Theorising Nineteenth Century Slavery and Sexual Desire in the Central Sudan Strategic Silence

Hauwa Mahdi (PhD), School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Abstract

Strategic Silences: theorising19th century slavery and sexual desire in the Central Sudan

This paper engages the ideology of sexual difference in slavery in the construction of gender inequality in the Central Sudan. Historical studies of Islamic states acknowledge the principles of slavery and concubinage as intrinsic parts of the states. Nineteenth century political leaders and contemporary academics seldom acknowledge sexual desire in religious interpretations and state ideologies. When academics theorise slavery, their perspectives focus on slaves as material producers. This approach silences the biosocial interfaces of slavery and gender in reproducing those societies.

This article takes its point of departure in the rules of sexual behaviour and the monetary differential values of male/female slaves in Muslim societies. Why were female slaves valued higher? How significant was sexual desire in the reproduction of 19th century African Muslim societies? I argue that, the higher value of female slaves and the higher value of beauty amongst them signify that sex and desire were decisive factors in gendered hierarchy. The relative silence about sex is itself part of asserting the patriarchal heteronormative structure of the societies.

The analysis draws from the writings of state actors in the Central Sudan, European travellers, as well as academic works on slavery in Africa. The paper argues that the demographic imbalance of the sexes produced by the export of Africans converged with Islamic state ideology that served patriarchy to privilege male sexual desire.

The conclusions are, that: sexual desire is a significant factor in state ideologies in Islamic states; the silences surrounding sexual desire reflect the Muslim elite's strategic interpretative authority in redistributing privilege; and that hetro-male privilege strategically silences discourse about sexuality in the 19th century and reverberate in social inequalities of the present.

Strategic Silences: theorising19th century slavery and sexual desire in the Central Sudan[1]

Introduction

The Central Sudan (CS) covers roughly the Savannah belt of the African continent from the bend of the River Niger to the Lake Chad. The nineteenth century Islamic revolutions and ideological contestations among Muslims created a socio-political context for re-evaluation and new frameworks for social conduct. Several states were important actors in the formation of CS societies, and dominant among them were the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno.[2]
Islamic rebellions against Hausa kings that started in Gobir in 1804 led to the founding of the state historians have named the Sokoto Caliphate. Shehu Usman ɗan Fodio, his brother Abdullahi ɗan Fodio and son Muhammad Bello,[3] formulated the political and philosophical theories of the Sokoto Caliphate. An uprising in western Kanem-Borno inspired by the jihad in Hausaland in 1808 led to a

[1] The idea of sex and slavery in this paper were first presented at a conference: *The Emergence of Hausa Identity: History and Religion*, University of East Anglia, Norwich, 11-12 July 2008.

[2] From the beginning of the 20th century, large portions of the two states fell to Nigeria, and smaller portions to Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

[3] Their names are spelt differently in different texts. In this paper, I use the Hausa names for the Sokoto leaders and the Kanuri names for the Borno leaders. The full names and other spelling of the Sokoto leaders are, Shaykh Uthman b. Foduye or 'Uthmān dan Fodio; for the son Amir al-Muminin Muḥammad Bello.

dynastic change that instituted the Al-kanemi dynasty. Shehu Laminu,[4] came from Fezzan to rescue the *Saifawa* dynasty in Borno, and subsequently established the new dynasty through his son Shehu Umar. Sokoto and Borno came to dominate the politics of this region in the 19th century, each claiming Islamic correctness.

The impact of the Atlantic slave trade on African societies and on internal slavery specifically has been neglected themes compared to that of slavery in the New World. Many studies have discussed the challenges of statistical estimations of slaves,[5] and the economics of the systems of the continent, centred mainly on issues of slave labour in material production,[6] as well as aspects of social history such as identity. The studies of slavery of the Sudan tend to emphasise the economic aspects of external trade and, on internal slavery that often highlight male slave activities than they do that of females. However, there are also works that have dealt with women or some gender dimensions of slavery.[7] Most slave researchers tend to incline towards the material production capacity of females for their higher value than they do other factors. This paper addresses the sexual dimension of slavery in the CS.

Theorising sexuality from a gender perspective ought to deploy an intersectional trajectory, where a number of significant factors and identities come into play. Such factors include disaggregation of their numbers and a nuanced deconstruction of the specificities in male and female roles in material production as well as social and biological reproduction in the two states. However, such an exploration is not possible here. Instead, the paper is limited to a discussion of the role of sex in gender relationships through the ideological and political debates of the two states, the practices within them and in academic interpretations of the slavery in the region. The aim is to explore sexuality in slavery as the structural scaffold of social and biological reproduction. To unpack the structural meaning of sex in slavery, it is important to consider the leaders' attitudes and behaviour as reflections of their philosophy of governance. The theoretical question in the paper centres on sexual status and conduct of female slaves, to establish the gendered perception of sexuality in the ideology of the states. The preconditions for legitimate sex in slavery were different for male and for female slaves, as well as for freeborn males and females. The rules of sex as a central part of the ideology of the Central Sudan states were constructed and construed partly on silence as strategy of organising female/male sexuality; and secondly silence thus becomes a normative framework for gendered sexual hierarchy in general and in slavery.

The paper commences with a broad discussion of the CS leaders' policy position as the context for reflecting on sexuality and enslavement and, a critique of those positions. It is followed by relevant aspects of academic discourses surrounding the demographic difference between male and female slaves and the roles of the two sexes in the production/reproduction systems in the region. Lastly, the paper focuses on the discourse and arguments on reproduction in slavery in the CS, and offers alternative explanations for the higher value of female slaves.

Ideology, Policy and Politics of gender and slaving

Neither Sokoto nor Borno political leaders dwelt much on slavery as of itself, or indeed on the rules of sexual conduct in their writings. Slavery was mentioned as appendix to the main policies of the state,

[4] His full name and other spelling are Muhammad al-Amin al-Kānemi or Muḥammad al-Kānami.

[5] Paul E Lovejoy and Jan S. Hogerndorn, *Slow Death to Slavery: The course of abolition in Northern Nigeria, 1897-1936* (Cambridge, New York and Oakleigh, Australia: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[6] Paul E. Lovejoy, *Salt of the Desert: a history of slat production and trade in the Central Sudan*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press).

[7] Allen and Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa.* Martin A. Klein, "Women in Slavery in the Western Sudan," 67- 92. Thornton, John. "Sexual Demography: The Impact of the Slave Trade on Family Structure." In *Women and Slavery in Africa*. Edited by Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, 39- 48. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.

such as governance, war, relation between state officials and ordinary subjects and the general need of upholding Islamic principles of justice. The rules of sexual conduct are simply implied as an underlying fact of female/male relations. These attitudes neither are an indication of the value of slaves in the CS nor are they indicators of the set parameters of sexual behaviour. The neglect of slavery in Muslim discourse as topical subjects is not exclusive to the Central Sudan. As Fisher and Fisher have observed legal interpretations of Islam such as those in Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani's (922–996) *Ar- Risala* (The Treastise of Maliki Fiqh (law) and Khalil ibn Ishaq al-Jundi's (died ca. 1365) *Mukhtasar,* the same sources used by CS political leaders to propound their policy, had only incidental references to slavery, rather than topical discussions of it.[8]
The leaders of this region did not oppose the idea of slave trading or slavery in principle. Implicit in their position, both in the practice of slavery and in their writings is that the condition is permissible in Islam. While slavery does not take a central position in their philosophy of state, when the references were made to it, they had not questioned in any way the condition itself.[9] On the contrary, narratives from visitors and natives show sophisticated standards and practices of conducting the system within each state and in their relationships. Written policies of state and religious treatise among political actors seldom included the trade and of slavery as significant issues of discourse.

