereas economic revolution from
poverty to prosperity requires that nations continue competing, investing, innovating, and working even harder to sustain the economic prosperity already accomplished. These traits are intrinsic values. These are the values a nation needs to prosper. Unfortunately, all economic values are instrumental and temporary.

Thus, a rich nation needs something other than the pursuit of economic wealth present in its value system to propel it to crave for more. This non-economic something could be excellence, love, salvation, safety, survival, and honor: any value that is never enough. “The paradox of economic development is that economic values are not enough to ensure them. Intrinsic values fall within the cultural field. We may thus say that economic development is a cultural process” (Ibid)

Gradona concludes that values fall within that province of culture we call ethics, and can be grouped into a pattern called value system. Hypothetically, there are two value systems: ideal and real value systems. Ideal value systems could be classified into two: those that promote economic prosperity and those that inhibit it. A nation can be judged modern or developed depending on its leaning on the former, while a nation is adjudged poor or traditional depending on its leaning to the latter. “Real value systems are mixed as well as moving. If they are moving towards the favorable value system pole, they improve the nation’s chances to develop. However, if they move in the opposite direction, they diminish the chances of a nation to develop” (2000: 47).

In recognition of Patterson’s contribution, Gregory Jordan (2004) argues for a synthesis of cultural variables with historical structural factors towards an integrated and multiplicative framework, or two-way model for a deeper understanding of poverty. He
contends that “cultural and/or behavioral variables are only relevant to the degree that historical structural factors condition the environment in which groups of varying economic and social advantage operate in and react to.” He concludes that “any theory and perhaps inquiry on the cause of poverty that includes cultural variables must also include the relevant structural contexts” (Gregory Jordan 2004: 37).

A major criticism against the culture thesis is that, by stressing the agency of the poor in its condition, it tends to lay blame on the poor, and ignore the effects of the social system and power dynamics in generating poverty. This inherent gap in the culture thesis prompted development scholars (Charles Tilly 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003; Amartya Sen 1999; Du Toit 2005; Lamont et al. 2010) among others to examine poverty from relational perspectives; and to perceive inequality as the cardinal determinant of poverty. Research on poverty and economic development witnessed a paradigmatic shift when Amartya Sen won the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economics with his publication “Development As Freedom.”

In what seems like tapping into the Christian philosophy of human freedom, Amartya Sen posits that economic development “depends on the amount of substantive freedom entitled to man; development would occur if and when factors that impede human free will are removed” (Sen 1999: 3-4). For Sen, poverty stems largely from capability deprivation of intrinsically valuable and instrumentally significant conditions and factors, influenced by external factors other than the lowness of income, and which varies between different communities, different families, and different individuals. Deprivation arises from noticeable social inequality which limits the capabilities one has,
“that is the substantive freedom he or she enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value” (1999:74). By viewing development as an integrated process of expansion of interconnected substantive freedoms, “it becomes much easier for one to anticipate the negative effects on economic progress made by the complex relationship between the lack of freedom in economics, society, and politics” (Sen 1999:7-8).

Likewise, the vital roles played by institutions and entities like markets and market-related organizations, governments and local authorities, political parties and other civic institutions, educational arrangements and opportunities for open dialogue and debates in limiting the substantive freedoms one has could be appreciated (Sen 1999: 8-9). Sen understood that social values and practices could influence our exercise of freedom, thus defined freedom as ‘instrumental freedom’ and categorized them as ‘political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security’ (Sen 1999: 9-10).

In the light of the above, Sen believed that Freedoms are not merely primary ends of development, they are also among its main means. Given enough social opportunities, individuals can effectively shape their destiny and help each other. He thus likened the connections to development and freedoms to the medieval distinction between ‘the patient’ and ‘the agent’ (Sen 1999:10-11). Freedom he argues “must be seen as both the processes that permit freedom of actions and decisions, as well as the actual opportunities people have, given their personal and social circumstances” (Sen 1999:17).
Bearing in mind that the primary focus in the discourse of poverty/development is largely in the lives that people can lead—the freedom they have to lead minimally decent lives—Sen believes that it is erroneous to concentrate wholly only on one (income) or the other of the means to such freedom. Impoverished lives and not depleted wallets should be the focal point of analysis. In the end, “poverty must be seen in terms of poor living, rather than as just lowness of incomes” (Sen 2000:3).

Sen also believes that the capability perspective on poverty is obviously complex because there are distinct capabilities and functionings that we have reason to value. Social exclusion is one of these ways. “First, each of us have every reason to value not being excluded from social relations, thus, exclusion in this manner could directly be linked to capability poverty. Second, being excluded from social relations has the potential to result to other forms of deprivation too, thus, limit our living opportunities the more” (Sen 2000:4-5). The ways social exclusion can lead to capability deprivation is identified in two distinct ways: Firstly, constitutive relevance in which one’s exclusion can sometimes constitute a deprivation and could generate other forms of deprivation also. Secondly, Social exclusions may not be impoverishing in themselves, but could lead to the impoverishment of human lives through their causal consequences (for instance the denial of social and economic opportunities that would be helpful to a person’s involvement). Sen referred to this form of exclusion as being instrumental importance (Sen 2000:12-13).

Sen maintains that culture like class, race, gender, profession, and politics does matter, but is not uniquely pivotal in determining our lives and identities. This is because,
our behavior hinges as well on the hard facts of the presence or absence of relevant institutions and the incentives—prudential or moral—they generate, as it is on our values and predispositions (Sen 2004:43). Thus, those who attribute so much of our self-realization like poverty and development to our cultural identity are guilty of ‘type two’ error (see Kevin Avruch 2006).

Furthermore, there are inherent challenges in the cultural determinism of poverty. For one thing, cultural determinists often underestimate the extent of heterogeneity within what is taken to be one culture, thereby missing great variations that sometimes exist even within the same general cultural milieu. For another, culture is constantly in a flux. Thus, it is “deceptive to presume the stationarity—explicit or implicit—of culture” (Sen 2004:43). Sen concluded that the currency of the capability determinism of poverty over culture lies in the fact that “societies attach importance to such elementary capabilities as learning and writing, rather than the preservation of departing lifestyle or to adopt newest fashion style from abroad” (Sen 2004:56).

Sen’s freedom and capability thesis paralleled Tilly’s categorical inequality thesis. It also acknowledged the role of institutions in limiting one’s capacity to act in a manner that would enhance his economic opportunity or performance. However, Sen failed to see that some of these institutions and the individuals that erect and operate within them are sometimes culturally defined. For instance, the caste system that socially excludes many from the political and economic life of the state, and unequally rewards one category over another in India and Pakistan is culturally created. More so, the compulsion to preserve and generationally transfer such capability inhibiting practices like caste system as group
identity is also culturally influenced. Thus, his insistence that culture matters but so little appears to be over simplistic.

In his study of chronic poverty in post-Apartheid South Africa, Du Toit (2005) applied a multidimensional and structural approach to survey three regions—Mount Frere, Ceres, and Cape Town’s African suburbs. He observed that the overall situation of the poor is determined by interactions between “asset poverty, cash dependency, labor market marginality and the thinness of social capital; and their subjugation to exploitative power relations.” (Du Toit 2005:17). He concluded that chronic poverty is not only a function of asset deprivation and dearth of access to jobs but also determined by entrenched interactions of vulnerability, marginality, and powerlessness.

Du Toit conclusion may be correct, but it is also ahistoric. His study failed to account for over a century social categorization of White and Black class by the apartheid system which unequally rewarded the groups in favor of the former, and exploited the later. The present deprivation and incapacitation of the Black South Africans was set in motion by this structure. Tilly’s ‘category-inequality-poverty’ nexus is correct for this case.

Jeffrey Sachs (2005), another development expert also took an in-depth look at poverty. His work is structured in three parts: (a) the origin of global disparity in poverty or alternately, the brake off point when the now developed nations broke loose from the initial standpoint of global poverty spanning from A. D 1000 to A.D 1800; (b) regimes of differentiated diagnosis of global poverty, faulty models of interventions and their consequences in particular to developing nations, and the need for clinicalization of
future diagnosis and interventions; (c) roadmap towards ending global poverty and a clarion call for making the right investments needed to end poverty.

Sachs began his analysis by taking a historical review of the world economic status, going back to two hundred years prior, at a point when the global economic output was at its barest minimal. At that time, 1820, the global disparity in wealth and poverty as we know it today, so to speak, were inexistent, regions and nations of the world had similar income level. Sachs noted that, “pre-1800, there had been virtually nothing like sustained economic growth in human history; beyond that point, however, humanity has witnessed an unprecedented quantum leap towards prosperity and has rightly been termed the era of modern economic growth by Simon Kuznets” (Jeffrey Sachs 2005:27). Characterized by high volume of economic production, with the world's average per capital income soaring by more than nine times between 1820 and 2000, this period marked the beginning of the golf in global poverty; during which today’s richest regions of the world produced by far the greatest economic progress (Jeffrey Sachs 2005: 27-28). Sachs argue that “the crucial puzzle for understanding today’s vast inequalities, therefore, is to understand why different regions of the world have grown at different rates during the period of modern economic growth” (Jeffrey Sachs 2005:30) since every region began the era comparatively very poor.

The differentiating factor is to be located in the industrial revolution that began in England, and which fueled agricultural productivity to an unprecedented scale, pushed food production to an exponential height, and made Britain a global political force. Technology and its underlying ideas provided the impetus for the industrial revolution
which is the driving engine of modern economic development. From Britain, industrial evolution, and its apparent drivers—technology and ideas—were spread across the globe, though under various conditions and approaches, and with it comes economic prosperity. Sachs, therefore, maintains that beyond the availability of natural resources within a state's territory, “the single most important reason why prosperity spread, and why it continues to spread, is the transmission of technologies and the ideas underlying them” (Jeffrey Sachs 2005:41). Sachs also recognized the fact that, in addition to prosperities, modern economic growth brought a remarkable disparity between the richest and the poorest countries, gaps that were practically impossible during the pre-1800 when poverty gripped the whole world. Why is this so, Sachs asked? Put differently, why do some Groups/countries fail to achieve economic prosperity while others do?

Sachs (2005) enunciated several factors that hinder groups/countries from producing relative economic prosperity for themselves to include:

1. **The poverty trap.** Sachs contends that extreme poverty in itself entraps countries that are severely poor, lacking the abilities to free themselves from escaping poverty.

2. **Governance failure.** Governments have roles to play to ensure steady, sustainable development in their countries. These would include the building and regular maintenance of high-priority infrastructure projects, creating a conducive environment to attract both local and foreign investors, guaranty transparent in its operations, and maintain internal peace and security within its domain.
Government failure in any of these tasks guarantees that the economy is going to fail.

c. *Geopolitics.* Given that states exist and function in interaction with each other within a global system, a state’s economic policies may and do affect another’s capacity to create wealth.

d. *Lack of innovation.* States with the capabilities (both ideas and structural) to innovate are likely to produce more wealth. Ideally, “economic growth and innovation proceeds in a mutually reinforcing process” (Jeffrey Sachs 2005:61).

e. *Cultural barriers.* Often, culture, which in most cases includes the religion of a given people erects impregnable barriers to development. For instance, cultural and/or religious practices in some regions of the world or countries may block the participation of women both in political and economic activities of the state, thereby undermining their contribution to the development at large. Most importantly, constraining and confining women to the domestic domain could potentially delay the demographic transition from high fertility to low fertility; a process necessary for development. This point clearly reflects the case of Northern Nigeria where Kulle (seclusion of women) is practiced.

f. *The demographic trap.* Huge population sometimes constitutes a significant obstacle to development. The consequences of a family, especially poor ones having many children is that they find it tough to give these kids sound education, health care, necessary nutrition for their development. This triggers a domino
effect n the nest generation who fall into the poverty trap, rear large families, too and exacerbate and subsequently transmit poverty. Thus, poverty is perpetuated.

In summary, Sachs concluded that beneath the sustained poverty amid growth, and its global disparity lies in the inability of the extremely poor countries to muster the capital muscles capable of, and the unwillingness of the rich nations to provide the necessary resources to nudge their “foot on the ladder of development” (Jeffrey Sachs 2005:244).

Sachs historical account of poverty appears to be reductionist. Besides, other than speculating the time when the whole world was poor, he failed to explain the exact cause of poverty. Sachs also spoke of the role of the lopsided global financial system and other agencies of the Global West—International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank and their regimes of failed policies in exacerbation poverty.

In an elaborate study, Tilly (1998) following Muldrew and Wolf presented a relational perspective of chronic poverty. For him, inequality is a product of asymmetric social interactions leveraged by accumulation on one side or the other, guaranteed by the creation of social categories which rationalize and maintain unequal advantages. Categories he argues produce durable inequality, which overtime constantly yield net advantages to those on one side, and reproduce the boundary as well. He opined set of inequality-generating and reinforcing mechanisms: exploitation, opportunity hoarding, emulation, and adaptation.
Exploitation refers to the exclusion of a group by another from the full value produced by their labor (e.g., slave and fief farmer in pre-colonial northern Nigeria whose labor is unpaid and/or are heavily taxed). Opportunity hoarding speaks of acquiring value-producing recourse by one group, and restricting its use to in-group, and then creating beliefs and practices that maintain their control (e.g., the promotion of ‘madrasal’ among the poor commoners by northern elites while they send their children to western schools). Emulation consists of the production of organizational models already operating somewhere. Lastly, adaptation is the institutionalization of rewarding social routines that rely on the sustenance of the existing categories and/or relations across the boundaries by both groups (Tilly 1998).

Tilly’s conceptualization and analysis of poverty, its causes, and conditions took both a historical and social perspective. To a large degree, it reflects the political and economic history and realities of northern Nigeria.

• Poverty in Northern Nigeria

Historical accounts of widespread poverty in pre-colonial Africa in various levels and forms across the region abound. In the case of Nigeria, the narratives of poverty among the composite groups—Hausa-Fulani, Ibo, and Yoruba—shows that perception of poverty, its causes, and the poor differ significantly. For instance, John Iliffe (1992) wrote that, poverty among the Ibos—of the southern Nigeria—is considered shameful in a society where equal opportunity is the prevailing ideology. Conversely, in the case of the Hausa-Fulani of northern Nigeria, the poor forms a social category, while poverty is almost considered a norm.
He concluded that due in large part to the grain-based agrarian economy, dependent on short and unreliable wet season; most probable causes of poverty in pre-colonial northern Nigeria are ill fortune, personal inadequacy, or incapacitation.

Illiffe’s conclusion has many flaws and some of his findings are contradictory. To begin with, he attributed poverty in pre-colonial Hausa society to rain-fed agriculture, same time acknowledged, albeit unwittingly, the role of the political economy of slavery, and categorization in generating chronic lack in the society. Another paradox is that his research shows that, pre-colonial northern Nigeria, irrespective of irregular, short wet season, remains “one of the most fertile spots on earth” (Illife, 1992:35).