On one hand, the lack of formal discourse about parameters of sexual conduct might imply the normalcy of this cultural practice as mundane gendered relations unworthy of state concern. On the other, their writings emphasise addressing men and admonishing them for the subordinate position women occupied, merely as implements.[10] Shehu Usman ɗan Fodio, Abdullahi ɗan Fodio and Muhammad Bello, who wrote extensively about the dire condition of existence in the Sudan in the 19th century, alluded to the unfortunate conditions in which women lived.[11] Sokoto leaders for example, drew knowledge from previous Islamic states or learned men to admonition Hausa rulers, but also used history as a means of mapping a path for their own government. Probably because of these objectives of their authorship, their texts more often than not address men, and only occasionally seek female audience.[12] The *silence* on gender as relational framework of women and men is strategic in asserting higher value and normativity of male perspectives. Yet, the appeal to two separate audiences was not random but gender-specific, where men were addressed on matters of policy and governance, while women were addressed on matters of sexual morality or education. Even issues of direct concern to women were not always addressed directly to them, but were rather channelled through men. These writings offer glimpses of the hierarchy within women as a gender category too. This approach lodged

---

[8] Allen G. B. Fisher & Humphrey J. Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa: the institutions in Saharan and Sudanic Africa and the trans-Saharan trade* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1970), p. 5-8. See, Caliph Muhammed Bello's reference to these texts in his response to Amir Ya`qub of Bauchi. Also, Abdullahi ibn Muhammad (dan Fodio), *Tazyin al-waraqat,* M. Hiskett (ed.), Ibadan 1963. The concept of slavery is rarely discussed in specific chapters within classics of Islamic/Maliki law such as the *Risala* and the *Mukhtasr*; instead, slavery is mentioned as a given - in terms of slaves' limited legal capacity/standing in law, and also in terms of contract of sales and purchases. Slavery is also discussed in collections of fatwas.

[9] See in particular, Muhammad Bello, "Al-Qawl al-Mauhud fī Ajwibati As'ilati al-Amīr Yaᶜqub" [The Discourse Presented in Answer to the Questions of Amir Yaᶜqub] in *Nigerian Administration Research Project: Second Interim Report* trans. O. S. A. Islamil and A. Y. Aliyu (Zaria, Nigeria: The Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, 1975), 34- 39.

[10] `Uthman dan Fodio,"Islam and Women" in, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology* ed. Thomas Hodgkin, Thomas (London, Oxford & New York: 1975), 254.

[11] 'Usman dan Fodio, *Kitab al-farq* (trans. M. Hiskett – *The Book of difference between the governments of the Muslims and the governments of the unbelievers)*; *Bayan wujub al-Hijra ala'l i-ibadi* (trans. F. H. El-Misri - On good governance); *´Umdatul al-´ubbad* (trans. Ibrahim Sulaiman); *Minhaj al-abidin* (trans. El- Garth – The path of worshippers). Muhammad Bello, *Usul al-siyasah* (trans. Shehu Yamusa – Principles of politics); *Tanbih al-sahib ´ala ahkam al-makasib* (trans. Omar Bello – The dignity of labour). These translated texts, which I consulted at the Department of History, ABU, Zaria, were published in Kaduna, Nigeria, on the occasion of the bicentenary of the Sokoto Caliphate.

[12] The silence is not unique to the Central Sudan statemens, but is rather common in other Islamic states too.

the power of the sexual act firmly in the hands of men (the normative free male), they at the same time held women (the free female) accountable for the breach of sexual propriety.

Some principles of slavery

Four important principles of slavery emerge out of the broad policy positions in the Central Sudan, as in Islamic law according to researchers.[13]
The first and most important condition is that Muslims may not enslave fellow Muslims. According to ḍan Fodio, "to enslave the freeborn among the Muslims is unlawful…whether they reside in the territory of Islam, or in enemy territory."[14] Lovejoy, in agreement with Murry Last and M. A. Al-Hajj believes that this principle was adhered to in the early phase of the jihad.[15] The idea is that after the early phase, up 1817, the jihad "ceased to be predominantly ideological."[16]
Ideology is "a system of ideas pertaining to social and political subjects which justify and legitimate culture",[17] in which laws and rules of sexual conduct constitute an essential element. Thus slavery too operated only as part of a wider ideology of religion and of state. The Sokoto position regarding enslaving their adversaries in the wars before 1812 shows a direction that merged two aspects of Islam – the state and religious faith. With the exception Mai Idris Aloma's rule in Borno, and possibly Kano in the 16th century, faith and state among Muslims in this region had largely been kept apart. The merger of the two parts of Islam by Sokoto provided ideas of slavery in Islam, which were more stringent as they were arbitrary. For example, their position had permitted the enslavement of people who might have been believers of the Islamic faith, but who were opposed to the jihad. This interpretation sets in motion a contestation between faith and political affiliation. What the above quoted scholars mean by being less ideological probably refers to the infringement of the law against the enslavement of Muslims post-1817.

Abdullahi ḍan Fodio's departure for Kano in 1807 in protest against the conduct of the jihad is further indication of the inherent tensions in the ideological and the emerging culture of the jihad pre-1817. In 1808 Abdullahi says, "I had seen the changing times, and (my) brothers, and their inclination towards the world, and their squabbling over its possession, and its wealth, and its regard, together with their abandoning the upkeep of the mosques and the schools."[18] He gets more damning in the poem where he states, "my companions passed,… I was left behind among the remainder, the liars … and who in order to obtain delights and acquire rank … And the collecting of concubines."[19]

The second principle is that slave owners were entitled to use them for economic production without recompense for their time or labour. This aspect of the condition became widespread throughout the CS. Increasingly, the aristocracy and an emerging business class came to depend on slave labour for plantation production, but also manufactured goods such as textiles. The expansion of the plantation system using slave labour by both the aristocracy and commoners in the Sokoto Caliphate suggests it

---

[13] Bernard K. Freamon, "Definitions and Conceptions of Slave Ownership in Islamic Law1," in *The Legal Understanding of Slavery: From the Historical to the Contemporary*, ed. Jean Allain. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 41- .60.

[14] `Uthman dan Fodio, "Manifesto of the Jihad" in, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology* ed. Thomas Hodgkin, Thomas (London, Oxford & New York: 1975), 248.

[15] Paul E. Lovejoy, "Slavery in the Context of Ideology," in *The Ideology of Slavery*, ed. Paul E. Lovejoy (Beverly Hills & London: Sage Publications, 1981), 11-38.