In a more detailed ethnographic study of the systemic violence in northern Nigeria, Michael Watts (1983) presented poverty in a rather benign way as famine. He suggested that famine/poverty in northern Nigeria is best appreciated from the dynamic of the social relations of production prevalent in pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial Nigeria. Viewed together from the political structure and social stratification of the Mohammedan state system, along with the state ideology by which the state sustained itself. As Watts clearly puts it, ‘To understand the political economy of the Caliphate, and its pauperization proclivity is necessary to grasp the complex interdigitation of warfare, jihadi ideology, and the production of slaves by the Sarauta class. To this extent, slavery enters into the equation of social production” (1983:78) (emphasis added in none italics). Watt’s conclusion on the underlying factors of poverty in pre-colonial and postcolonial Hausaland is congruent with Tilly’s inequality producing categories; here
legitimized by an ideology of equality of all before the Devine Law; designed to palliate the actual situation.

Another study by Isa Abbass (2010) was directed to poverty in the Zazua [Zaria] province of Northern Nigeria. He reported that poverty of the region is a product of the process of state (pre-colonial and colonial) formation, characterized by over taxation, exploitation, and enslavement, which extract surplus resources from the rural peasants for the service of the urban aristocrats. In his words, “with the consolidation of power in the city by the ruling aristocracy, taxes, tributes, and other forms of levies were appropriated and sent to the city” (Isa Abbass, 2010:4). Abbass (2010) noted that the process of state formation in pre-colonial Hausa-land was identical; with rulers possessing absolute powers; acted arbitrary and usurped powers especially in economic matters. Concerning the 15th-century Zazzau, his inquiry reports that economic success and commercial activities attracted many settlers to the province. The desire to consolidate their state drove the rulers of Zazzau to embark on “series of countryside integration through conquests of large tracts of territories comprising of villages, towns and cities which were brought under its control” (Abbass, 1997; cited in Abbas, 2010:3). Within this system, the social relationship that emerged was that of political and economic subjugation and exploitation of the ruled by the rulers.

The system so created provoked the rise of the Fulani Muslims who overthrew the Habe ruling class in a Jihad movement in the early 18th century, in the guise of social reform. Regrettably, however, the economic and political ideology and practices that emerged are markedly similar to that of the Habes: exploitation, exclusion, and
subjugation. In the 19th century, this political and economic system and process was further exploited, modified, and sustained by the British colonizers whose interest it served. According to Abbass (2010), “*the Caliphal period was characteristically corrupt as fief holders exhibited intense extortion of the peasantry. The British colonial regime, in league with the local chiefs, was marked by unprecedented exploitation, repression, and extortion of the peasantry. That exacerbated the existing rural problems of poverty and impoverishment*” (Cole, 1951; cited in Abbass 2010:11).

Though, Abbass’ findings, to a large extent, illuminate the historical origins of chronic poverty in northern Nigeria, and the role of state formation in creating a categorical inequality that breeds poverty, it failed to account for the factors responsible for the generational transfer of poverty among people of northern extraction particularly in postcolonial Nigeria. Furthermore, it paid little attention to the roles of social institutions like poor education, child bride/early marriage, among others in sustaining and transmitting poverty trans-generationally among the people.

In what appears like addressing the gap in Abbass’ conclusion (factors responsible for the transfer of poverty among people of northern extraction in postcolonial Nigeria) Sa’adu A. Jijji (2007) argue that, colonization, and its appendages—modernization, western education, trading opportunities, access to western technologies, and innovation—account for the low level of poverty among Nigerians of Southern extracts. By inference, its absence and or improper implementation in the North is responsible for the high prevalence of poverty in the region. He indicts the indirect rule policy of the colonial regime; which adapted, modified, and utilized the Caliphal
administrative system and its impoverishing tendencies as the sustaining factors of poverty in the region. For him, the indirect rule in the north “also meant that the traditional institutions and practices that could also act to stifle economic growth and development of the region were left to flourish” (Sa’adu Jijji, 2007: 5).

However, the root of sustained high poverty level among the people of northern extraction in postcolonial Nigeria lie in the low level of productivity and production technology in the agricultural, agro-allied industries, and extractive based industrial sectors upon which the region’s economy depends. This he maintained is consequent upon the actions and inactions of successive regimes since 1960. Thus, political neglect more than anything accounts for high poverty level among people of northern extractions and the region in general.

Sa’adu Jijji’s conclusion that the indirect rule policy of the colonial administration is in part responsible for the prevalence of poverty in Northern Nigeria corroborates findings of other scholars like Abbass (2010). Whereas he acknowledges the presence of traditional institutions and practices capable of stifling economic growth among the group, he spoke of them only passively. Inherent in this view, however, is a false assumption. Albeit covertly stated, the assumption appears to be that the development of the South and the wealth of the region and its people are consequent upon the government—federal and/or state.

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter presented a general and balanced views of the basic concepts used in this study. First, it focused our understanding of these concepts by providing clear
definitions and meanings of these terms as they are used in this inquiry. In so doing, it provided a mind map that guides our journey through this scientific exercise. Second, this chapter provided a critical evaluation of the various perspectives of scholars on these concepts. The next chapter deals with the ongoing debate on the analytical potentials of the culture of poverty thesis. It will attempt to present an elaborate analysis of the views of scholars on both side of the debate.
CHAPTER THREE
THE CULTURE OF POVERTY: A THEORETICAL EXPLORATION

3.0. Introduction

Since its introduction into the academic community, the culture of poverty thesis has been subjected to series of empirical, scientific evaluations. While many of these studies have reported no support for the claims of the culture of poverty thesis, others found evidence to support the statement that the poor possess attitudes that distinguish them from the non-poor. Given the renewed interest in poverty, the localization of poverty in some parts of the globe, and the pushbacks from the cultural relativists, the debate relating to the analytical potentials of the culture of poverty theory continues. This chapter, presents some of these reports. It begins with the reports that discredit Oscar Lewis’ (1959) propositions, followed by those that support the theory.

3.1. Relevant empirical studies discrediting the poverty of culture thesis

Earliest critiques of Oscar Lewis and the culture of poverty thesis include Rodman (1964), Charles Valentine (1968), Roach and Gursslin (1967), and Leeds (1971), Lola M. Irelan, Oliver C. Moles and Robert M. O’Shea (1969). In a study designed to evaluate ethnic variations in culture of poverty perspectives, Lola M. Irelan, Oliver C. Moles and Robert M. O’Shea (1969) hypothesized that “poor respondents of three separate ethnic groups (Anglo, Negro, and Spanish-speaking Americans) would not differ significantly from each other in their responses to 8 attitude areas related to the concept”
(Irelan et al., 1969:405). Here, sample size of 1,156 that represents the three groups almost in an approximate number (440, 316, and 400) was selected. They operationalized their hypothesis into eight variables and then applied the Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric one-way analysis of variance by rank.

Their finding is startling and contrasts with the propositions of the culture of poverty thesis. For instance, from the questions designed to draw out a culture of poverty traits, the responses of the three different ethnic groups showed remarkable statistical variations from the poor samples. Their report indicated that “in fourteen out of sixteen tests, ethnic groups differ significantly from each other. The average score for eight of these sixteen comparisons showed differences of 10 percent or more between any two of the three ethnic groups” (Irelan et al., 1969:411). Regarding the fatalistic trait, they reported an inconsistent relationship between fatalism and ethnicity. To be sure, an insignificant variation between Anglos, Spanish-speaking, and African Americans who had received public assistance exists. Equally, response elicited from assistance non-recipient participants from the three ethnic groups indicated clear differences significant at .001 level. Thus, since their report showed much less similarity of views of opinion between these three different ethnic groups than the culture of poverty suggested, they rejected their null hypothesis.

Johnson and Sandy were among the early, vocal critics of Oscar Lewis and the “culture of poverty thesis”. They desired to bring the theory closer home and test it with the poor in the United States of America. Here, Johnson and Sanday (1971) turned their attention to heads of low-income and moderate-income
families in three Pittsburgh neighborhoods. They focused on the sub-cultural differences among ethnic groups and differences between the poor and the non-poors. They examined their research subjects on three (3) of the core traits laid down by Oscar Lewis – style of the family heads, future orientation, achievement ethics, and trust-in-people. When they compared family structure, their findings indicated that there exists a strong statistical correlation between female-headed households among African Americans and poverty. In fact, the poor tend to have more female-headed families than the non-poor. However, when the future orientation of these groups was evaluated, the result yielded no significant difference between the poor and the non-poor. Furthermore, the trust-in-people and the achievement ethics showed no significant statistical differences between the poor and the non-poor. Barbara Coward et al. (1974) focused on one ethnic group in the USA for their inquiry and used the data from a community survey to compare groups of the poor and the non-poor. Here, randomly selected hundred households in African American neighborhoods were interviewed. These interviews produced two hundred and seventy-one samples which are consistent with the data available from the community survey on African American households. Babara Coward et al. further divided the samples into two income groups: a very low-income group (the “poor”) and a moderate-income group (the “non-poor”) based on their annual income before taxes, and following the poverty line utilized by the U.S Census Bureau. By this categorization, one hundred and
thirty-two of their respondents were classified as “poor”, and one hundred and thirty-nine as “non-poor”.

Coward et al. cross tabulated income across the core traits of the culture of poverty as outlined by Oscar Lewis (1965) – Powerlessness, Normlessness, Social Isolation, and Self-esteem—and then applied a Chi-square statistical analysis. With regards to attitudes, values, and character structure of the individual, they found that the “three measures of different aspects of alienation each revealed a different pattern, with support for the culture of poverty perspective in only one of the three cross-tabulations” (Coward et al. 1974:619). Regarding family structure and family’s disposition to “authoritarianism” in child rearing, their report indicates a measure of support to Oscar Lewis’ claim but found no support for family life.

Taking all the broad traits as itemized by Oscar Lewis together, they reported support to Lewis’ assertion in less than half of the cases; and in several of these instances, some indices did not corroborate the predictions. Barbara Coward et al. therefore concluded that “we found no support for a perspective distinguishing the poor from non-poor in their ways of life” (1974: 626).

It is interesting to see how Barbara Coward et al. applied statistical analysis to their variable. While they are among the earliest scholars to empirically investigate the culture of poverty thesis, their stated objectives are somehow vague. One might be poised to ask what their intention was. Furthermore, although some of their findings are at variance with most of the propositions of the culture of poverty thesis, given that, in many instances, their findings clearly supported a sizeable number of Oscar Lewis’
proposals, it appears that declaring their research inconclusive would have been the appropriate thing.

David B. Miller (1976) is another scholar who turned his attention to the poor in the USA to investigate whether the culture of poverty as claimed by Oscar Lewis exist. His focus was to test “Lewis's thesis that those in poverty who are inclined to participate with others gain in potential mobility in comparison with those who are not similarly inclined”. He aimed to “(a) describe the participation patterns of a sample of poor rural households in Mississippi, (b) see what factors are associated with those patterns, and (c) investigate whether participation patterns contribute to the mobility of the next generation” (David B. Miller 1976:720).

David Miller used a simple random sampling technique to collect data from one hundred and ten households in Kemper County, Mississippi through structured interviews in summer 1968. The information he sorts after concerned with “the social and economic attributes of persons living in a rural, low-income area”. These ranged from “data on participation and on income, education, age, geographic mobility (potential and actual), home tenure status, and sex (David B. Miller 1976: 721). To elicit this information, David Miller structured his interview questions to reflect various levels of social participation—membership and involvement in formal organizations in the community, as well as informal participation with relatives, friends, and neighbors. He then weighted answers to these questions such that a high score indicated a high level of social participation in the society with a nonimmediate family member. Next, he divided the
analysis of the data into two—dependent and independent variables and analyzed with the “gamma measure of association”

David Miller’s major finding is that “the relationships between participation and income, education, age, sex, home tenure status, and geographic mobility potential of household heads all proved insignificant” (David B. Miller 1976:721). He also found that a “positive relationship between the level of participation of household head and the level of education of his adult children did, however, prove significant beyond the .001 level of probability” (David B. Miller 1976, 70). Due in part to the secondary nature of the data analyzed and the small sample size, Miller indicated that “the implications that can be drawn from these findings are limited” (David B. Miller 1976, 72). He thus declared the study inconclusive. Muller’s inquiry and conclusion demonstrate the critical nature of the issue of poverty. It is a clear indication that studies of this kind require sizable and well-designed methods and appropriately collected data.

In another study focused on the poor in the USA, but specifically among the Appalachia natives, Dwight Billings (1974) set out to test whether certain elements of the Appalachian culture are, in fact, distinctive—what Oscar Lewis called sub-culture. Here, he collected and analyzed data from the 1972 Southeastern Regional survey with a scale formulated along three core traits laid down by Oscar Lewis—localism, fundamentalism, and fatalism. Here too, sample respondents of eleven thousand, six hundred families in thirty-one neighborhoods, were drawn from twenty counties of North Carolina.

Dwight Billings then selected fourteen (14) of the many attitude items that are closely similar to the previous study the data was used for and on their face validity.
After that, he trichotomized, and factor analyzed the data to produce a four-item scale that drew out fatalism, achievement orientation, outlook on the future, and social class identification which he used as a measure of “Middle-Class Orientation”. He then compared the “middle-class” orientation of respondents living in the mountain counties of North Carolina with that of urban respondents from the industrial Piedmont and that of respondents residing in the rural eastern coastal plain. His result shows a weak relationship between region and middle-class orientation.

Dwight Billings’ efforts to discover what accounts for this difference, and how important is it led him to use three separate indicators to measure SES: occupation, personal income, and education. He found that, rather than education differences, rurality accounts for the small gap in middle-class orientation between mountain respondents and the rest of the sample. Dwight Billing thus concluded that the backwardness and poverty of the Appalachians are consequent upon rurality rather than on distinctive mountain culture.

While Dwight Billings findings appear not to support the cultural roots of the Appalachian economic backwardness, his later suggestion for an alternative approach—situational analysis—to the inquiry seems to me as the main purpose of his inquiry. According to him:

Attitudinal characteristics do not explain the lack of development in the mountain counties surveyed. However, Appalachia is not the medieval society to which concepts borrowed from Tonnies or Redfield are applicable. Much of it, though not the North Carolina Mountains, is integrated with a modern industrial economy through its coal production. From this perspective, its poverty is not a consequence of insufficient modernization but the result of a particular kind of economic development and its political consequences. A situational analysis of Appalachian
poverty recommends itself as an alternative to the cultural explanation (Dwight Billings, 1974: 320-321).

The above shows Dwight Billings silent about the role innovation and modernization plays on the development of societies. One might wonder what could have been the situation if the Appalachians regions had fully integrated into the modern American society where the role of coal in the social development had largely given way to industrialization.