[16] Lovejoy, "Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate," in *The Ideology of Slavery in Africa*, ed. Paul E. Lovejoy, (Beverly Hills, Sage Publications), 214.

[17] Lovejoy, "Slavery in the Context of Ideology," 16.

[18] 'Abdullāh Ibn Muḥammad, *Tazyīn al-Waraqāt*, Trans. and ed. (M. Hiskett. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1963), 120-121.

[19] Ibid, 121- 122.

was considered more productive.[20] The participation of women in the plantations is seldom specified.[21] However, considering that labour in farming was gendered, we must assume that female slaves worked in the plantations in accordance with the gendered division of labour that prevailed in all spheres of material production. The silence on women's input in this sector forms part of the systemic silencing of their role as means of undervaluing their contribution and of maintaining the gendered inequality.

Third, Muslim men who owned female slaves, were permitted to have sexual relations with them without a marriage vow. The acquisition of concubines as part of the delights emerged very early in the jihad, one of the factors that forced Abdullahi to migrate to Kano in protest. Concubines became a major factor in the demographic expansion of the ruling and business classes. The silence about female slave owners suggests that they had no right of sexual relations with their slaves equivalent to that of male slave owners.
Fourth, the status of slavery was heritable through the mother and not the father.[22] This principle is exceptional in this region, it being the only condition where inheritance through the maternal line applied.

Entrenching Muslim male normativity

Definition of the normative Muslim was an ideological stance based on the elevation of political affiliation and/or submission to the jihad as the standard measure, and within that measure the Muslim male was superior to all others. This higher position of the Muslim in the state is evidenced by the issues raised in the correspondence with Shehu Laminu, himself a very learned man, over the validity of the Caliphate's support of the insurgency in western Borno in1808. The potential for conflict caused by the dichotomy between faith and politics in the management of the Caliphate in its early years caused Abdullahi ɗan Fodio some concern. Over the course of the century, the rulers of the Sokoto seem to have diverged from the declared principles. However, the adoption of the religious principle enabled the jihadists, as they became the ruling class; claim the legitimacy of interpreting faith-based governance in the region. This governance policy gave impetus to enslavement, if not permitting, at least encouraging indiscriminate slave raiding. Firstly, unbelief became a term that encompassed all groups and individuals who perceived the application of Islam differently from that of the jihadists. Secondly, that position provided an easy justification for enslavement of opponents of the jihad whatever their self-declared faith.
Based on this definition of the unbeliever as the primary "other", slavery and slaves in the Sokoto Caliphate were mentioned mostly as 'givens' - as status, labour/work or in terms of state policy towards non-Muslim neighbours or as their compatriots in the state. When such mention is made, it is meant as of lower status, especially relative to Muslim men. This group of people or individuals as unbelievers were inferior in the eyes of the state in principle and may legitimately be enslaved unless they agreed to pay the Islamic state taxes. The position of the unbeliever as the other was made clear to the Emir of Bauchi, Yaᶜqub, when he asked Muhammad Bello a series of questions concerning governance and relations between the emirate and different types of subjects. After a discussion of the religious implications of the sixth question, dealing with status and material reward for participation in the jihad, Bello responded to the question by referring to the Ibn Abi Zayd's *Risala* and Khalil ibn Ishaq al-Jundi's (died ca. 1365s) *Mukhtasar*. Bello says, "the dhimmi [the status of an infidel under the trust of an Islamic state] is like that of a slave."[23] Further, "only he whose Islam is *confirmed*… is a

[20] Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformation in Slavery: a history of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 195- 202. Polly Hill, "Comparative West African Farm-Slavery (south of Sahel) with special reference to Muslim Kano Emirate (N. Nigeria)" in *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa*, ed. John Ralph Willis (London and Totowa, N. J.: Frank Cass, 1985).

[21] Lovejoy, *Transformation in Slavery*, 196- 197.

[22] Baba of Karo, *Baba of Karo: A Woman of the Hausa Muslim*, trans and ed Mary Smith (New Haven & London, 1981), 41.

[23] Bello, *Answer to the Questions of Amir Yaᶜqub*, 36.

freeman, male, of mature age, sane, of good health who was in *battle* with the intention of waging the jihad is entitled to a share of the booty…."[24] These two explanations by Muhammad Bello made the male Muslim the norm and lumped all females, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, as well as minors who are not of mature age, as the subordinate to the Muslim man. His response introduced a clear association between Islam and the secondary status of non-Muslims or unbelievers, apostates and women in the eyes of the state. On principle, non-Muslim slaves suffered a double disability in Islamic law according to Fisher and Fisher.[25] The non-Muslim female slave suffered a third fundamental disability – that of her bodily integrity in view of the sexual rights of the master. The difference between the female slave's sexual choices and that of the freeborn female is significant. While the freeborn female had in theory the choice of whom to marry and therefore a choice of her sexual partner, the slave female had neither. The changes the jihad brought into politics in the Central Sudan, of associating, being a non-Muslim to being a slave or the potential to become one, had much importance to female rights of the physical body.

Interpretative contradiction

There is a further contradiction in the idea of specifying non-Muslim female slaves in their texts, which implies that another category is the Muslim female slave. In a treatise written just before the wars commenced in 1804, Shehu Usman declared the illegality of enslaving Muslims.[26] Here too the distinction between faith and politics becomes important in determining who qualified for the status of Muslim; and whether there were female slaves who were faith-wise Muslims before their enslavement in the Caliphate. The political justification for slavery is an important element in understanding the distinction the jihadists made in respect of their sexual behaviour vis-à-vis that of the previous rulers. Written in 1806, *Kitab al-farq* was intended to draw a clear moral distinction between the Hausa rulers and the Caliphate government. Among other things, Shehu Usman ɗan Fodio accused the Hausa rulers of "taking what women they wish without marriage contract,"[27] which would include sexual relation of the rulers with slave women. Yet, owning concubines was a practice that was common among the jihadists, and Shehu Usman ɗan Fodio and other members of his own family had concubines. The basis of their casting aspersions on the Hausa rulers was dependent upon two political preconditions. Firstly, the jihadists appropriate the authority to define propriety in religious and social conduct through religious discourse and territorial gain. Secondly, and in particular, their ability to determine the rules of sexual morality and establish its validity as Islamic. The distinction between their acquisitions of concubines can only be ideological – in how they had interpreted Islam that defined the Hausa rulers they replaced and the society as unbelievers, in the sexual encounters between unmarried partners.

On the death of Shehu Usman ɗan Fodio in 1817, the territorial and administrative Caliphate had been established, allowing the first Sultan, Bello, to describe the 47 raids of his rule against those who had refused to submit to the jihad, as rebellions. In these wars, the jihadist appropriated the wives and concubines of their adversaries as their own. For example, Katembale, a former wife of Sarkin Gobir Yunfa, captured in 1808, became Bello's concubine. The question of whether she was a Muslim or not was made irrelevant by her husband's opposition to the jihad, rather than their faith, however they might have practiced it. By the physical appropriation of women, the jihadists also appropriated the authority to define sexual propriety as of political right concurrent with the creation of the state. This laid the foundation for defining the premise of sexual morality that is male privileged. Thus, the system created an underclass, which is ideologically inferior to freeborn Muslim norm – the slave, to

[24] Ibid. The words 'confirmed' and 'battle', in cursive, are my emphasis because they raise issues of gender inequality, especially of the undervaluation of women's participation, and of conceptualising membership of the Muslim community that are beyond the scope of this paper.