Although, the culture of poverty thesis generates much-heated debate among the academic in the 1970s through 1980s, policy makers beginning with Lyndon Johnson of the Unite States of America had begun to implement interventions and poverty eradication strategies that included altering the attitudes, beliefs and orientation of the poor in its design. The move towards culture change related interventions drew the attentions of scholars who evaluated the credibility of such policies and their underlining theory—a culture of poverty. In this category is Naomi Carmon (1985).

Naomi Carmon (1985) evaluated a government policy on poverty reduction designed to reorient the poor from their ways of life—culture of poverty—that engendered their economic backwardness. For Naomi Carmon, “the issue is: Does such a program have a chance to break the cycle of poverty” (Naomi Carmon, 1985, 405). Her study focused on three key assumptions of the culture of poverty thesis (a) is the poor in Israel characterized by the specific traits that are found among the poor in other countries; (b) If so, is it a culture of poverty; and (c) what are the prospects for change? Her population consists of seventy-three poor young women who had applied for urban
housing assistance in Tel Aviv and seventeen mothers of some of the participants. Their views were elicited through a structured interview. Her inquiry showed that the poverty traits found among poor people in many cultures were also common among Israeli poor, but because they did not appear simultaneously in all four spheres of life (individual, familial, communal, and societal). Thus, she did not uphold Lewis’ model.

Naomi Carmon’s rejection of cultural underpinnings of economic backwardness among her subjects because the poverty traits were not present across all four spheres—individual, familial, communal, and societal—is surprising. So also, is her rejection of the culture of poverty theory due to a limited sample.

Another major critique of the culture of poverty thesis is Rachel K. Jones and her colleague Ye Luo (1999) whose research efforts examined whether poor individuals differ from non-poor individuals according to values and attitudes about three dimensions: employment, family values, and dependency on means-tested welfare. They compared non-Hispanic White and African Americans in a sample size of eight thousand, eight hundred and thirty across four years, using data from the General Social Survey (GSS). They found that the culture of poverty is supported in two instances when race and poverty status are considered. However, their hypothesis that African Americans differ from Whites regarding their attitudes towards means-tested welfare and family life received little support. Their findings were also at variance with the culture of poverty hypothesis in six of the eight equations. For instance, they found that when it comes to valuing a work ethic in their offspring, the effect of poverty is the same for both Whites and African Americans. While the consequences of poverty were race-specific for the
family value items: Only poor African Americans are likely to agree that a single mother can raise a child. Rachel K. Jones and Ye Luo concluded that they “find little support for the traditional culture of poverty argument” (Rachel Jones and Ye Luo 1999:454).

Jones and Luo reported that: “poverty/being poor decreases the odd of an individual indicating that learning to work hard is one of the most important qualities a child should acquire” (1999:454). Their report supports the culture of poverty argument which suggests that non-poor people are more likely than poor individuals to socialize their offspring to work hard. No doubt, this is at the heart of Oscar Lewis’ argument that mental paradigms are inter-generationally transferred, notably through the family. Again, these scholars affirmed that poverty increases the odd of agreeing that a single mother can raise a child as well as a married couple. More so, they found that (poor) African Americans more than the Whites are much likely to indicate their support for premarital sex. Here too, Jones and Luo’s findings support the proposition of the ‘culture of poverty’ thesis that one’s values and attitudes shape his/her economic outcomes. Given the above findings, one may wonder why Jones and Lou are quick to reject the culture of poverty thesis.

In the rural area of Cameroun, Akuri John, Susan Weinger, and Barbara (2009) designed a study to investigate the feelings of poor rural women regarding their condition of poverty rather than the underlying factors of chronic poverty or the potency of the “culture of poverty” thesis. Here, they randomly selected thirty-six women from seven rural villages of a combined population ranging from 250 – 8,000. Then, the scholars utilized a structured interview to elicit responses from their participants. John et al. then
used the inductive analysis method to extract the major themes (11 in number) that emerged from the responses. These themes were eventually subjected to theme analysis.

They reported that most of their respondents' hard career goals and dreams to be successful contrary to the propositions of the culture of poverty thesis that suggests that generational immersion in chronic economic backwardness leads to the absence of dreams, i.e. lack of forward-looking. These hopes were dashed early in life by poverty, often consequent upon one ill fate or another. John et al., therefore, concluded that “culture of poverty concept used by some proponents to explain generational poverty is not applicable to these rural women participants living in the third world” (John et al., 1990:145).

It is interesting to see the research design of John and his colleagues. As they clearly stated at the beginning, their goal was to investigate the feelings of the poor regarding his condition and to contrast it with their initial life goals. This design is probably not the best to test the potency if a theory like the culture of poverty. Also, the scholars relied on the use of a scenario of a hypothetical life experience told to their participants to spark up their senses. Furthermore, the research/researchers told a story of a young woman whose dream of acquiring education and afterward building a career was dashed by a family mishap that incapacitated her family financially. That corroborates Oscar Lewis’ observation and writing in the “Five Families” and supports the proposition that poverty is trans-generationally transmitted through the family in particular.
3.2. Relevant empirical studies supporting the culture of poverty thesis

Given the level of criticism the ‘culture of poverty’ theory received as soon as it was published, some other liberal thinking scholars were eager to empirically test its propositions. Among them is Edward Banfield. Like Lewis, Banfield took the ethnographic approach. He lived among extremely poor and backward peasant community in the south of Italy for nine months between 1954 -1955. As he grapples with understanding the root of the backwardness of the community, Banfield became startled by the utter absence of organization in that community which he called “Montegrano” (fictitious name). He contrasted Montegrano with St George, Utah, which is similar in size and remoteness, but is full of organized activities.

He observes:

We are apt to take for granted that economic and political associations will quickly arise wherever technical conditions and natural resources permit. The assumption is wrong because it overlooks the crucial importance of culture. People live and think in very different ways, and some of these ways are radically inconsistent with the requirements of a formal organization. There is some reason to doubt that the non-western cultures of the world will prove capable of creating and maintaining the high degree of an organization without which a modern economy and democratic political order are impossible (Edward Banfield, 1958: 8).

Banfield concluded that while numerous factors explain the poverty and backwardness of the group, the most significant of them is the culture (beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors)—amoral familism—uphold by this group. He defined ‘amoral familism’ as “the inability of villagers to act together for their common good or, indeed, for any good transcending the immediate, material interest of the nuclear family” (Edward Banfield, 1958: 10). Edward Banfield’s hypothesis is that “the Montegranies’ act as if
they are following the rules: *Maximize the material, the short-run advantage of the nuclear family; assume that all others will do likewise*” (Edward Banfield; 1958: 85). He then applies this hypothesis to the phenomena of poverty and backwardness he observed within the community. Here, a few of which suffices:

1. In a society of amoral familists, no one will further the interest of the group or community except as it is to his private advantage to do so.

2. In a society of amoral familists, organization (i.e., deliberately concerted action) will be very difficult to achieve and maintain.

3. The amoral familist who is an office-holder will take bribe when he can get away with it. But whether he takes bribes or not will be assumed by the society of amoral familists that he does.

4. In the society of amoral familists there will be no connection between abstract political principle (i.e. ideology) and concrete behavior in the ordinary relationships of everyday life, and,

5. The amoral familist will value gains accruing to the community only insofar as he and his family are likely to share them (Edward Field, 1958:85-102).

Banfield’s report indicated that the dominant operational ethos of the Montagranies is weak family values and poor parenting, fatalism, and lack of outlook on the future. This parallels Oscar Lewis’ findings in his five Mexican families study and corroborates the culture of poverty thesis. Like Oscar Lewis, Banfield is acutely aware that the pattern and process of child upbringing in every society is central to its performance both in the economic and political realm. His observation in Montegrano is
that the love of the parents for their children hinders them from taking decisive actions of discipline on their offspring as and at when due, even though they have an obligation to "set the children on the right road". On the other hand, children, through deception, exploit the love of their parents. Consequently, “children are naturally lazy and wayward; all the homilies scolding and beatings an indulgent parent gives them may not suffice to set them on the right road” (Edward Banfield 1958: 108).

Banfield observed that the Montegrano peasants seem to fear nature more than man. This fear influences their faith in one’s capacity to meaningful accomplishments (both economic and political), and their ability to plan for the future. He reported that for the Montegrano peasants living in such a fearful world meant that:

A parent cannot count on achieving anything by his effort and enterprise. The conditions and means of success are all beyond his control. He may struggle to get ahead, but in the end, he will probably be crushed by the insane furry of events” “Great success, then, is obtained by the favor of the saints or by luck, certainly not by thrift, work, and enterprise. These may be important if one is already lucky, but not otherwise (Edward Banfield 1958: 113 - 114).

This mental paradigm of fear and lack of outward looking is transmitted generationally from the family.

Finally, Edward Banfield argues that “an industrialized economy is possible only in a complex social organization which cannot come into existence under conditions of amoral familism and that efforts at economic or community improvement are doomed to failure unless the total ethos is modified, which involves a cultural change” (1958:132). Edward Banfield (1958) report indicated that the poor in Montegrano and Mexico share
similar values and that these values constitute sub-cultures that differ markedly from the operating norms of the larger societies in which they exist.

Though scholars have been deeply divided on the merit of the culture of poverty model, they almost unanimously agree that:

(a) For a culture of poverty to exist, it must be demonstrated that there are attitudinal, values, and behavioral differences between the poor and the non-poor (b) these specific differentiating values and behaviors are socially transmitted from one generation to the next, and (c) It must be demonstrated that there exist a causal relationship between this generationally transmitted set of cultural values on the one hand and educational, occupational, and financial achievements on the other” (Troy Abell and Larry Lyon, 1979:605).

Based on the above criteria, (Troy Abell and Larry Lyon, 1979) designed their inquiry to evaluate the culture of poverty thesis. They utilized the data from the National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) of labor market experience gathered by the Center for The Human Right Research, Ohio state University between 1966 and 1971. The size of their sample is five thousand, two hundred and twenty-five young men. To answer the question whether there are differences between the poor and the non-poor, they utilized ‘a series of “difference of mean tests (t-tests) to analyze and compare and the none-poor on forty-nine variables.

Their report indicated a statistically significant difference between the poor and the non-poor. They wrote that “of the forty-nine variables on which the poor and the non-poor are compared, twenty-nine are significantly different at the .01 confidence level.” They also found that “the difference between the poor and the non-poor regarding the work ethics and a locus of control is statistically insignificant” (Troy Abell and Larry
Lyon, 1979, 607). Thus, they concluded that “these data certainly do not support a number of stereotypes concerning the poor” (Troy Abell and Larry Lyon, 1979:609).

Troy Abell and Larry Lyon’s inquiry into the existence and social transferability of differentiating values and behaviors from generation to another show that, the sons of the poor differ markedly from the sons of the non-poor in many important ways including IQ, and professional and financial accomplishments. However, their report also indicates that there is no correlation between this generationally transmitted set of differentiating variables and occupational achievement.

By running a series of regression analysis using the forty-nine variables, Abell and Troy also found that the education, especially, the number of years of formal education one has is the best single predictor of occupational prestige and income for both the poor and the non-poor. It accounts for “46 percent of the variations in occupational prestige and 25 percent of the variation in income for the poor sample and 48 percent of the variation in occupational prestige and 15 percent for the non-poor sample” (Troy Abell and Larry Lyon, 1979, 610).

Furthermore, they indicated that beyond years of formal education, (a situational or structural variable) has a direct explanatory relationship with income. Whereas, individual variable (those and individual has control over) such as IQ, locus of control, work ethics, occupation desired, work knowledge and expulsion from school could not add to the variance explained by education and region of the country. In answering the question whether there exist causal relationships between the generationally transmitted set of differentiating values and occupational and financial achievement, their report
shows that to be negative. They wrote that “of the seven factors directly or indirectly affecting occupational prestige and income, six are generationally transmitted differentiating variables. All but the education factor is variable that significantly differentiate the poor from the non-poor at .01 level” (Abell and Troy 1979:610). Thus, Abell and Lyon concluded that “although, the poor may differ from the non-poor on a number of these behavioral traits, these differences are irrelevant to poverty because no causal link is established” (1979: 610).

While Abell and Troy reported the existence of a generationally transmitted set of differentiating variables (culture of poverty) from their study, their finding could not corroborate a direct relationship between these variables and poverty. It seems that, rather than control for such variable as IQ, and some school years attended, these should have been factored into the equation. This perhaps would have exposed the researchers to the role these two factors play in educational accomplishment, and by inference economic progress. This argument is corroborated by the Alan T. Twomey and Philip De Lacey (1986).

Recently, many more empirical studies designed to evaluate the reliability of the culture of poverty model have been conducted outside the American continent and in the fringes of the developing nations. Their findings seem to corroborate the claims of the ‘culture of poverty’ theory. One of such studies is by Alan T. Twomey and Philip De Lacey (1986). In Australia, Alan T. Twomey and Philip De Lacey (1986) designed a study that seeks to identify and to interpret characteristics of members of an Australian minority ethnic group with the ‘culture of poverty’ model. Their sample (fifty-five
Aboriginals and fifty-six Whites ages from 5-10) were selected from the communities of about four hundred and forty-four ‘high-contact part-Aboriginals who live on the south coast of New South Wales, and about 8,000 White Australians, with whom they coexist. Though, a sizable number of these children (32 percent Aboriginal and 23 percent Whites) came from fatherless families; they were selected from home whose heads were employed in the unskilled, semi-skilled, or blue-collar jobs.

Each child was given four cognitive tests, while their scholastic ability was determined by interviewing their teachers who were asked to rate the number abilities, reading abilities, and application to school work of children in their classes who were in the sample. Parents or guardians of the children were interviewed with a scale developed from the culture of poverty scale (CPS). They reported significant differences between CPS scores of the Aboriginals and Whites, with the Aboriginals showing many more characteristics of the culture of poverty than the Whites. This finding is even astonishing because the Aboriginals’ material living conditions had improved considerably in recent years. This is a significant support to the proposition of ‘culture of poverty’ thesis that those odd traits of the poor may continue even when the conditions (structural or situational) that gave rise to them had ceased.

They concluded that:

The higher involvement of the Aboriginals in the culture of poverty is accompanied by higher rates of school absenteeism, poor scholastic-ability ratings, and poor performance on all but one of the language and classification test. When each ethnic group is considered separately, for the Aboriginal children the level of ‘culture of poverty’ involvement of a child’s family seems to be related to differences in cognitive ability, and possibly scholastic ability; and for the White children ‘culture of poverty’ seems related to language performance test (Alan T. Twomey and Philip De Lacey, 1986:80).
In a similar inquiry carried out in Iran, Ahmad Mohammadpur, Jalil Karimi, and Mehdi Alizadeh (2011) reflected on their practice as interveners in poverty alleviation program designed to help underprivileged women transit out of their situation. They examined the attitudes of the poor women who are caretakers of their families, supported by the Behzisti Organization (Iranian Government Welfare Institution). Here, caretaker women are defined as:

Women are defined as those who are in charge of their family’s needs and decision making without a man supporting the family. The caretaker women can be categorized as divorcees, widows, with husbands who are in jail, disabled, unemployed or addicted to the drugs and unable to provide financial support. Women whose husbands have migrated for wage labor have also been included in this class (Mohammedpur et al., 2011: 5).