[25] Fisher and Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa*, 6-7.

[26] `Uthman dan Fodio, "Manifesto of the Jihad" in, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology* ed. Thomas Hodgkin (London, Oxford & New York: 1975), 248.

[27] `Uthman dan Fodio, "Characteristics of the Old Regime," Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology ed. Thomas Hodgkin (London, Oxford & New York: 1975), 251.

embed degrees of sexual un- and privileged groups. The Caliphate argument that slaves had to be non-Muslims creates the necessary ideological separation. However, we know too that both males and females who professed Islam as their religion were enslaved, although it is difficult to determine whether they entered slavery through official wars, as in the case of Katembale, or through unofficial slave raids. Among the known enslaved Muslims was Ali Eisami, who was enslaved in Borno and after going through many owners including in the Caliphate, ended up in the Atlantic system.[28] Dorugu, alias Dan Daura and his entire family, were enslaved within the Caliphate and sold out in different directions by fellow Muslims. Rabi, Baba of Karo's stepmother was captured in their village not far from Zaria the capital of Zazzau emirate. Similarly, in the list of names in the estate of Wamban Kano at the end of the 19th century, a majority of female slaves were Muslims, who could have been Muslims before they were enslaved.[29] Therefore, the idea that only unbelievers should be enslaved has to be perceived as a definition based on political affiliation rather than on one's declared faith. These definitions underscore the importance of ideology in the sexual practices in these states.

Significant Silences

There are many silences too about slavery that are important for understanding the construction of privilege in the two states. According to Lovejoy, Muhammad Bello was "committed to … the prohibition against enslavement of free Muslims and the sale of enslaved Muslims to Christians."[30] Bello's concern with enslaving Muslims equate to "European preoccupation with the rights of Man'", Lovejoy argues.[31] Caravan inspections were carried out to ensure Muslims, pregnant women and artisans were not sold into slavery to N. Africa.[32] Still, one must question the depth of Bello's commitment in preventing the enslavement of Muslims. The payment of taxes from the provinces was made with slaves, many of whom might have been Muslims, while the intra-Muslim wars persisted for the whole century. Since slaves were an important part of the annual dues paid by the provincial emirs especially those of Adamawa, Bauchi and Zazzau, one must question the depth of Sokoto's commitment to upholding the principle of not enslaving Muslim. Borno provincial governors similarly paid annual taxes to the central government in Kakuwa in slaves. While the Sokoto government established a system of inspecting slave exports, the specific terms of identifying a Muslim are not clear. Neither is there evidence within the state that slave masters had sought to ensure that their concubines were unbelievers. Similar silence pervades in Borno. However, based on the Vizier Bashir's propensity for selective acquisition of concubines as trophies, we could assume that belief was not a relevant criterion of selection for concubinage in Borno either. As shown later on in this paper, part of the sophistication of the slave system, was that of categorising and associating particular ethnic groups with specific qualities as slaves.

The process of establishing the Sokoto Caliphate, which defined the "other" as the unbelieving, set in motion the production of a social structure with an array of ideological explanations for slavery, as well as gender, and sex privileged hierarchies. The last named hierarchy might have been itself facilitated by the Atlantic (and the Saharan) external trades that partially contributed to the demographic imbalance of the sexes in the Central Sudan.

Female/male slave demographics and prices

---

[28] Rev. Sigmund W. Koelle, African Native literature: Or Proverbs, Tales, Fables and Historical Fragments in the Kanuri or Bornu Language, trans and ed. Rev. Sigmund W. Koelle (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 248-256.

[29] In an interview I conducted with two descendants of female slaves in August 2013, in the border region between Nigeria and Niger, both women insisted that their mothers were Muslims before captivity.

[30] Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Bello Clapperton Exchange: The Sokoto Jihad and the Transatlantic Slave Trade" in The *Desert Shore: Literatures of the Sahel*, vol. 3, Christopher Wise. (Boulder, Colorado and London: Lynne Rienner , 2001), 218.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid, 219.

There has been a growing literature on the Atlantic as well as the trans-Saharan slave trades, and their impact on African societies. Three dimensions of the discourse relevant to this paper are: first, the female/male ratio of slaves in the international systems, especially regarding the impact of the Atlantic trade system on the demographic differential between the sexes. The Second is the discourse surrounding division of labour of the sexes in the Sudan. Lastly, is the differential pricing of slaves based on gender. Questions have been asked as to why there were more female slaves in the Sudan than males and whether that was simply a by-product of the preference for male slaves in the Atlantic system, for females in the trans-Saharan system or if it was independent of both.[33]

Demographics discourse

The consensus among researchers is that both slave export trade systems had demographic effects on the African continent. However, they disagree on which of the trades had the most impact on West Africa.

Inikori and Engerman make a forceful case for the impact of the Atlantic trade on the economies and societies of the various regions of the continent.[34] The impact of the Atlantic slave trade on the demographic map of Africa can partly be traced by the numbers of African slaves in the New World, Middle East and Asia. While in 1600 there were only 3 million African slaves in the New World, by 1850 there were 5 million.[35] In Manning's estimate 10 million Africans reached the New World, 1.5 million lost their lives in the Middle Passage, 6 million across the Sahara to the Arab world and Asia, 8 million within the continent and further 4 million lost their lives as a direct consequence of slaving activities.[36] The number of forced migrants demands an exploration into the structural adjustments that African societies had to make to sustain their communities.

Summaries and aggregations of the slave exports on the Atlantic route show females constituting fewer than males in that system. In Klein's estimate, females made up approximately only one third of total export, including the breakdown of the figures by age at the end of the 18th century.[37] In another study, the males to females ratio exported, is estimated to the ratio of two to one in favour the males.[38] The trans-Saharan system has a female prevalence, although males were also exported. Borno appears to have specialised in the 'production' and supply of eunuchs into this system, supplying many of the courts in the Middle East as far as the Ottoman Empire over centuries. While there is mention of eunuchs in Sokoto, there is no information as to whether they were castrated in this country or were imported from elsewhere. Nachtigal offers a short description of the casteration process in Borno. .[39] The general idea is that more males were exported in the Atlantic system, indicating the retention of high numbers of females in African societies, even when the preference for female slaves on the

---

[33] Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson "Competing Markets for Male and Female Slaves: Prices in the Interior of West Africa, 1780- 1850", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1995), 261-293.

[34] Joseph E. Inikorij and Stanley L. Engerman, "Introduction: Losers and Gainers in the Atlantic Slave Trade" in *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1992), 1- 22.

[35] Patrick Manning, "The Slave Trade: The Formal Demography of Global System" in *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe*, ed. Joseph E. Inikori & Stanley L. Engerman, (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1992), 119-120.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Herbert S. Klein, "African Women in the Atlantic Slave Trade," in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, ed. Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 30-1.

[38] Martin Klein "The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on the Societies of the Western Sudan," in *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe*, ed. Joseph E. Inikori and Stanley L. Engerman (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1992), 33.

[39] Gustav Nachtigal, Sahara and Sudan: Kawar, Bornu, Kanem; Borku and Ennedi, vol 2, trans. Allan G. B. Fisher and Humphrey J. Fisher (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers), 1974, 217.

Saharan route has been accounted for. Much as it is interesting to explain the source of the demographic differential, it is relevant in this paper only to with respect to social reproduction than to the statistics or, why there are more females in the Sudan.

The underlying question in the social reproduction debate is whether the higher value of the female slave to that of the male in the Sudan was due to her economic productivity or due to her reproductive capacity. According to Klein, the price of female slaves was at least one third higher than that of males and some times as much as 2:1 in the Sudan. He summarises the two main explanations proffered for the price difference: One explanation is that women were simply more economically productive because they could be deployed in a wider range of activities than men. Another explanation is that slaves in Africa did not actually reproduce themselves to warrant their sale value. Slave masters did not encourage slave procreation because it added to their responsibility.[40]

Female Slave Price Discourse

The analysis of pricing of female slaves is sometimes posed in binary terms - production versus reproduction. Many scholars have concluded that the utilitarian roles females play in material production were decisive factors in their higher value, rather than their reproductive capacity. The price debate is one of the most important in determining the significance of gender relations and female slavery.

European travellers' accounts confirm the higher price of female slaves in both Borno and Sokoto throughout the nineteenth century, with little downward fluctuation. The currencies of exchange in the two countries were different and many, but the price within each currency were higher for the female than it was for the male. During Clapperton's second visit to Sokoto in 1826 male slaves "from thirteen to 20 years of age will bring 10,000 to 20,000 – female slaves if very handsome from 40 to 50,000 – the common price is about 30,000 for a virgin about 14 or 15."[41] On Nachtigal's visit in 1870, a robust male slave "was least wanted in Borno slave markets for reasons of malleability" he states. "The price of mature young girls who are suitable as concubines is understandably a good deal above *sedâsî* [robust male slave],[42] but they constitute a less marketable and rather uncertain article of commerce, since their value fluctuates very much according to the degree of their beauty and the taste of the bargainer for them."[43] Lovejoy and Richardson's collation and tabulation of written sources of slave prices in the Central and Western Sudan show that female slaves were most highly priced than all categories from 1780-1850.[44] After careful examination, they have concluded that the price differential between the sexes in the Sudan was neither exclusively determined by the Atlantic slave trade system, nor by the Saharan system. Rather, the Sudan and the other two systems "were moving in tandem."[45]

Claude Meillassoux's position on the production/reproduction debate is that the freeborn female's "submission as a laborer follows from her submission as a procreator." [46] Female slaves on the other

[40] Martin A. Klein, "Women in Slavery in the Western Sudan," in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, ed. Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press), 72 - 84.

[41] Hugh Clapperton, *Hugh Clapperton into the Interior of Africa: Records of the Second Expedition, 1825- 1827*, ed. Jamie Bruce Lockhart and Paul E Lovejoy (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 318.

[42] Kanuri language generic name for male slave of optimum value by physique. Surrîya (sgl, serrârî, pl.) are female equivalents. See Gustav Nachtigal for detailed measurements.

[43] Gustav Nachtigal, *Sahara and Sudan: Kawar, Bornu, Kanem; Borku and Ennedi*, vol 2, trans. Allan G. B. Fisher and Humphrey J. Fisher (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers), 1974, 216.

[44] Lovejoy and Richardson "Competing Markets for Male and Female Slaves," 288-292.

[45] Ibid., 286.

[46] Claude Meillassoux, "Female Slavery," in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, ed. Claire C. Robertson and Martin Klein (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), p. 49.

hand "were valued above all as workers … because female tasks were predominant in production."[47] The high value of female slaves he argues, "was related to the sexual allocation of tasks, that is, … women's participation in labor was greater than that of men."[48] They were used in "female tasks or to be used as an instrument of social or political manipulation."[49] This stark separation of roles in production versus procreation between the freeborn and slave females is problematic because it distances the enmeshed reality of social relationships. In other words, the abstraction for purpose of structuring research has replaced the fuzzier bordering of real lived lives. Firstly, Meillassoux's argument of females as functionally versatile in material production naturalizes socially evolved circumstances and ideologies that justify gender divisions and disparity, rather than explaining why the differentials exist and the functions they serve. Secondly, his arguments dissociates the female slave in biological reproduction as well as the social reproduction of the ideology and the structures of inequality.

To explain the higher value of females we must seek out ways to incorporate a gendered ideological premise, beyond the production/reproduction paradigm to identify intersections in the web**.** An intersectional gender perspective would acknowledge multiple trajectories of female enslavement and their higher market value even when in pure Economics their over-flooded numbers should have damped their price. The fact that women were versatile in the number and types of tasks they could accomplish compared to men must be perceived within the intersectional and embedded ideologies of socialisation rather than a condition prior to their social roles. The question we must ask should be why women could perform a myriad of reproduction as well as production tasks, rather than assume those attributes as innate feminine traits. Procreation is natural, but the sexual relations and other conditions in which procreation occurs, are social constructions, in this case slavery. The important constructions in the case of the CS were among other things the four conditions that permitted enslavement of the category called, unbeliever. In the case of female slaves, the condition included relinquishing the right over her body for the master's pleasure at his will, sanctioned by the position the learned people of the Sudan had taken.

The economic argument assumes that the reproduction of labour is equal to procreation, - a natural act that in itself might offer sufficient motivation for female enslavement. In spite of the positions of the CS leaders, the arguments about Atlantic and Saharan trades and their impact on the Sudan as well as the understanding of reproduction as a three-pronged process, it is important to employ intersectionality, though to a limited extent to explore the different dimensions of female slavery.
It is specifically necessary to make two important analytical distinctions: Firstly, it is important to distinguish concubinage from other probable master-slave sexual encounters. Second, it is important to separate reproduction/procreation from the sexual act or attraction/desire and the purposes they serve apart from procreation.

Concubinage and Sexual Desire

The sexual act or attraction in itself as part of the motive for female slavery, has received little attention, even as the facts show another side of the situation. To explicate this situation, one must consider attitudes and practices rather than policy positions. For example, we know that females have been used as valuable gifts and political pawns in the past.[50] The attitude of some of the slave masters, such as the vizier of Borno, suggests too that female slaves were collected as trophies. The vizier lamented to Clapperton "that he had not yet a specimen of that tribe", or that he has a living specimen

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 55.

[49] Claude Meillassoux, "Female Slavery," in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, ed. Claire C. Robertson and Martin Klein (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 64.

[50] Fisher and Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa*, 153-156.

of another.[51] Of course, one cannot make an empirical generalisation from such attitudes and practices, as to whether the practice was the norm or exception to the rule. Theoretically, the practices indicate permissibility of holding such opinions without repercussions from the wider society. A series of such 'mundane' acts could form a coherent societal principle entrenched in the social structure and values. In making the sex versus reproduction argument, let us make a detour into the discussion through American slavery to hear the voice of a female slave, because we lack extant voices of Sudan female slaves.