The study addressed the following questions: (a) what is the cultural context creating and maintaining the culture of poverty among these women? (b) What are the characteristics and dimensions of the culture of poverty among caretaker women? (c) How do these women define, understand, and interpret poverty and their experiences as caretakers in poverty? (Mohammadpur et al., 2011:5). These scholars utilized intensity sampling method to select their participants and an in-depth interview and direct participation observation to elicit their responses. Furthermore, they applied thematic analysis on the data which produced eight main themes. These include “low-risk taking, irresponsibility, beggary, dis-participation, sexual vulnerability, forced remarriage, gender bias, and secrecy” (Mohammadpur et al., 2011: 6).
Mohammadpur et al. (2011) reported that a major determinant of poverty among the caretaker women is a low-risk factor which has been internalized over the years. They maintained that phobia for risk taking, which stemmed from the life experiences of multiple frustrations and lack of outward looking are the major determinants of poverty among the caretaker women. Also, the feeling of entitlement and dis-participation (lack of socializing) with the larger society were reported as contributing factors of the economic backwardness of the women. They also found that the poor women have developed a mindset of continued welfare.

According to Mohammedpur et al.:

Since Behzisti has ordered us to exclude women with high capabilities (rich enough) from the list of the poor and stop giving them salary, bonus and so on, thus these women try to hide their income, properties, remarriage, their daughter’s marriage and cases which may cause decrease or cut in the salary paid to them by this organization. Once we noticed that a woman, who got used to coming to organization constantly for getting help and food bonus, had not come for three months and had been suddenly disappeared. When she came again, we asked about her absence; she told that she had been sick. It was a little suspicion, so we decided to ask her neighbors, they revealed that she had remarried, and the reason for not coming for asking money was her pregnancy.

– So why did she do that?
Because when a woman remarries, she is not permitted to get support from the organization.

Again, the above clearly support the culture of poverty proposition that the sub-culture of the poor tends to survive beyond the structural or situational conditions that created them in the first place. Succinctly put, they concluded that:

These and other questions show that poverty in our society in general and especially among the poor is not only a behavior, need or conditions, but it is following a mental, value and normative system called culture of poverty. Hence, without recognition of this kind of culture, any policy and planning will be failed or will waste expenditures (Mohammadpur et al., 2011; 12).
Being a research born out of (reflective) practice, this study and its conclusion is noteworthy. Their emphasis that failure to recognize the (sub)culture of the poor and its debilitating consequences, to factor it in the design and implementation of anti-poverty intervention policies will be efforts in futility corroborates some of the assumptions of this study.

In another study designed to investigate rather “the factors that influence the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria” Roseline Jindor Yunusa (2012) concluded that “the problem of poverty alleviation programs as seen by this study are that policy makers have no knowledge about the culture of poverty or the emotional preparedness that people need to break family generation cycle of poverty and ultimately transition out of poverty” (2012: i). In this inquiry, Yunusa turned her attention to the chronic poverty in Nigeria, and why almost all the alleviation programs of the past regimes (1960-2012) were unsuccessful. To investigate this, she selected the poor; five beneficiaries of the government (federal and state) poverty alleviation programs in Abuja, Nigeria, two of “Hope Initiative” (an NGO), and one from a bank sponsored project. She interviewed these eight participants; the data so gathered were subjected to thematic analysis under six main themes.

Her inquiry reported that a major factor behind the underperformance of the alleviation programs is the lack of understanding of the poor and their (sub)culture. Yunusa concluded that, “the Peoples Bank of Nigeria claims to be small-man oriented too, but it was run by big-men who do not know what it means to be poor, have the knowledge of the culture of poverty, and neither do they appreciate the thinking of people
in poverty” (Roseline Yunusa, 2012:33). While this study was not designed to
investigate the determinants of poverty in Nigeria, or to evaluate the explanatory
potential of the culture of poverty theory, some of its findings alluded to the existence of
subculture among the Nigerian poor.

In a similar inquiry designed to investigate “The impact of Catholic social
thought and capitalism on the social and economic development of Nigeria the role of
Nigerian culture in the persistence of poverty” Agbakwuru E. Chinedu (2004) reported
that, in addition to colonialism and its appendages, internal factors peculiar to the people
of Nigeria have contributed to the current predicament of persistent poverty in the
country. However, He contends that:

These factors may not be collapsed into what we may call the Nigerian culture
because they contradict some of the values and modes of behavior which the people
have identified themselves with, which were devised as specific to themselves, for
their common existence and survival. These factors despite how wide spread it may
be, are adaptations that some people found convenient because of a moral vacuum

Moral vacuum is consequent upon the evaporation of the restraints imposed by
the traditional cultural morality. This moral gap now permeates the fabrics of the
Nigerian society and traverses every region. However, the practice of capitalism entails
some levels of ethical values such as trust. The absence of moral values including those
required to thrive in the capitalist venture meant that Nigerians developed various forms
of attitudes that are incongruent with capitalist practices and principle, as the operating
standards both in private and public spaces in the country. The consequence is that, long
after it has taken root in the country, capitalism fails to thrive, hence the economic backwardness of Nigeria.

3.3. Conclusion

Five decades after political independence, enormous deposits of various natural resources, huge crude oil revenue and successive regimes of poverty reduction programs, Nigeria remains classified among the poorest nations globally. Most her population lives in absolute poverty, lacking access to necessities of life, and having little hope for a better tomorrow. Across the region, reports indicate a high prevalence of poverty in Northern Nigeria which “continues to display some of the worst human development indicators in the world” (Leena Koni Hoffman 2014:5). For over 75 percent of Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria, the quality of life is disappointing:

- More than three-quarter of the adult population in the region are illiterate.
- About 80 percent of the Northern Nigerian women are illiterate.
- More than half of the Northern population is malnourished.
- Unemployment in the region is 40 percent, as opposed to 12.1 percent national average.
- Infant and child mortality rate are 222 per 1,000 as opposed to 89 per 1,000 live births in the South (Issah N. Abu et al. 2015:5).

Summarily, the North is not only the poorest region in Nigeria; it is far poorer now than it was at independence in 1960. Persistent poverty in the North comes at a high price to the region, Nigeria, and the world—inequality occasioned by conflict and violent extremism. As with poverty in other parts of the world, scholars of Nigeria have tried to
explain this phenomenon with the structural/economic theory. They contend that persistent economic backwardness among the Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria is rooted rather in the total neglect of the agricultural sector, upon which the economy of the region depends, by successive regimes following the emergence of the oil industry since the 1970s. The result is low levels of productivity and production technology in the agricultural sector. For this crop of theorists, this incompetence on the part of the government across all tiers, together with the culture of corruption that characterize the Nigerian state is responsible for the persistent poverty in the region.

The challenge with the above argument is that, in Nigeria, the government factor is constant across the regions, both in character and composition. Thus, above report by-itself is insufficient to explain chronic poverty among the Hausa-Fulani of northern Nigeria. Advocates of this position cite the remarkable prosperity of Southerners, irrespective of bad governance. The primary motivation for this inquiry was to seek an alternative explanation of the phenomena within a larger determinant of poverty to see how it can advance a general understanding of the challenge. That would be the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS

4.0.  Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first presents a critical examination of the development of the economic, political, and social transformation which has created the situations predisposing the Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria to poverty under the heading “Northern Nigeria: a brief history.” Part two will present a critical analysis of the primary data for this inquiry in an elaborate way. Here, the focus would be to identify patterns and themes that emerge from the data about poverty in Northern Nigeria, backed with evidence from the literature, presented in clear and detailed manner. Note that by design, this study is not a scientific testing of the core traits of culture of poverty thesis, rather, it is an interpretative induction of the themes that emerge from the interview data. These emergent themes would then be examined vis-a’-vis the propositions of the culture of poverty thesis and in relation to the questions this research deals with. This would the focus of the second segment of this chapter.

4.1. Northern Nigeria: A Brief History

The region of the upper (River) Niger and Benue basin stretching to the borders of the Sahara Desert was home to multiethnic groups organized in various clusters of state structures. Among them, the Kanuri Empire (Kanem-Bornu), situated close to the banks of the Lake Chard basin, the Hausa-city states, and other conglomeries of other states clustered along the River Niger and River Benue axis. Like in the Hausaland, Isah
Mohammed Abbas (2010) noted that the process of state formation across these groups is markedly similar. Three key factors informed this evolutionary process: “physiographic and economic reasons, the emergence of strong dynasties and rulers, and the introduction of Islam” (Toyin Falola and Akanma Adebayo 1985:56).

The nucleus of the Hausa state is the clans; each made up of numerous compounds of clusters of agricultural communities (unguwoyi) administered by compound heads (Sarki). The Sarki coordinated the farming activities of the clan and maintained the communal discipline that was beyond the families. Furthermore, another strategic center of authority was the family heads (the maigida) who kept order within his household and directed all agricultural activities (Toyin Falola and Akanma Adebayo 1985 and Ejiogu 2004). “In practice, the maigida had more power than the Saki noma, mainly because allegiance of members of a community was primarily to the head of the family” (Toyin Falola and Akanma Adebayo 1985:69).

Falola and Adebayo (1985) argue that, beyond the clusters of the compounds and clans, early Hausa states also included congregates of distantly relate extended family members and strangers who settled around these groups and who pursued different occupation other than agriculture. This they maintain was due to an environment that was conducive which promoted economic growth, the introduction of iron tools, and by religious factors of neighboring groups belonging to a similar cult. Given these factors, the Hausa states began to enlarge and evolve into towns (guruuruwa plural, gari singular). Also, within these cities evolved established political authorities vested in the Sarkin Gari but whose power is limited within the farmlands of the gari. In 7th century in Hausaland,
the social system “had not been transformed into the large-scale political organization under centralized rule. It was an era when the authority patterns had not been restructured in ways that marginalized subordinate members of society for the benefit of few leaders who arrogated the task of directing society unto themselves” (Ejiogu 2004: 181).

By 12th – 15th century, however, the political developments that began in the preceding centuries had become established and animated in the emergence of leaders with visionary instincts and state building proclivities. In what appeared like a revolutionary manner, these zealous leaders began to transform these gururuwa (towns) into city states (birane) by merging some of these numerous, small, independent towns into bigger states with centralized political authorities (see Ejiogu 2004, Toyin Falola and Akanma Adebayo 1985, Sa’ad Abubakar 1974, and Yield 1960). In all, seven states emerged via this process: “Biram, Kano, Gobir, Zazzau, and Katsina. And seven vassals: Daura, Zamfara, Kebbi, Nupe, Gwarri, Yaure, and Kwararafa” (Ejiogu 2004:182).

According to Falola and Adebayo (1985), three key factors made this transformation from gari to birane possible. They include “geographic location, trade and strategic factors” (Toyin Falola and Akanma Adebayo 1985:70). These states were located along the most fertile areas which supported agricultural boom and industrial developments and were centers of trade routes, heavily fortified with walls. Also, key three transformations were noticeable in these new states. First, the emergence of non-kinship based type of government who became all-powerful rulers under the title Sarki—king. Second, authority became centralized and vested in the Sarki, an overall ruler of the
state assisted by a range of officials (masu-sarauta). Third, the emergence of social stratifications: Rulers, the privileged class (masu alfarma) who are immune from the law of the kasa, “who routinely expropriate sufficient surplus values from the subjects” and their common subjects—Talakawa (Smith 1971; cited in Ejiogu 2004: 182). Consequently, land, the chief factor of production became the prerogative of the state and of the ruling class who held it in fiefs; the commoners were reduced to ordinary serfs. “The Hausaland was feudal in the sense that the land belonged to the ruling aristocracy, and the peasants had no rights of ownership. The peasants were made to pay excessive taxes, and their farms were often expropriated” (M. A Al-Hajj 1979:11). By exploiting surplus resources from the common serfs, the rulers built and maintained highly equipped standing army with which they furthered the art of state creation and expansion through wars.

Within this time in history, the Hausa states were waging wars of slave raiding on non-Hausa pagan neighboring tribes, and of conquest and expansion against each other. It is at this point that slavery came into and became a major part of the equation of social production of labor in Hausaland. Empirical evidence shows that farm-slavery was a predominant feature and means of agricultural labor in the 15th -18th century Hausaland. Smith estimated that in Zazzua/Zaria emirate, one of the major cities in 15th-18th century Hausaland, “there are probably as many slaves as free persons, lacking the legal, social, and economic privileges of the free persons” (cited in E.R Yeld 1960:116). To be sure, as is apparent in Lord Lugard’s Memorandum No. 22 (1906), “it is quite clear that the farm-slavery was very considerable in the Hausa emirates. It is justifiable to state that if,
as some believed, the population of Hausaland at the end of the 19th century was some tens of million, then several million people were in servitude, most of them being farm-slaves and their dependents” (cited in Polly Hill 1976: 397). It is important also to state herein that slavery became an important means for wealth creation and provided the merchandise of trade with the Arab merchants from the Maghreb Africa. The slave economy was made possible mainly because Islam permits the enslavement of infidels. Although, this was abused since there are enough evidence that even members of the Islamic communities were enslaved too.

One other factor pivotal in the statecraft in the 15th-18th century Hausaland was Islam. While there are contending theories of its origin, a predominant version is that Islam was introduced in the Hausaland in the 12th century by Kanem Bornu traders (Richard Dusgate 1985). However, for many reasons including that it was received only by the kings and was mixed with traditional practices, it never flourished. Towards the end of the 15th century, Islam received further impetus from Fulbe/Fulani traders and scholars who migrated to Hausaland from the areas of Mali and Songhai empires. Thus, by 15th century going forward, Hausas rulers have adopted Islam and had made it a state religion.

From that moment,

The role of Islam in the social, economic, and political history of Hausaland was no longer as simple as it may seem to some observers today. Islam, which was introduced into Hausaland by Arab traders, promptly became the harbinger of commerce and trade that furnished the rulers with the skilled personnel whose expertise they tapped to develop and expand their state bureaucracies. Without Islam and the skilled administrative manpower that was associated with its initial propagation in Hausaland, there is no doubt that those rulers could either have found it difficult or impossible to operate their predatory centralized rule. It
furnished them with an invaluable political and ideological infrastructure with which they were able to support the regimentation of Directiveness over their conquered subjects (Ejiogu 2004:186).