> The secrets of slavery are concealed like those of the Inquisition. My master was, to my knowledge, the father of eleven slaves. But did the mothers dare to tell who was the father of their children? Did the other slaves dare to allude to it, except in whispers among themselves? No, indeed! They knew too well the terrible consequences.[52]

The excerpt is from Harriet Jacobs, who descended from a slave family in South Carolina. It is a lead to the different and similar trajectories of gender in slavery between its form in the USA and its form in the Central Sudan. The citation also opens up the role of *silence* in maintaining gender inequality that may not be visible in policy or even ideological positions. In Jacobs' narrative of the sexual encounter with her master, we observe a number of things. Firstly, that the wife of the slave master had, for lack of a better term, moral prerogative over her husband's sexual behaviour/partners. Secondly, that it was in theory, immoral for him to carry out sexual acts with the slaves. Thirdly, that the master's consorting with his female slaves had increased the number of his slaves by at least 11 more. Was the master motivated to have sex with his slaves for the purpose of procreation? From the narrative, it is difficult to determine whether the master's fathering of children was the motivation for his sexual encounter with the female slaves, but unless he was an exception, planters did not encourage procreation by slaves.[53] In addition, the master's determined emotional engagement as he stalked Harriet, points to a clear sexually-driven act rather than to a calculated procreative or economic benefit for his actions. However, one can also infer as Meillassoux suggests, that in all three observations, the Christian sexual ideology plays an important role in the perception of morally proper sex, if not the reality.

As recent historical reconstructions of the southern USA slavery shows, female slavery in the nineteenth century was no longer a matter of maintaining an economy alone.[54] According to a scholar, female slavery had become closely associated with "frequent discussions of the rape of light-skinned enslaved women, or fancy maids, their own relentlessly sexualized vision of the trade."[55] The perception of female slaves as sexual objects progressed among both planters and traders that "coerced sex was the secret meaning of the commerce in human beings, while commodification swelled its actors with the power of rape."[56] Thus, even in the USA slave market, where both racism and price of male slaves predominated, there was an underlying market for female slaves as sexual objects. In these markets, "light-skinned women were sold at rates four to five times the price of equivalent female field laborers."[57]

---

[51] Heinrich Barth, *Barth's Travels in Nigeria: Extracts from the journal of Heinrich Barth's Travels in Nigeria, 1850- 1855*, ed A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (London, Ibadan and Accra: Oxford University Press, 1962), 153.

[52] Harriet Jacobs [penname Linda Brent], *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ed. Maria L. Child (Boston: published for the author, 1861). http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/JACOBS/hj-cover.htm Chapter, VI, p. 1

[53] Philip D. Curtin, *Migration and Mortality in Africa and the Atlantic World, 1700-1900* (Aldershot, Burlington – USA, Singapore & Sydney, 2001), 215.

[54]David J. Libby, Paul Spickard and Susan Ditto eds. *Affect and Power: Essays on Sex, Slavery, Race, and Religion in Appreciation of Winthrop D. Jordan (*Jackson, MS, USA: University Press of Mississippi, 2005).

[55] Edward E Baptist, ""Cuffy," "Fancy Maids," and "One-Eyed Men": Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States" in *Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas*. ed Walter Johnson and David Brion Davis (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 177 .

[56] Ibid., Baptist, 177 .

[57] Ibid., 193.

Fisher and Fisher have set out in detail the rules that should guide sexual relations between Muslim males and females, and between them and non-Muslims in accordance with Ibn Abi Zayd and Khalil bin Ishaq interpretations.[58] Yet we must consider that the long practice of slavery in the CS might have generated its own dynamics where sex and desire have become important motivations in female enslavement and slavery. The two outstanding features of the rules for sexual relations are firstly, the enforced monogamy for all classes of females in their choice of a sexual partner.[59] Secondly, by interpreting the provisions of religious belief to male advantage, the CS rulers instituted rules that made polygyny permissible for all classes of males. These rules suggest a sexual factor in slavery and a contributing factor to the high price of female slaves.

In both Sokoto and Borno, we do not hear the voice of the concubines or any female slave as sexual objects or on her reaction to an encounter with a master stalking her with sexual intent. We can imagine a similar situation when Imoru gives as the perspective of the male.

> When a man sees a beautiful slave and he likes her, he keeps it a secret. He sleeps with her regularly and she becomes his concubine, korkora [kwarkwara]. When she bears once for him she becomes a free woman: he doesn't sell her, he doesn't give her away as a gift **…** *If she has a marriage*, all is the same. When he dies, she can marry anybody she is a free woman, just like all freeborn women.[60]

The right of the master to take into his bed any female slave he wished did not require the lengthy circumspection of the procedure narrated by Harriet Jacobs in 1861.[61] In this accepted practice in the CS is embedded a *silence* about the contradiction between the male right to solicit sex from female slaves, and the stringent demand required of them as Muslim males not to exceed four wives. There was none, or little, discussion among religious leaders about the enslavement of women who might have considered themselves Muslim, who became concubines. Was the master committing adultery by engaging sexually with a slave who was a Muslim?

Further, we need to distinguish concubinage from other sexual encounters because it locks up the master/slave sex in exclusive formal sex partner roles, when sex between individuals in the two groups might not have always been within this framework. Ordinary female slaves could be coerced into sex with their masters or other men who might not have been obligated to take responsibility for the offspring of such liaisons. The highlighted phrase, "If she has a marriage, all is the same" means the master's sexual rights was not invalidated even if she was married to somebody else. The formalised sexual relation called concubinage simply meant the master recognised and assumed responsibility for her offspring, but did not mean concubines and wives held exclusive rights over their master/husband's sexual activity. Since the master could sexually engage with any of his female slaves, without marriage that excludes other males, she could with or without marriage sexually engage other men as well. Such *silences* about the complexity of sexual relationships, is where religious leaders had arrogated to themselves interpretative authority that shuts doors of discourse around religious texts as if they were unproblematic, or because the men recognised the problem, and would rather silence a rational debate.

Beauty and sexual slavery

---

[58] Humphrey J. Fisher, *Slavery in the History of Muslim Black Africa*. (London: C. Hurst and Co., 2001). Fisher and Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa*, 99-101.

[59] Qur'an, Chapter 4, verses 3 & 25.

[60] Douglas Edwin Ferguson, "Nineteenth Century Hausaland: Being a Description by Imam Imoru of the Land, Economy and Society of his People", Phd dissertaion, University of California, Los Angeles, 1973, p. 231.

[61] Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

Accounts about slaves are replete with the role of beauty of the female in her enslavement. The role of sexual desire in the enslavement of females predates the imbalance of the sexes wrought by the Atlantic trade.[62] Female slaves were sold as wares, where their physical quality of particular body parts determined whether they were considered primarily, though not exclusively, as farm slaves or concubines. The significance of sex in pricing females can be seen in the difference of prices among females depending on their age, but most importantly on whether she was classed as a beauty or not. It is debatable whether the prices of females based on age was determined by their potential to be deployed to more tasks than older females, but beauty had no function in material production. Comparative prices of the different categories of females can enable us deal with the ideological issues in sex. One cannot explain away why an old woman would sell for 10 Maria Theresa dollars while a girl or young woman for up to 100 in Borno in the 1870s, or explain it away as a factor of their economic potential.[63] Nor could the pricing of an ordinary virgin in Sokoto at 30,000 cowries, while a beauty sold for up to 50,000, be simply a matter of either productive or procreative functions alone.[64] By the late nineteenth century, the market for slave beauties was sophisticated to the point where different non-Muslims communities had been categorised as better or worse as concubine or as farm hand. Indeed, female beauties were no longer peddled as ordinary wares in the market, but were rather traded in the merchants' houses.[65]

The state's rules against sexual encounters between unmarried sexual partners, other than between the master and female slave might have been stringent. Rules do not however equate to reality. European travellers have mentioned cases of punishment of women and slaves for erring against the sexual rules in Borno. In one case, the death sentence that Shehu Laminu adjudicated against sexual offences by two girls was challenged, both within Islamic philosophy, and by popular protest. The punishment was eventually commuted to shaving off the girls' hair off.[66] On another occasion, sixty women were rounded up for sexual offences, and the death sentence was carried out in the case of five and the rest were meted other forms of capital punishments. After the punishments, more than one hundred families emigrated from the town in protest, and many who remained, refused to honour the Shehu as was the practice.[67] In the Sokoto too, researchers suggest such illegal sexual encounters might have been severely punished.[68] For instance, Nast says, "In November 2000, a burial mound west of the checkpoint leading to Shekar Yamma was pointed out to me. This was the place, I was told, where the executed lover of a concubine had been buried as a warning to other concubines" in Kano.[69]

What can be observed is that actions against illegal sex affected both slave and free females. Punishment was however not the same for all cases, and seldom were the men involved meted out the same punishment as the female offenders. Still, in the Borno's case ordinary people reacted with disbelief and resisted Shehu Laminu's judgement. In the Kano case, where the female slave was a concubine, it was only the male offender that got the death sentence. The sexual encounters of women, whether freeborn or concubine, associated with the ruling class might have been more supervised than of the majority of women. Still, because the slave's limited family connection, they might have been more harshly punished than free women. Thus the concubine, whose sexual encounters are closely

---

[62] Allen G. B. Fisher & Humphrey J. Fisher, Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa: the institutions in Saharan and Sudanic Africa and the trans-Saharan trade (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1970), 101-109.

[63] Fisher and Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa*, 164.

[64] Ibid., 165. Clapperton. *Hugh Clapperton into the Interior of Africa*, 318.

[65] Clapperton, Travels and Discoveries, vol. 1, 202

[66] Ibid., 295- 297.

[67] Ibid., vol. 2, 79- 80.

[68] See examples in Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death to Slavery*, p. 114.

[69] Heidi Nast, Heidi J. *Concubines and Power: Five Hundred Years in a Northern Nigerian Palace.* Minneapolis, MN, USA,, 2004. p. 223. http://site.ebrary.com/lib/gubselibrary/Doc?id=10173883&ppg=142. See the encounter between a concubine of a slave, Dorugu and a concubine in the palace of Zinder in, J. F. Schön, *Magana Hausa: Native Literature or, Proverbs, Tales, Fables and Historical Fragments in the Hausa Language*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1885, p.31 and 16.

supervised by the master, should be separated from the majority of ordinary free as well as other slave women.

While we lack detailed narratives to draw from, the prices of females in some cases are clearly based on age. Females of childbearing age were priced higher than so called older females. The strictly procreative potential of the younger female could have been a factor in setting her value. However, combined with the Imoru's view of the master's eye on sex, one cannot discount the sexual act in itself as an important reason for female value.

> "The lot of these girls … is usually the happiest among the slaves. They take over completely the place of the housewife, and … still on the whole the cost of maintaining them … are much smaller than for lawful wives. For men without means and people who are compelled to great journeys and long absences, they are real blessing, for lawful wives are seldom inclined to leave their home and kinsfolk, and according to religious law, they cannot even be compelled to do so."[70]

Sexual desire was a decisive factor in the value put on female slaves.

Conclusion

The aim of the paper is to discuss the significance of the higher price female slaves fetched in the slave markets of the Central Sudan in the nineteenth century. After more than a century since the end of open slavery, it is impossible to recover hard evidence on the sexual functions slave women performed, especially when there are no written sources where their own voices can be heard. Circumstantial information based on the differential pricing of male and female slaves is probably the best retrievable evidence from written records of the dimension of their roles. This paper touched on the differential value of the two sexes as a window into how trading women for sex entrenched the institution of slavery horizontally as well as vertically. Female slavery became an important scaffold to many aspects of the social structure in the Central Sudan, embedded in the production systems, but especially in the reproductive. Slavery as a whole created various forms of exploitation, oppression and categories of inequality based on religious and political affiliation, by designating groups of people as legitimately enslaveable. Female slavery within the larger system distributed sexual privilege unequally between males and females, but also within the category females by the price paid for beauty. These inequalities still hang on the ideological interpretations of gender roles, including the objectification of females as sexual objects.

Taken together the argument is that CS slavery and prices were not driven only by the need for labour in material production. The African strategy for enlarging families through limitless polygamy and populating and mastering their environment had come into conflict with ideological position of sex in Islam. By the nineteenth century, this African attitude was on a collision course with the expanding Islamic states and institutions. Muslim reformers and Islamist states had had to be innovative in this diverse region and yet accommodate the more stringent rules of sex, especially for females. Their strategy had been to limit or silence the depth of debate on interpretations loaned from North Africa, and by that they enabled men live their sexual desires. In the same process, women's sexual and other rights were systematically undermined. At the same time they were kin to apply aspects of North African patriarchy already imbedded in the religious interpretations.

The value system that emerged with the ideologies of the nineteenth century still play important roles in Muslim societies in West Africa, and their perception of women's status and roles. The nineteenth century concurrently witnessed struggles for the right of men and, new structures and ideologies for the oppression of women, as societies across the region adapted to the insecurity, new forms of governance and not least the demographic imbalances wrought by the slave trades and internal slavery. .Contemporary violations of women's human rights should be perceived and interpreted with a

[70] Nachtigal, *Sahara and Sudan*, 216- 217.

historical knowledge of the circumstance that entrenched these particular forms of patriarchal oppression in West Africa. The oppression of women in this region must be linked to the history of slavery at large, and the gender constructions that emerged within that condition. This paper only addressed a miniscule portion of the impact of slavery on women's rights even as men's rightful accesss to women's bodies were being established.