For instance, the last quarter of the 18th-century Gobir witnessed excessive exploitation of the serfs by their rulers. These rulers imposed unchecked forms of taxations on the peasants and subjected them to untold hardship. Besides, the ruling class, under many guises, through the practice known as ‘Kamuwa’ regularly appropriated the properties and labors of the commoners.

Subsequently, kamuwa [was even] extended to include the wives of the serfs, corves increased, and ceremonial self-abasement was imposed on all subjects. Subject peoples who could not adjust to the comprehensive coverage, specific latitude, close supervision, and severe sanction threshold of Directiveness under Sarki rule left the walled domains. Those who remained became disposed to the point of indifference in the Compliance dimension and adjusted their daily socio-economic activities to the realities of such a life, which is akin to learning to ‘staying in their place (Smith 1964: 169; cited in Ejiogu 2004:189).

In Kano, owing to his unquenchable thirst to extort, which drove most merchants away to Katsina, Sarkin Kano Kumbari Dan Sherafa (1713-43) almost destroyed the Kurmi market. Likewise, between 1768 to1776 the Sarkin Kano Baba Zaki did not spare even the nobility nor the Ulamas. He exploited them as much as the commoners (Hamza Muhammad Maishanu and Isa Muhammad Maishanu 1999). All the Hausa states and vassals replicated the above systems and structures of oppression. The situation in the jama’as (Islamic communities) was of discontent. Given this situation, two revolutionary events took place: First, revolts. The vassals began to revolt against the core states, gained their independence, and in some cases, raid the core states for slaves and resources. There were internal serf rebellions too. Thus, Hausaland were engulfed in
series and decades of internecine wars in the late 17th century through early 18th century. Second, the Islamic scholars led by the Fulani who had settled in Hausaland in the 15th century began to preach and write against the Habes oppression of the Talakawa (commoners) and the dominant practice of mixing Islamic practices with local traditions. Among them, Usman Dan Fodio, born in Gobir in 1754 by Fulani settler parents and began preaching in 1774. His message resonated with the oppressed, won their admiration and followership, but provoked the rulers. By 1794/95, Dan Fodio’s popularity, message, and the growth of his followers had begun to alarm the authorities in Gobir. In consequence, the Saki sort to stop him through a promulgation that abolished the wearing of turban and veil, Islamic preaching except by Dan Fodio, and non-originally born Muslims to return to their traditional worship (Hamza Muhammad Maishanu and Isa Muhammad Maishanu 1999).

Usman Dan Fodio understood the plot of the Sarki to weaken his base and chose to be proactive instead. In 1804 Dan Fodio embarked on a hejira, fled Degel his home town to Dugu. There too, his follower grew with time. On 21 June 1804, Dan Fodio led a Jihad (holy war) on Gobir, his King, and the infidels. The Fulani nomads dominated his army, but also included disfranchised Hausa commoners and non-Hausa members of the state. The successful Fulani Jihadi conquest of the Hausa marked the beginning of a new era in the socio-political and economic structure in Hausaland—the rule of the Fulani. “Ever since, much of Hausaland has remained under Fulani rule” (Ejiogu 2004: 191).

Paradoxically, what emerged in post-Jihad Hausaland was simply a change of guard. Rather than reform the autocracy in Hausa social system and install a new political
order that would allow popular participation, the Fulani Jihadists further entrenched it. Usman Dan Fodio simply substituted ‘Emirates’ for ‘Saki’, “declared his clan the royal clan or Sullubawa and appointed its members Emirs to rule over them in his name as the Sultan” (Ejiogu 2004: 192). The Jihad continued beyond the death of Usman Dan Fodio in 1817 and spread to non-Hausa states in the region including Kane-Borno.

The British encounter brought the Fulani expansionism to a halt. By proclaiming the region, a British Protectorate on January 1, 1900, for the Hausa-Fulani, a new era had just begun. By 1914, the colonizers amalgamated the hitherto independently administered region with the Southern protectorate and called it Nigeria. On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained political independence from Britain.

Within this environment, half a century later, most of this population, majority of whom are serfs and their dependents are still chronically poor. How does above depiction create and sustain the environment that generates the common conditions of poverty among this group? What factors in this environment and in what ways do they interact with one another as well as their surroundings to hinder economic prosperity among the individuals and the entire group? How can the understanding of the shared experiences of the Hausa-Fulani illustrated above illuminate the path of this inquiry and help to decipher from the data the dynamic interaction of the environment and other mechanisms that produce economic backwardness in Northern Nigeria?
Poverty
States showing % living in absolute poverty

Source: Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics

Figure 1
4.2. **The Data: Theme Analysis**

In all, eight core themes emerged from the data: “Northern conservatism,” “culture of dependence/beggarliness/economy of affection,” “large population and limited parenting,” “male dominance and social exclusion of women in economic activities,” “limited priority to education,” “religion—a form of belief in Islam that nurtures fatalism and irrationality,” “low risk taking/ lack of need-for-achievement motivation,” and “leadership/bad governance.”

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Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

Theme 1: Northern conservatism.

Among the first themes to emerge from the data is the conservative nature of the Northern social system and people. All the twenty-nine participants utilized the phrase “northern conservatism” or similar expression multiple times to explain the sociopolitical system and economic structure of the Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria. One in which the social structure that emerged following the Utsman Dan Fodio led Fulani jihad is
stratified into two: The first group represented the rulers who monopolized the political and economic life of the state and utilized its coercive apparatus to shut down all avenues of participation in the society from the serfs. The second, the subjugated serfs and peasants “who had been largely convinced through the supporting ideological and political superstructure of the Islam to give up all acts of participation and absolve those in the authority of all responsiveness” (Emmanuel Ejiogu 2004:190). All the participants articulated that above system which enforces subservience on the mass population of the serfs discourages creativity, promotes dependence, resists change and creates a self-reinforcing environment that engenders and sustains poverty. Furthermore, many Northern elites are hell-bent on maintaining the status quo “which was considered an ideal that was fought for. This implies in many respects, attempting to uncritically conserve traditional institutions, opposing Western education without creating a profound and viable alternative, and by attempting to exonerate political elites from serious scrutiny and accountability to the public” (Samuel Zalanga, 20014:6).

In responding to the question “how then would you explain the prevalence of Western education among northern elites —and the general lack thereof—among the mass poor northerners”, one participant replied: “if you come here in the North and ask, everybody would tell you that look, the average Northerner is a conservative and always delights in taking praises. It is a tradition here. They are not like Southerners; Northerners like to receive praise. Also, they conserve and keep to themselves whatsoever they have achieved” (RFW). Another participant said:

A Northerner is somebody that is known to be conservative to himself. They are conservatives to themselves, and they would like others to rally around them and
then to worship them. So, one man would be the wealthiest, and everybody would come around him and beg for alms routinely, so that they keep on praising him. Hardly do you see that in that South.

A poem composed by one of the Northern elites as a push-back to the cultural changes that has begun to take place in the region due to their encounter with the British officials and people from the Southern region illustrates Northern conservatism and demonstrates clearly the inbuilt change-resistance mechanisms of the Hausa-Fulani elites.

The poem reads:

Today unbelief is established, and so also innovation
Well, as for us, we have no use for this in our time
This that I am about to say, there is no jesting in it,
Now I am going to warn you, O people,
Whoever heeds it, he will be happy,
Whatever article of their clothing, if you wear it,
I tell you that you may understand,

If you pray a thousand times, you will not be vindicated
And the same applies to the maker of hurricane lamp globes
Your short trousers together with your tight-fitting trousers,
Whoever puts them on, his unbelief is wide

Whoever wears suits with buttons, he has apostatized,
He has no religion at all, only pride,
His state is the state of the makers of silver dollars,
They are beyond our power to imitate.
One who wears shirts with collars,
Whoever wears them, his unbelief is wide,

Khaki and pajamas, whoever it is
Who wears them and prays in them, he has committed a crime
Here they are, three things, do not use them
All of them, avoid them, without arguing,
For to use them is not right, you have seen them,
Towel and washing-blue, and powder, whoever uses them
Certainly, on the Last Day, the Fire is his dwelling.
Like most change-resistant social structures in modern history, the Hausa-Fulani is an exclusive system, needs and strives to maintain social order, survives by warding off every encounter with the out-groups, in so doing keeps its members, more so the serfs, in perpetual stagnation. This is evident in another poem of the colonial era by Mallam Sa'adu Zungur one of the most respected Hausa-Fulani intelligentsia reads:

O chief Abdullahi, help us
You have the Chiroma Sanusi to spread knowledge
Protect your whole community,
In order that our country shall remain forever a monarchy,
Kano City and Fage and Tudun Wada
Villages, wattle and daub huts,
Do not let the pagan enter into them
To spread the poison of republicanism

One of the participants summarized this point as follows:

A typical northern elder who is well educated would not want anything to bring a kind of imbalance in his acceptance in the society. Oh! I am the big man, I should always be the big man, and my family should always be looked upon as providing succor for the entire community. So, they feel if they should encourage education, they will lose that “bigmanism”; that influence they have on people would reduce (RFW).

Quite the reverse, the Southerners, more so the Ibos of Southeast Nigeria believe in their collective existence such that the meaning of one's being is in the collective whole. This is apparent in some of their adages such as “Nwanne bu ike” meaning “I am because we are”, or taken literally “a brother is a source of strength.” Thus, every member of the group seeks to advance the fortune and continuity of the group. This trait is conspicuous in the economic life of every Ibo person and the entire group. This fact is
clearly stated in the response of one of the participants to the question “how then would
you explain the prevalence of Western education among northern elites — and the general
lack thereof — among the poor mass northerners?”. He answered:

The Southerner believes that he should empower his brother. That is why you see
that a Southerner will take his brother and put him in that same trade he is into. He
will take his brother and train him, and at the end of probably 5-6 years, he will
give him an outlet and make him to establish his personal trade and be independent.
On the contrary, a Hausa man, a typical Northern Nigerian man would not do that.
Now, this has affected them somehow in the North (RFW).

Another participant corroborated this fact. He added:

They (referring to the Ibos) have a kind of systematic way of transferring wealth to
relatives, to brothers, to friends, and then you do not see that among Northerners.
What I mean by systematic way of transferring wealth is that Southerners take
delight in training their brothers even before Western education, and it still happens
till date. You discover that Southerners live a communal life in such a way that
what I have I would like to share with my brothers and let him also have the hope
of becoming what I am. That is why you discover that so many Ibos, especially
those that have shops, or have businesses, would like their brothers, or relatives, or
friends to come into the firm so that they would also learn, with time they would
become like them. So, it would continue. So, it is a key factor. This systematic way
of transferring abilities or potentials to subordinate seriously lacks here in the North
(RFW).

What is more, the Hausa-Fulani social system as shown by the data above creates
the structural environment that shapes a culture of dependence; by maintaining the status
quo through series of hand-outs, Northern elites incentivize beggarliness and downplay
the need-for-achievement motivation. The above forms the crux of the culture of poverty
of most of the Hausa-Fulani serfs.

Theme 2: Culture of dependence/economy of affection/Beggarliness

The second most dominant theme to emerge from the data is the prevailing
culture of beggarliness among the northerners. This is associated with the pre-colonial
feudal system characterized by total expropriation of land by the ruling class and exploitation of surplus values from the serfs and intricately intertwined with the Northern conservatism. This social structure produces acquiescent individuals devoid of any sense of self-worth, aspiration, or direction; dependent on the handouts, perceived as favors and benevolence from their rulers, whose praise they (the serfs) sing. In the words of one participant, “well, I would say it is a problem of mindset. The South believes in **empowering self through hard work, and through education; whereas in the north, doctrine of dependence is prevalent**” (RFW).

When asked, “to what factors would you attribute the economic success of Southerners, especially those living in the north?” One participant replied:

It is also a function of their beliefs and mindset. They (the Southerners) do not want to be seen begging. It is a pride thing. However, that pride thing serves as motivating factor and ensures that the southerners do not relent in their efforts to be successful. Southerners feel that if they are not successful, people would probably disrespect them. So, with that kind of mentality, everybody wants to be successful. So, you see them working, engaging in all sorts of things including trading, skilled and non-skilled craft works, small and medium scale businesses, as well as professional white collar jobs (RFW). “**In the north, most youths depend on their leaders to survive**” concluded another participant.

It is important to highlight here that; among the northern Nigerians, begging is reinforced by a religious practice known as ‘Almajiri’. The Almajiri is a derivative of Islamic/Arabic education system which requires pupils to study under, and possibly become a learned “**Ulama, who propagates the peaceful course of Islam**” (Gabriel Ngbea and Hilary Achunike 2014:269). One participant, himself a beneficiary of the system elaborated on the practice; in his words:
The Almajiri is a system or culture in the north where children (mostly male ages 3-6) are sent to places away from their homes, to live with an Ulema or a Malam (Islamic teacher) who teaches them the Qur’an. The design of the Islamic school (Madrasa) is such that the children would have to go out on the street begging for alms for their daily upkeep (RFW).

Another participant elucidated on this practice. She said:

A man gives birth to a child, and when the child is 3-6 years old, he sends the child to another state, for instance, Sokoto all in the name of Islamic education. So, strangers raise the child. Moreover, the child spends only about an hour or two in the class each morning; while he goes begging for alms the rest of the day. What is the essence of a child learning just for two hours each day while he spends the rest of the day begging? What knowledge would such a child acquire in that process? One can say that, it is because of the assistance they get from people that is why they prefer begging to the Arabic learning they went to seek. So, that is why in the North you see that most of them prefer going to beg for alms to work (RFW).

Another interviewee explained that this culture is perpetuated because alms begging seems to be a better alternative to hard work in a system where equal opportunity to tools and resources such as education, skills training, and remuneration are unavailable; complacency institutionalized, and begging rewarded. He said, “it is because here in the north, even if you need and you ask, nobody would see it as anything. However, over there (referring to the South), they would laugh at you, they would mock you, even from your immediate family” (RFW). In 2013, The National Council for the Welfare of Destitute (NCWD) reported that, “there are over seven million Almajiris” (Ra-ah, 2013; cited in Gabriel Ngbea and Hilary Achunike 2014), “who roam the streets of Northern Nigeria dressed in rags with plates and cups in their hands, scavenging for food, sleeping in the marketplaces, motor parks, Mosques, with families, or an Ulama” (Bala 2013, cited in Gabriel Ngbea and Hilary Achunike 2014).
They have no skill, they did not go to school, and they have been already indoctrinated to believing that their early childhood should be dependent on begging. Able-bodied children of ages 4-15, whereas their age mates in the south, go to school at that age or hire themselves out as an apprentice to learn one skill or the other; and become competent people by the time they grow (RFW).

“It is obvious that the northerners and the parents of the street children have abdicated their obligations of properly caring for and educating their children” (Gabriel Ngbea and Hilary Achunike 2014:269). 100 percent of the participants hold the view that, this group of Almajiri children grow up to become unemployable, unproductive, and dependent on the society; this is one of the major determinants of poverty in the region.