References

Baptist, Edward E. ""Cuffy," "Fancy Maids," and "One-Eyed Men": Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States." In *Chattel Principle : Internal Slave Trades in the Americas*, edited by Walter Johnson, 165-202. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005. http://site.ebrary.com/lib/gubselibrary/Doc?id=10169948&ppg

Barth, Heinrich. *Barth's Travels in Nigeria: Extracts from the journal of Heinrich Barth's Travels in Nigeria, 1850- 1855*. Edited by A. H. M. Kirk-Greene. London, Ibadan and Accra: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Bello, Muhammad. *Al-Qawl al-Mauhud fī Ajwibati As'ilati al-Amīr Yaᶜqub* [The Discourse Presented in Answer to the Questions of Amir Yaᶜqub]. In *Nigerian Administration Research Project: Second Interim Report*. Translated by O. S. A. Islamil and A. Y. Aliyu, 34- 39. Zaria, Nigeria: Institute of Adminnistration, Ahmadu Bello University, 1975.

Clapperton, Hugh. Hugh Clapperton into the Interior of Africa: Records of the Second Expedition, 1825- 1827. Edited by Jamie Bruce Lockhart and Paul Lovejoy. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005.

Curtin, Philip D. *Migration and Mortality in Africa and the Atlantic World, 1700- 1900.* Aldershot, Burlington USA, Singapore and Sydney: Ashgate Variorum, 2001.

Denham, Major and Clapperton, Captain. *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Years 1822, 23 and 24*, 2 vols. London: Darf Publishers Limited, 1985 (1826)

Ferguson, Douglas Edwin. ""Nineteenth Century Hausaland: Being a Description by Imam Imoru of the Land, Economy and Society of his People"." *Phd dissertaion.* Los Angeles: University of California, 1973.

Fisher, Allan G. B. and Fisher, Humphrey J. *Slavery and Muslim society in Africa: the institution in Saharan and Sudanic Africa and the Trans-Saharan trade.* London: Hurst and Company, 1970.

Fisher, Humphrey J. *Slavery in the History of Muslim Black Africa*. London: C. Hurst and Co., 2001.

Freamon, Bernard K. "Definitions and Conceptions of Slave Ownership in Islamic Law1." In *The Legal Understanding of Slavery: From the Historical to the Contemporary*, edited by Jean Allain. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Hill, Polly. ""Comparative West African Farm-Slavery systems (south of the Sahel) with special reference to Muslim Kano Emirate (N. Nigeria)." Chap. Chapter 3 in *Slaves and Slavery in Africa: Volume 2:The Servile Estate*, by John Ralph Willis, 33- 50. London: Frank Cass and Company Limitrf, n.d.

Hill, Polly. "Comparative West African Farm-Slavery (south of Sahel) with special reference to Muslim Kano Emirate (N. Nigeria)." In *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa*, by John Ralph Willis, 33- 50. London and Totowa, N. J.: Frank Cass, 1985.

Ibn. Muhammad, Abdullahi, first emir of Gwandu. Tazyin Al-Waraqat . Edited by M. Hiskett. Translated by M. Hiskett. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1963.

Inikori, J. E. ed. *Force Migration: The Impact of the Export Slave Trade on African Societies.* London, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland and Johannesburg: Hutchinson University Library for Africa, 1982.

Inikori, Joseph E. & Engerman, Stanley L. “Introductions: Losers and Gainers in the Atlantic Slave Trade” in The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1992), 1- 22.

Jacobs, Harriet[penname Linda Brent]. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Edited by Maria L. Child. Boston: Published for the author, 1861. http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/JACOBS/hj-cover.htm

Klein, Herbert S. "African Women in the Atlantic Slave Trade." In *Women and Slavery in Africa. Edited by Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein,* 29-38. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.

Klein, Martin A. "Women in Slavery in Western Sudan." In *Women and Slavery in Africa.* Edited by Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, 67- 92. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.

Klein, Martin A. “The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on the Societies of the Western Sudan.” In *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe*. Edited by Joseph E. Inikori and Stanley L. Engerman, 25- 48. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992

Klein, Martin A., ed. *Breaking the chains: slavery, bondage, and emancipation in modern Africa and Asia.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.

Libby, David J. and Paul Spickard and Susan Ditto, eds. *Affect and Power: Essays on Sex, Slavery, Race, and Religion in Appreciation of Winthrop D. Jordan*. Jackson, MS, USA: University Press of Mississippi, 2005). http://site.ebrary.com/lib/gubselibrary/Doc?id=10157869&ppg=26

Lovejoy, Paul E. "Slavery in the Context of Ideology." In *The Ideology of Slavery*. Edited by Paul E. Lovejoy, Beverly Hills & London: Sage Publications, 1981, 11-38 .

Lovejoy, Paul E. "Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate." In *The Ideology of Slavery in Africa.* Edited by Paul E. Lovejoy, 200-243. Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications.

Lovejoy, Paul E., *Salt of the Desert: a history of salt production and trade in the Central* Sudan, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986

Lovejoy, Paul E. and Hogerndorn, Jan S. *Slow Death to Slavery: The course of abolition in Northern Nigeria, 1897-1936*. Cambridge, New York and Oakleigh, Australia: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Lovejoy, Paul E. and Richardson, David. “Competing Markets for Male and Female Slaves: Prices in the Interior of West Africa, 1780- 1850.” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 28, no. 2 (1995): 261-293.

Lovejoy, Paul E. *Transformation in Slavery: a history of Slavery in Africa*. Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Lovejoy, Paul. “The Bello Clapperton Exchange: The Sokoto Jihad and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.” In *The Desert Shore: Literatures of the Sahel*, Volume 3, edited by Christopher Wise, 201- 227. Boulder, Colorado and London: Lynne Rienner, 2001.

Manning, Patrick. “The Slave Trade: The Formal Demography of Global System.” in T*he*

Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe. Edited by Joseph E. Inikori & Stanley L. Engerman, 117-142. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1992.

Meillassoux, Claude. ”“Female Slavery.” In *Women and Slavery in Africa*. Edited by Claire C. Robertson and Martin Klein, 49- 66. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press 1983.

Nachtigal, Gustav. *Sahara and Sudan: Kawar, Bornu, Kanem; Borku and Ennedi.* Translated by Allan G. B. Fisher and Humphrey J. Fisher. Vol. 2. London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1974.

Nast, Heidi J. *Concubines and Power: Five Hundred Years in a Northern Nigerian Palace*. Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2004. http://site.ebrary.com/lib/gubselibrary/Doc?id=10173883&ppg=142.

Paul E. Lovejoy amd Jan S. Hogendorn. *Slow Death to Slavery: The Course of Abolition in Northern Nigeria, 1897–1936.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Hill, Polly. “Comparative West African Farm-Slavery Systems.” In *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa*, edited by John Ralph Willis, 33-50. London and Totowa, N. J.: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1985.

Schön, J. F. *Magana Hausa: Native Literature, or Proverbs, Tales, Fables and Historical Fragments.* London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge/Gilbert and Rivington, 1885.

Baba of Karo. *Baba of Karo: A Woman of the Hausa Muslim.* Translated by Mary F. Smith. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981.

Stillwell, Sean. *Slavery and Slaving in African History.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Thornton, John. "Sexual Demography: The Impact of the Slave Trade on Family Structure." In *Women and Slavery in Africa*. Edited by Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, 39- 48. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.

`Uthman dan Fodio. "Islam and Women.” In *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, edited by Thomas Hodgkin, 254- 255. London, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.