Theme 3: Lack/Limited parenting and large population

Participants blamed the family and/or marriage practices amongst the Hausa-Fulani, especially the Muslim faithful for producing two distinct but intertwined challenges that underlay poverty in the region: population explosion and limited/lack of parenting. First, because Islam permits polygamy, most Hausa-Fulani men take undue advantage of this to marry as much as four women simultaneously, and procreate at an alarming rate, resulting to high family sizes. A participant explained this challenge as follows: “The most unfortunate aspect of the whole thing (here he refers to poverty) is that people do not have control over many things, for example, their tradition, and their religion. We allow a group of people to behave irresponsibly. For example, can you imagine someone from my village having about 26 wives and many children. When you have these 26 wives, how do you have control over your family size?” (RFW). Most of the participants commented on the laxity that characterize most Hausa-Fulani families and the consequences. For instance, when asked, “what factor(s) do you think are
responsible for poverty disparity between the north and the south”, one participant said:

“A man would marry four wives and have about 39-50 kids. Nobody is controlling that.
When compared with people from other parts of the country, like in the south, the east, or the west, somebody with one wife and just four kids cannot be compared with anyone with 40-60 children” (RFW).

Sociologically, families are the nucleus of the society where basic values, and practices of a group are inculcated to new members; these values shape the worldviews of each individual and influence their adult life. The researcher is not quite sure whether the size of a family correlates with its ability to fulfill its social role; but, 90 percent of the participants in this inquiry think that large households among the Hausa-Fulani creates “empty shell” families. “Empty shell” is a sociological term which refers to families that are unable to fulfill its basic social functions to its members due in part to series of inherent problems and disharmony including a dearth of resources. Empirical evidence shows that more than half of the children born to families in the North suffer from limited or lack of parenting. Most of them are denied access to meaningful education, skills acquisition training, poor medical assistance, and quality time with their family. Above condition has been linked, in part, to the Almajiri practice. One participant puts this point as follows:

For example, you would see a northerner having about ten to fifteen children. From these children, he selects about seven and sends them to a place like Lokoja for this Islamic education. These are the kids that form part of these Almajeri boys you see begging on the street. It is the same thing I told you about at the beginning. If you have too many kids, even if twenty are do not come back home, you would not care. Consider, for example, myself, I have three, if I do not see any of them at home, I would not sleep. Therefore, I cannot afford to take any of them to Lokoja for this Arabic education; because I have three, and I value the three. Compare that with
somebody who has fifty or sixty, even if he does not see ten of them; he would not care (RW).

Responding to the likely reasons behind poverty disparity between the regions, another participant said: “Like where I come from, my dad would rather die than allow the child move around in the street and beg for food, assistance, and the rest of it. So, that self-discipline, that self-esteem also contributed” (RFW). Another participant captures the debilitating impact of limited parenting and how it perpetuates itself and the cycle of economic backwardness among the Northerners:

Early marriages, most school age young men because they are not in school, and there is no job occupying their time, they would begin to think of building a family at that very young age. Similarly, teenage girls who are also not in school considers marriage, hoping that these young men would marry them. Often, the reason is because, in their families of birth, their father is grappling with the burden of feeding his four wives and more than fifteen children. So, for these girls, early marriage is way to escape the hardships in their homes. Therefore, once they grow up to a certain age, their ambition would be to get married to one of those uneducated, unskilled, and unemployed young men just to get a home for themselves (RFW).

Theme 4: Male dominance/ exclusion of women in economic activities

Another feature of the culture of poverty in northern Nigeria is male dominance. Women are known to be major contributors to the prosperity of their societies across the globe. Their level of contribution sometimes correlates with the structure of their community, tools available, the amount of liberty they enjoy, among other things. Advanced societies that guaranty high level of freedom and opportunities for women have experienced their resourceful capacities more than others. In most Africa societies and Northern Nigeria, structures and strictures of the traditional patriarchal society and its
surviving vestiges constrain women from participating effectively in the social, political, and economic life of the state. The consequences are grave. While responding to the question “what factor(s) do you think are responsible for poverty disparity between the north and the south” an interviewee replied, “Unlike in the north where many people are yet to embrace education especially the women. Some of their wives do not even come out. Some don’t even interact with men; there is a class distinction between men and women maybe because of their religion” (RFW).

Responding to the question “how would you explain the role of education and trading opportunities in individual, and group success in Nigeria” another participant added:

It is because of their marriage practices and beliefs. The northerners believe that women are not supposed to be involved in jobs outside their homes. Some of their wives do not leave their homes, others do not interact with men; there is a clear distinction between the jobs for men and those for women in the Hausa-Fulani society. This explains why here in the north most men would not permit their wives to get employed in some sectors of the economy. Others would not want their wives to be employed, or to be seen outside their home. Their religion also encourages that. So, this is a norm for the northerners; they live by it. But, it affects their economic growth (RFW).

Similarly, another interviewee elaborated above points:

Currently, there are about 1.2 billion poor people globally; 70 percent of them are women. When you look at that figure, some of the causes especially in Northern Nigeria is religious and cultural factors. Due to Islamic practices, women are not allowed to participate in certain things including education; consequently, their level of education is reduced. Lack of education limits their productivity and capacity to earn. Also, it increases the level of unemployment among women of the region and adversely affects the economy of the province. When compared with the practice in the south where women are given access to education and liberty to compete with men in the labor market, the difference is clear. Women are great contributors to the economy of southern Nigeria (RFW).
Traditional limitations on women and its contribution to the individual and group backwardness in Northern Nigeria received the attention of more than two-third of the participants. 23 of the 29 participants (79.3 percent) emphasized that, the in-group, gender disparity in poverty skewed against women in the region also contribute to the high rate and persistent poverty in the North. They contend that, were women empowered and economically buoyant, their resources would have trickled down to the welfare of their children in the form of education, skills acquisition training, as well as good health. All of which would have had an exponential, long-run effect in the prosperity of the region.

Participants in this inquiry are not alone. So many Nigerians believes that the social practice that restricts women from effective participation in economic activities are detrimental and counterproductive. For instance, in a speech presented to the Northern Governors Forum titled “Why Northern Nigeria Is Undeveloped” the then Governor of Osun state, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola (2012) noted that

There is no way a society will make women unproductive and be sane or economically viable! This is what is happening in the North. Islam does not support that! Were it so, Iran would not have had the resources it has now. Not even Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria. These are Muslim countries which know that half of humanity cannot be unproductive. In the case of the North here, economic disempowerment of women means that about or less than one-third of the adult males sustain that society. There is no way there won’t be a problem. Why it is even worse there is that at their infancy and maturing ages; the elite has been socialized into sustaining a lifestyle out of sync with economic productivity (Aregbesola 2012:5).

Theme 5: Limited priority to education

All the participants alluded to the centrality of education to individual and group prosperity. What perplexed most of them is the general apathy to education among
northerners, however. Surprisingly, one participant explained that Islam enjoins adherents to seek for knowledge. He said that, “in Islam, they say you should seek for knowledge, even if the place is as far as China, if so, then what kind of Knowledge?” (RFW); and why do Northern Nigerian Muslims flout this Islamic injunction, or put better still why is it that education is not a priority to the Hausa-Fulani? In a simple term, education refers to the body of knowledge that one acquires to broaden his/her mind, equip himself with the capacity to understand, critically analyze, and to proffer solutions to challenges that confront him/her as a person, and/or the entire society. There are several different ways through which one could know, or acquire knowledge; among them, is education. Several classifications of education have been offered in the academic, but the participants focused on:

- Eastern—which refers to the system of learning that is traditional to the region of the Middle East and North Africa, closely associated with the Islamic religion, and characterized by the intertwining of philosophy and religion.

- Western—refers to the system of knowledge transfer with roots in Europe, based more on logic, and clearly separates between religion and philosophy.

- Skills acquisition learning which centered more on building the capacity of the individual to produce (note that these classifications are not parallel to each other).

In the North, the problem of educational backwardness is more endemic among Muslims. One participant aptly captures this reality. In her words, “when we talk about the low level of education in northern Nigeria, one must realize that some northerners
are Christians, most of whom are educated. The problem of lack of education in northern Nigeria affects mostly the Muslims in the region” (FRW). Given its centrality to human prosperity, and that Islam enjoined Muslims to seek for knowledge, one may, therefore, ask “why the lack thereof among the Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria?

One perspective is that the first colonizers of the region (the Fulanis) bequeathed Islam and Eastern/Islamic education to the people, thus, northern Muslims are more receptive to Islamic education. One participant explained that “some of them (Hausa-Fulani) believe that the basic education is an Islamic school. So, once they attend Arabic school, they might not bother to go to Western education” (RFW). This general lack of enthusiasm for Western education is premised on their fears that it is bait for conversion to Christianity and a tool for cultural imperialism by the West. This fear prevents many of the Hausa-Fulani families from sending their children to circular schools. One subject stated:

A typical northerner would prefer the Islamic education to the ‘Kafari’ (Western) education. They consider those who attend Western education as infidels because they feel that those who attend Western schools would be indoctrinated with Christian principles and are likely to convert to Christianity. Therefore, a typical northerner would prevent his child from associating with such education. Furthermore, the few northern elites who went to school take pride in not encouraging their youths and their younger ones to go to school less they lose their popularity and their place of prominence amongst their people (RFW).

However, nine participants observed some inherent systematic challenges with the Islamic/Eastern education practiced in Northern Nigeria. Regarding Eastern education in Northern Nigeria, one of them said:

You know the Northerners had an organized system of governance even before the coming of the missionaries and the colonial masters. They also had an organized
Islamic system of education, military, and the judiciary. But then, a major fault in the curriculum of Islamic education in Nigeria is that it lacks the science aspect. Whereas the Islamic/Eastern science has existed since ancient civilization, the Islamic scholars that brought Islam to northern Nigeria failed to introduce the scientific aspect of the education. So, that is one of the reasons the northerners are poor (RFW).

Above assertion about the Northern Muslims is subject to empirical inquiry, however, it finds its clearest expression in Albert Ozigi and Lawrence Ocho’s report that:

Whenever people accept Islamic faith, there is a formal system of Islamic education. In Northern Nigeria, this education is organized on two levels – the elementary-level (Qur’anic or Kuttab) and the higher-level (Ilmi or Madarasa) schools. Most of the Muslim children go through the Qur’anic school. The Ilmi school is for the minority who have the time, the aptitude, or the ambition to become an Ulema (higher Islamic teacher), an Imam (leader of prayers in the Mosque) or an Alkali (court judge), or those interested in education for its own sake. In the Qur’anic school, the aim is to get the pupils to recite as many chapters of the Qur’an as possible. Also, at this stage, no attempt is made to understand the meaning of the words. The practical objective of this memorization is to enable them to participate in prayers and other Islamic communal ceremonies, which are all performed in Arabic (Albert Ozigi and Lawrence Ocho 1981:7).

Reports show that traditionally, the Hausa-Fulani are less interested in the ontology of science and epistemology of knowledge. This is evident in an extract from a letter written by the Emir of Kano to the Lieutenant Governor of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria in 1930. It states:

The Hausas do not care for any type of literature other than religious or educational works--or what is closely connected with religion: such as the Unity of God, Sufism, jurisprudence and the law as Almighty God Himself said in His Book. Also, the Hausa do not look ahead. They do not think of the future, of what will benefit their children and grandchildren. And this is especially true of those in the Sudan: for it is commonly said of him of the Sudan: he cares for naught but his belly and his wife. Furthermore, let it be said that the best policy of all is for a man to learn as much as God wills of our knowledge and to learn in the English schools what cannot be learnt save therein: her writing, her script, her methods of calculation and the like....” (White, Jeremy. 1981. Cited in Samuel Zalanga 2013:7).
From the above data, one may not be entirely wrong to conclude that the perception of the participants as well as many Nigerians vis-à-vis economic prosperity among Hausa-Fulani is that religion (Islam) and tradition constitute a significant obstacle. It is not surprising therefore that 22 of the participants (75.8 percent) believe that the general apathy towards education among the Hausa-Fulani is central to their economic backwardness.

Theme 6: Religion—A belief in Islam that nurtures fatalism and irrationality

“So, you would understand that one, their religion and the tradition, putting them together is causing many problems in the northern part of the country” (RFW). “You see the system as I said earlier, mixing religion with culture and tradition, infusing culture, tradition and religion is a big problem” (RFW).

Above statements from the responses of two interviewees show the deep-seated obstacles to economic prosperity in Northern Nigeria. One respondent was critical of the dangers in blending religious beliefs (Islam) and traditional practices. In his words “in the north, they are making significant mistakes, particularly the Muslims. If you want to be a Muslim, you should be a Muslim, do not blend it with your tradition. Because, Islam according to us is a complete way of life; it has its culture and tradition” (RFW).

Over the years, the northern Muslims have intermingled Islamic principles and tenets with their cultural practices. That has produced new sets of significantly unique versions of worldview and practices that shape their attitudes towards certain issues—commerce and profit making for example. 18 (sixty-two percent) of the participants hold
the view that the position of the Hausa-Fulani towards life due in part to their perception of the teachings of Islam hinders their prosperity. For instance, a dominant belief among the Hausa-Fulani serfs is the determinism of one's life and the futility in laboring to alter one's fate. One interviewee puts it this way:

A typical Muslim sees life as being cut out for him. Also, that he should not engage in over profit. A Muslim or a typical northerner would feel that if I go into business, there is the possibility that I would make an abnormal profit. That means that he is acting against the tenets of his religion. So, most of them prefer to live a very simple and easy life. Even if you take them to the school of business studies, they would still not like it because some of their aspects of the teaching go contrary to their religion. So, not until this emphasis on religion is deemphasized in northern Nigeria, there would hardly be any development (RFW).

Close to 62 percent of the participants believe that the greatest obstacle to economic prosperity among Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria is their blend of traditional practices and Islamic beliefs which nurture fatalism and irrationality often manifest in their daily lives. It is important that we understand that this is not to condemn Islam, nor to discredit it, but do not forget that religious symbolism plays a significant role in our everyday life, including our capacity to create wealth. One participant, himself a Northern Muslim puts this challenge in the right context. When asked: “how can we implant competitive and entrepreneurial spirit in the average northerner?” He said:

Because of this thinking about religion (Islam), they are finding life difficult. For example, you tell a Hausa child to go and learn vulcanizing, or motor mechanic, he will tell you stupid things (that is give flimsy excuses). That is why the southerners are the people who do most of the craft jobs here in the north. For instance, cab driving; here in Abuja, if you look around, you would see that most of the taxi drivers are southerners. This is because, when a Hausa man is driving a cab and a lady enters maybe “half naked” just by seeing the lady, the man would feel that he has committed the forbidden (haram). To avoid committing the forbidden, he would be selective of the passengers to pick, in some cases, he would quit the job. Because
of this religious belief, northerners rarely engage in any meaningful productive activities, therefore, are poor (RFW).

Theme 7: Low-risk taking/lack of need-for-achievement motivation

By design, this study included techniques that would enhance its reliability. One such technique is the use of triangulations. Here, the third question on the interview list “to what factor(s) would you attribute the economic success of Southerners, especially those living in the North?” was used for this purpose. Above question elicited many phrases including doggedness, risk-taking, determination, enterprising, adventurous, fearless, and many others. 23 (79.3 percent) of the participants believe that the Southerners, especially the Ibos of the Southeast Nigeria are the most prosperous group, whose prosperity is tied to their fearless, adventurous, indomitable enterprising spirit. By inference, absence of such attitudes among the Northerners may be determinative of their economic backwardness.

In response to the above question, a participant said:

I feel that the reason why an average Southerner succeeds even in the north is that a typical southerner is more enterprising compared to his/her northern compatriot. He wants to take a risk, whereas a Hausa man prefers it the easy way. A Hausa man would not want to go into a large business that would give him a headache. He prefers selling collar nuts, sweets, and all these small, small things that are stress-free. You know, an average Ibo man is by far a risk taker as compared to his Hausa counterpart (RFW).

Another interviewee vividly captured the relationship between these attributes of the Southerners and their economic prosperity. He stated; “I believe that it is because of their adventurous ability. The average Southerner is an adventurer; he takes risks, and the more risk you take, the more opportunities you have to come out of poverty, and the
less risk you take, the less opportunity you have to get out of poverty” (RFW). One of the greatest observations that troubled the participants is not only the general lack of enterprise among the Hausa-Fulani, but their broad apathy towards skills acquisition. One would believe that given the influx of Southerners into the region since independence in 1960 and their comparative prosperity that the Northerners would have shown considerable interest in learning some of these skills from them; but this is not the case. They do not seem to show interest. A participant captured this point well. In his words; “I can say that lack of interest in skill oriented trades. If you come to the core north, you would see that most of the skill oriented trades are being carried out by people from another region because northerners are not interested in them” (RFW). Apparently, it is the broad spread of the need-for-achievement attitudes among the Southerners that propels them to push themselves beyond the thresholds of fear and the confines of comfort towards a personal industry which gave rise to individual prosperity and led to group economic advancement. Its lack thereof among the Northerners makes room for the persistent poverty in the region.

Theme 8: Leadership/Governance

Although, not an element of the culture of poverty thesis, leadership style of the region and Nigeria emerged as one of the themes from the data. About 54 percent of the participants are of the view that governance at all levels in Nigeria failed to provide the kind of leadership capable of lifting Nigerians out of poverty. Much of what have been witnessed in Nigeria since independence in 1960 have been self-serving, corrupt, and
visionless leaders. Their ineptitude and lack of vision have derailed the nation from the path of prosperity and have contributed to poverty in two key ways:

a. The collapse of industries. A major challenge of bad governance in Nigeria is the reckless abandonment of structural and institutional development in the country. Rather than focus on growing the economy through diversification and sectoral linkages, with the oil sector as the pivot, Nigerian political elites are busy stealing from the resources which they are supposed to fructify. The net effect is the collapse, especially, of agro-based industries and the agricultural sector. One participant narrated:

When agriculture was handled seriously, there were series of industries more especially in the North. There was a place called the Bompai industrial estate in Kano. In this estate, those days, there were textile industries, plastic industries, chemical and agro-based industries. Today, these industries have all closed. The effect is loss of jobs, loss of income, and poverty both for the people and the region (RFW).

b. Loss of foreign direct investments (FDI). The net effect of mismanagement and corruption on the part of the political elites is total decadence of infrastructure and public ethic. Across Nigeria, infrastructures—roads, electricity, reliable bureaucracy—are either broken or inexistent. Consequently, multinational corporations that ought to be operating in the country find it difficult to thrive in such environment. Most of them have since fled the country; those remaining are operating below capacity. Overall, though Nigeria is making billions of Dollars from its oil sector, the nation’s economy is largely undiversified; other areas like the agriculture, manufacturing, and service are abandoned.
One implication of the above is that agriculture, the chief employer of labor in northern Nigeria is hard hit in many ways:

I. Increase in drought and desertification encroachment forcing the forest vegetation in the region to recede at about 0.6 kilometers annually in the last 30 years.

II. High animal mortality and low crop yield in the last three decades.

III. Lack of raw materials that would have supported agro-based industries in the region, and

IV. Loss of means of livelihood and poverty.

4.3. Conclusion
Based on its design and methodology, this study has extracted and presented the core dimensions of sub-culture of poverty of the Hausa-Fulani commoners of Nigeria. While above seven categories of the culture of poverty of the Northern Nigerian serfs represent the themes that emerged from the data, it is possible that a research designed differently, with new sample, and conducted by other researchers could yield more or a whole new set of categories of the culture of poverty for Northern Nigeria. In this chapter, the researcher tried to qualitatively analyze and correlate these themes in a coherent manner to show plausible, alternative explanations for persistent poverty in Northern Nigeria. In the next, the focus would be to address the stated objectives, goals, and questions of this study
5.0 FINDINGS

As indicated in the introduction, chapter 1.0, this inquiry had one stated objective which raised two research questions. In this chapter, the focus is to discuss these research questions vis-à-vis the data that emerged, the literature and observation of the researcher. The goal here is to present the findings in clear terms, to demonstrate that the objective stated in chapter 1 has been accomplished.

Research objective:

This research set out to test the validity of the culture of poverty thesis and its claim that the poor around the world share common, differentiating attitudes that incapacitate them from accomplishing economic prosperity like others. Using a case study, the study aims to show that among the Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria, the serfs/commoners have developed a sub-culture of poverty as an adaptive, survival strategy, born of a shared historical experience. Remember that without the historical antecedents which created conducive environments for these traits, perhaps, this study would have been needless. Again, these traits were in fact, efficient enough to produce economic prosperity that sustained the feudal social system of the 18th-19th century Northern Nigeria. The challenge here is that economic prosperity in the modern capitalist
economy requires an entirely different array of beliefs and practices. It is within this context that the researcher now begins to answer the research question one.

Research question one wades into the validity debate of the culture of poverty thesis hoping that it (culture of poverty thesis) could help advance in-depth understanding of the economic backwardness among Northerners or not. Either outcome would inform a conclusion on the validity of the theory.

5.1 Research question one

“To what extent does the culture of poverty thesis advance our understanding of some of the underlying factors of chronic poverty in Northern Nigeria?”

Economic backwardness among individuals and groups has been a major focus both of policy makers and the academic. Oscar Lewis had opined that there are common behavioral denominators among the poor that distinguish them from the non-poor; which prevent them from accomplishing economic prosperity. This distinctive set of attitudes, often developed in reaction to their position of marginality ascribed by the class-stratification inherent in the capitalist society is generationally transmitted and self-perpetuating. Oscar Lewis (1959) called that the “culture of poverty.”

Deducible from the data presented in chapter four is that, in Nigeria, there are distinctive characteristic traits upheld by people of the two regions—north and south. These values are embedded in the various cultural mechanisms, propped by institutions and structures that created, enforce, and sustain them. The actuality is that, “when these traditional systems are challenged by the demands of the economic, technological and industrial realities of the twenty-first century, their success or failure to have prepared
the members of the social group becomes evident” (Agbakwuru Emmanuel 2004:121).

For the Hausa-Fulani society, Wife-seclusion and Almajiri system are the key cultural mechanisms that produce the attitudes and behaviors seen as adaptation by the commoners, which are pivotal to chronic poverty among them. As mentioned earlier, within the democratic capitalist system, two dominant values support economic prosperity. These are:

a. “A belief that the potential for wealth is limitless because it is based on ideas and insights, not fixed because of scarce resources. Therefore, wealth can be expanded for many by improving productivity” (Michael Porter 200:21).

b. Attitude to work/work ethics and creativity.

As stated earlier, an overriding assumption of feudal system is that land, the means of production (land) is scarce, that necessitates its control by the lords and fief holders. Even though it’s been over a century since Nigeria was integrated into the global capitalist system, in the North, feudalistic practices entrenched with Jihad by the Fulani in the 18th century still subsists. Successors of Usman Dan Fodio labor to sustain the status quo at all cost. This is what this study identified and categorized as the culture of Northern conservatism. The implication is that even when the modern economy has gravitated towards sectors other than agriculture, the worldview of these elites remained that the means of production is still scarce. This explains why the Nigeria political elites, dominated by these Northern elements, are narrow-minded and focused on the control of the oil sector rather than take productivity-enhancing steps by diversifying the nation’s economy and expand the cake.
Apparent from the data is that the Northern elites strive to sustain the feudalistic practices of Usman Dan Fodio Caliphate with various guises and practices including handouts to the commoners, systematic denial of equal opportunity to education and other tools of production, and legitimization of alms-begging and alms-giving as Islamic. Within the Hausa-Fulani social system, alms-giving appears to be a cultural, systemic mechanism for wealth redistribution. Consequently, over the years, the Hausa-Fulani commoners developed beggarly attitudes or dependency syndrome, which they pass on to successive generations through the Almajiri system. Therefore, for them, adapting to the needs of the twenty-first-century capitalist system is problematic. One could only speculate, what would have been the case if the Hausa-Fulani commoners had acquired necessary skills for the twenty-first-century multi-sector economy like other ethnic groups in Nigeria?

Quite the reverse, among the Christians in Nigeria (including the 15 percent of the autochthonous Northerners) and more so the Southerners, “alms-begging and alms-giving do not have the same institutional force. Begging carries some level of social disapproval. Alms-begging and alms-giving do not make any positive contribution to economic development since it does not induce productivity” (Agbakwuru Emmanuel 2004:127). This is also true of the 50 percent of the South-Western Nigerians who are also Islamic adherents. Unfortunately, the culture of beggarliness developed by Northern Nigerian Muslims generates an attitude inimical to work. To be sure, collective’s work ethics is another factor pivotal to economic prosperity. To a greater degree, a group’s attitude to work will determine their level of productivity; regardless of whether the
group/country has an agricultural, manufacturing or service economy. In his 1904-05 publication “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” Max Weber noted that there are everyday behaviors that are favorable to economic prosperity: “hard work, honesty, seriousness, the thrift use of money and time” (David Landes 200:11). These common attitudes (Protestant ethics) shape and produces a new kind of “businessman” “one who aims to live and work a certain way” (David Landes 2000:11). By implication, work is a calling for such a person or an economic man.

However, this is not the case with the overwhelming majority of the Hausa-Fulani group. Empirical evidence shows that, in addition to the culture of dependency syndrome, Northern commoners developed nonchalant attitudes to work, lacking in every sense of it, the need-for-achievement motivation. Agbakwuru Emmanuel is right that “these official baggers may not lack the opportunity to be involved in gainful employment, but reject it in favor of begging as a pious act. This preference for religious alms-begging has become a feature of the cultural and social landscape and is a type of attitude towards work” (Agbakwuru Emmanuel 2004:126). It is believed that the need-for-achievement motivation, a key driver of hard work, perseverance, risk taking, and thrift is essential for economic prosperity. Personal achievement or industry, a mechanism for social mobility in systems where such is permissible is promoted as a character trait. For example, among the Ibos of South-Eastern Nigeria, a “personal efforts, and hard work can enable a person to rise from a position of relative inferiority to a position of power” (Agbakwuru Emmanuel 2004:131). This has been credited for the prevalence of huge in-group work ethics among the Ibos. Data from this research shows that the work ethics of
the Southeasters is in part, the major factor that underlay their prosperity. On the contrary, chances for social mobility within the Hausa-Fulani social system are slim. Even so, it often comes as a gratuity from someone in the elite class.

In this group, a person must ingratiate himself to someone in power, by utter loyalty, being useful and obedient so as, eventually to be rewarded with favor in the form of status rise or benefits that are at the patron’s disposal. The character of traits, loyalty-usefulness-obedience are, therefore, the once that are emphasized in the process of socialization from childhood, and which are widely distributed in this population (Agbakwuru Emmanuel 2004:132).

Oscar Lewis had identified similar attitude—lack of achievement motivation—among the poor Mexican families he studied. He also realized that a major challenge here is not so much that these families are poor, as it is that these developed, adaptive cultures—beggarliness, poor work ethics, lack of meaningful child upbringing—are transmitted to the children, very early in their lives through the family. These they then carried on to adulthood and the circle continues even long after the environment that conduced them has ceased.

In view of the data presented in this inquiry and the themes that emerged thereof, it is imperative to state that of the eight factors that are responsible for poverty, leadership is a structural variable. Although, regarding the general economic backwardness of Nigeria, leadership is a decisive factor, however when the poverty disparity between the regions, or the comparative prosperity of the South is evaluated, it offers no explanatory assistance. The eight variables predictive of poverty, all but the leadership question are factors that significantly differentiate both regions, offering deep insight to the sustained poverty in the North, validating the culture of poverty thesis.
5.2 Research question two

“What has the Southern region done by contrast to the North that helped them transcend persistent poverty?” is designed to test the hypothesis that “Nations or societies are poor in part because their cultural value system—those traits they emphasize and those they don’t—tends to reward behaviors that inhibit economic prosperity.”

To begin with, pre-colonial traditional systems and values of most societies in the Southern Nigeria differ markedly from those of the Hausa-Fulani. For instance, the Ibos of South-East are known to be egalitarians. Within this group, state formation was “essentially a function of the interplay of factors such as migration, religion, kinship, and the economy which were impacted in turn by the environment” (Ejiogu 2004:98). These produced highly egalitarian polity with four distinct levels of authority: the ‘Ezi’ (compounds) made up of various households (onu-usekwu), ‘Umunna’ (sub-lineage), ‘Ama’ (village), and the ‘Ama-ala’ (village group) (Isichie, 1976: 19; Ejiogu, 2004: 117). In all, the structure of the governance in Iboland begins with the households, represented by the adult males of each home (father, and sons) who congregate to make decisions in matters relating to their existence. The sub-lineage, the second stage of governance, made up of many compounds who are descendants of on male ancestor, authority lay with the team of male heads of each compound presided over by the representative of the oldest son of their ancestor. The Ama (village) represents the highest level of Ibo political structure and refers to collections of autonomous, sovereign, sub-lineage who share a common ancestor. At this level, authority lies with the gathering of all adult males who preside over and direct the affairs of the village when summoned. A key feature of the
Ibo polity is the equality of all, with no man making demands of any sort from the other. Though it exists, a line of social stratification is thin and social mobility is allowed.

Following the creation and integration of theses hitherto independent groups into the Nigerian state and the modern capitalist system, cultures of the collectives which constitute Southern Nigeria have demonstrated a high capacity to have prepared its members to adapt to the changing realities of the twenty-first century. For example, the climate of liberty offered by most traditional societies in the South is akin to Western democracies which foster personal industry and creativity. Thus, Southerners had limited challenge embracing and assimilating the new democratic capitalist culture which requires a different kind of work ethics, individual creativity, and then, gradually thrive in it.

As Mariano Grondona (2000) noted, though, the driving force of economic development is work and productivity, it is, however, the climate of liberty that allows individuals the control of their destiny which propels them to strive and invent. This is so because:

If individuals feel that others are responsible for them, the efforts of individuals will ebb. If others tell them what to think and believe, the consequence is either a loss of motivation and creativity or a choice between submission and rebellion. However, neither submission nor rebellion generates development. Submission leaves a society without innovators, and rebellion diverts energies away from constructive efforts towards resistance, throwing up obstacles and destruction (Mariano Grondona 2000:48).

Data from chapter four shows that, such is the greatest challenge confronting Northern Nigeria for which a good proportion of its population (serfs/commoners) has been conditioned to the attitude of irrational obedience and total dependence.
Conversely, the desire to assert one’s social dignity motivates the Southerners to achieve economic prosperity. This explains why, for example, the Ibos of South-East Nigeria “remains very competitive, resilient and ready to undertake any enterprise, no matter how demeaning, in order to make money” (Agbakwuru Emmanuel 2004:116). This motivation-for-achievement also drives the Ibos to migrate, and easily socialize themselves, with any group they encounter in any part of the globe. Many of the participants eloquently stated this fact. “Southerners have the determination to succeed. Just like the Ibos, all over the world, Ibos are there. They have the determination to succeed, and they have the skills, many skills in everything, most especially in business” (RFW).

Another factor as articulated by Michael Porter (2000) is that “to move beyond poverty, a nation must upgrade its inputs, institutions, and skills to allow more sophisticated forms of competition, resulting in increased productivity. This requires such things as upgrading human capital, improving infrastructure” (Porter 2000:21). If not for the Colonial encounter, the modern capitalist economy is alien to all the constituent groups of Nigeria. Quite unlike the Northerners who push back to everything Western, once conquered, Southern Nigerians accepted Western ways of life, including, education, skills for modern industries, and were forward looking. For the most part, these new approaches to life explain why Southerners went all out to acquire ‘Western’ education, learn new artisan skills in various crafts, and improved on their indigenous technical ability. These aided and facilitated their transition from the dominant indigenous economy (agriculture, fishing, and commerce) to the more diversified, specialized skill
demanding capitalist economy, leaving behind their Northern neighbors. In consequence, the neglect of the agricultural sector by successive Nigerian regimes, following the discovery of the oil industry, has negligible, negative impact on them.

What is more, social barriers preventing women from effective participation in the political and economic life of the state in the North are virtually nonexistence in the South. As the data indicated, Southern women enjoy liberty and equal opportunities with their male counterparts, in some cases; girls are likely to be sent to school more than their brothers. Thus, they not only participate and contribute to the economy of the family and of the region in general, but are also captains of industries, entrepreneurs, and directors in the government parastatals.

In this chapter, the comparative analysis made between the situations in the north and south is simply to facilitate the examination of the problem. This study has identified the culture of poverty developed by most northerners as the differentiating factor between them and the southerners, and as the key determinant of the poverty disparity between the two regions. To be sure, the culture of poverty among the northerners is not the only exacerbating factor of poverty in the north; likewise, the need-for-achievement motivation prevalent among the southerners by itself may not account for the level of economic development in the south or the inequality in poverty in Nigeria. There are other factors that contributes to chronic poverty in the north, some of these could and do exacerbate the poverty disparity between the region. One such factor is governance. The goal here is not to assess culture of poverty of the north or the need-for-achievement motivation in the south on one side with any, or these other factors, however. It is rather,
to demonstrate that culture ought to be taken seriously in understanding the causes and conditions of poverty in northern Nigeria just like other factors such as governance.

For instance, it has been reported that structural factors (political neglect of the region, bad governance, and institutional breakdown) and Islam are at the root of the continued economic backwardness among the Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria. Leena Koni Hoffman for instance wrote that, in the region, “the worsening challenges with poverty are consequences of the collective failure of leaders at all tiers of government to properly deliver public goods and services or to accountably manage public funds” (2014:4). What is missing in this analysis is that the character of the Nigerian state and political elites across the regions are similar. More so, there are about fifteen million Muslims in Yorubaland, Southwest Nigeria whose situation differs remarkably from that of the Hausa-Fulani. Within this group, women are neither subjected to seclusion nor excluded from political and economic activities. Along with Islamic faith, they welcome Western education and sent their children to school (often both secular as well as Islamic). Yoruba Muslims could boast of as many professionals, in all fields as their Southern Christian neighbors, and are also well represented in the artisan profession. They do not subject their children to alms-begging (Almajiri) even when they send them to Islamic schools (in fact, the participant who noted that his father would rather die than to see any of his children beg for food belongs to this group). Above all, they are motivated and fears competitors. Their economic prosperity compares with those of their Christian Southern neighbors. Some scholars have suggested the need for this group to be
studied and to understand reasons for their economic prosperity and how they have coexisted harmoniously and peacefully with their Christian neighbors.

So, why then do the Hausa-Fulani subjugate their women this much, invoking Islam as a guise? In a field study designed to investigate the reasons behind the move to rural seclusion in Hausaland, and the absence thereof in Bornu, Gina Porter (1989) found that, cultural variations between the Hausa and Kanuri; difference in ground water hydrology (which make drilling well and boreholes in Bornu difficult and expensive, requiring women to move about in search of water) and divergence in colonial economic history are responsible. She reported that central to the low level of seclusion amongst Bornu women is the limited availability of slave labor in the pre-colonial era. The assumption is that, if female constituted the bulk of the agricultural labor, so too was agricultural slaves. If so, then, the withdrawal of former slave women from farm work to seclusion (Kulle) following the colonial abolition of slavery in Northern Nigeria as an assertion of their freedom and in mimic of the traditional roles of the Hausa women who neither fetched firewood nor farmed. Whereas in Bornu, slaves were essentially confined to farms and houses of the noble classes, as such, were overall insignificant to the household production comparatively to the Hausaland, implying therefore that agricultural work among the Bornu was not so much linked to slave status as it was amongst the Hausa. Arguably, the degree of social stigma associated with slave labor felt by women in Hausaland was far higher than it was in Bornu.

Beneath this is the fact that, constant raids of neighboring, non-Muslim communities, including Bornu by the Fulani plus mass immigration to Caliphal cities
following economic booms and trade, provided Hausa states with more than sufficient labor needed to produce and stimulate economic growth; rendering Hausa women involvement in the workforce unnecessary. For Bornu, constant Fulani raids and climatic shifts depleted their population, decreased their productivity, and made it imperative for women to be a major part of domestic labor. Gina Porter (1989) reports similar findings to this inquiry. She wrote:

The non-seclusion of women is an important issue because of its continuing significance for the development of the Bornu region. This is clearly exemplified by Usoro’s survey of disparities in Nigerian rural poverty in the 1970s, when a major distinction in productive efficiency and well-being was drawn between the north Sokoto area and the Kukawa district, the latter's relative prosperity being related, in large part, to the participation of women in the labor force. Paradoxically, it would appear that the distinction between Hausaland and Borno in the seclusion of women has been responsible for a certain reversal of the previous twentieth-century contrast between the prosperity of the one and the poverty of the other (Gina Porter 1989:490-491).

Though, Gina Porter (1989) focused on in-group analysis; her finding highlights the need for clear understanding of the origin of poverty among Northerners and factors behind its differentiated spread in Nigeria. It also seems to lend credibility to this study and its findings.

Given the integration of Nigeria into the global capitalist economy, the significance of education in enhancing individual and group capacity to compete in the global system, and the endemic, chronic poverty in the region, why then are northern elite insistent on maintaining the legacies of the Caliphate (“by conserving the tradition institutions, opposing Western education, and exonerating themselves from all of responsiveness and scrutiny of the commoners”)? (Samuel Zalanga 2014: 8). In recent
years, more so, since the rise of the group Boko Haram, a few liberal northern elites have raised a similar question. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi (Emir of Kano and former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria) observed that:

The truth is as follows: The people responsible for the plight of Muslim Northerner are no other than the northern Muslim elite. We must never let this elite forget that and we must remind our people that their true enemy is not the Nigerian constitution which guarantees their freedom and equity; not the poor Southerner or Christian but their rich fellow Muslim, who has dehumanized them and kept them in perpetual deprivation (Agbakuru Emmanuel 2004:293).

My hypothesis is that the correlation between the surviving feudalistic structures and the persistent struggle of the elite classes to maintain the status quo and their combined association with sustained poverty in the region reflects the social functions of pauperization of the Hausa-Fulani commoners that feeds into the recurrent spate of conflict in Nigeria. The above factor may well explain relentless efforts of the elites to withhold education (both Eastern/Arabic and Western) from the commoners. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi’s lamentation that:

Only education would restore to the Northerner a sense of his self-worth and humanity and his equality with other human beings. As Tocqueville clearly understood, “once human beings accept the legitimacy of the principle of equality in one sphere they will attempt to extend it to every sphere of life “Only education would eliminate the culture of begging and subservience on which our people thrive. And it is precisely because the dominant classes know this that they prevent the people from having a liberating education (Agbakuru Emmanuel 2004:294) lends credence to the above assertion.

As the vision to halve the global poverty by the year 2015 had come and gone with success stories in some region of the world and failures in others, there is a need for a proper assessment of the poverty alleviation programs of various regimes, donors, and
communities, with a view to ascertain reasons behind the dismal performance in certain regions. As noted before, but for the north whose poverty contributes significantly to the overall national economic backwardness, Nigeria has witnessed a huge decline in poverty in the last two decades. Given the recent World Bank Report that poverty headcount in the South-West for example fell from 21.2 percent in 2010-11 to 16 percent in 2012-13, and rose in the North-East from 47.1 percent to 50.2 percent over the same period (see The Economist 2014); and that “the poverty status in turn is highly correlated with adult literacy rates; size of average household; orientation to private sector-led wealth creation as opposed to dependence on Government or few people” (Chukwuma Soludo 2007: 11); still as a group the North is opposing education, promote Almajirism which has created a social disincentives for child upbringing and fuel large family units; shun skill acquisition and entrepreneurship, and subjugate their women. One may, therefore, ask why? Is it possible that the dominant classes in the North are ambivalent of the development of the region and the prosperity of the commoners? Alternatively, perhaps as the notion goes that, pauperization of the Hausa-Fulani commoners serves a purpose of maintaining social order and stability in hierarchical, feudalistic, class structure; which, destabilized, could trigger a class revolution. Alternatively, maybe that the docility and pauperization of the Hausa-Fulani commoners provide the Northern elites with army of uninformed population devoid of the rational capacity to question their “Devine” authority to rule, or validity and legitimacy of their actions; who could easily be mobilized for political gains in the identity-charged National arena. The likely answers to
these questions are outside the purview of this research, but they appear to be a fruitful starting point for further inquiry.

5.3. Conclusion and recommendations

The study of the culture of poverty in Northern Nigeria produces some findings relating to the theoretical propositions of Oscar Lewis: (a) within Nigeria, the Hausa-Fulani living in the northern region exhibits unique behaviors in relation to child upbringing and family structure, disposition to (Western) education and capacity building, work ethics, and social restrictions to individual liberty especially for women; (b) these distinctive attitudes differentiating the Northerners from the Southerners seems to be socially and generationally transmitted with the family and the Islamic school as the socializing institutions; for instance, uneducated, unskilled, underemployed fathers produce and rear children in the same manner they were raised; (c) except leadership issue, none of these seven variables—conservatism, beggarliness, large family size and limited parenting, fatalism and irrationality, lack of need-for-achievement motivation and gender bias—are present among over 10 million Islamic adherents of Southwest Nigeria, therefore, precluding Islamic explanation for these factors. Finally, these findings support the explanatory potential of Oscar Lews’ conception of the “culture of poverty” model that owing to their shared historical experiences and in adaptation to their situation, the poor develops and generationally transmit different sets of culture that induce and sustain poverty; and Orlando Patterson’s proposition that “Nations or societies are poor in part because their cultural value system—those traits they emphasize and those they don’t—tends to reward behaviors that inhibit economic prosperity.”
In the past, policy makers and scholars avoided the cultural explanation to the causes and conditions of poverty in Nigeria for some reasons. In some cases, some dismissed the possibility that cultural factors can illuminate the understanding of the causes of poverty, why it persists, and its disparity in Nigeria. Consequently, while the nation grapples with poverty and its attendant consequences (conflict), Nigerian governments and their development partners developed and implemented successive regimes of poverty alleviation programs; most of which performed dismally poor.

Roseline Yunusa (2012), reported that these poverty alleviation programs failed partly because “the government seems to lack proper understanding of the culture of poverty, and how to work with people in poverty, the lack of knowledge on the part of government is affecting government policy formation and proper implementation of poverty alleviation programs” (p. 3). This study has outline and elaborated on the dominant culture of poverty among the Hausa-Fulani of northern Nigeria. Given that poverty has been implicated as one of the major determinants of youth buy-in into radical extremist ideologies and rise in conflict emanating from northern Nigeria; future peacebuilding strategies, especially those that would incorporate economic development ought to pay attention to two factors:

First, emphasis towards attitudinal change. Development policies should include in their design measures that require changes in behavior from beneficiaries. For instance, in the US, the government uses agencies and civil society organizations to enforce welfare recipients to quite substance abuse, train them to acquire new skills, monitor, and place them in jobs. Similarly, Nigerian governments and its development partners need to
collaborate with civil society organizations, government agencies, and entrepreneurs to enforce change in attitudes for the youths in Northern Nigeria. The old practice whereby ministry of labor converts a school building to a training center and simply makes open invitation for enrollment to youths for skill acquisition without any quid pro quo from them no longer suffices. Furthermore, there is a need for serious awareness campaign geared towards delegitimizing alms begging and all institutions that promote such practices including madrasa. Such awareness campaign should also promote the advantages of elongated child care practices; this would discourage families from giving out their children to Ulamas to cater for.

Second, leadership. Northern political elites need to understand that the global system is no longer feudal; to survive, their people must adapt to the capitalist economy. This requires the elites to quit promoting “glorious days of the caliphate” and its features, including incentivizing begging, women seclusion (kule) and all forms of restrictions on women. In addition, Nigerian political elites need to take bold steps to grow the national economy, expand the middle class, and support small and medium scale entrepreneurs nationwide.
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**Books**


**Thesis/ Dissertations**


BIOGRAPHY

Chukwuma Godwin Onyia graduated from College of the Immaculate Conception (CIC) Enugu, Nigeria in 1990. He received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Political Science from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria in 2001 and 2005 respectively. He was employed as a Project Associate in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, Abuja Nigeria four years and received his master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University in 2016.