

The Evolution of the Built Environment of the Margi Ethnic Group of Northeastern Nigeria

By

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The Evolution of the Built Environment of the Margi Ethnic Group of Northeastern Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a story of the evolution of the domestic sphere of the Margi ethnic group of northeastern Nigeria. The evolution started with round huts and fences that were constructed mainly with pieces of stones while living in the Mandara Mountain enclaves and with mud huts surrounded with thatch mats while living on the plains and then evolved to a contemporary, but a hybrid structure, as a result of their contact with westerners. Based on fieldwork, interviews, and critical archival analysis of missionary and colonial papers, my narrative traces the historical, geographical, spatial, architectural, and developmental perspectives of the infrastructure changes in the Margi built environment in precisely 52 Margi towns, villages, and neighborhoods. This includes: roads, residential structures, and components of modernity such as schools, churches, mosques, hospitals, and stores (the term stores is used to account for markets, bars, convenient stores, and restaurants). I concentrate on the type of structure, the time it was built, the changes made to the structure, and the types of material used. I also examine individual group interests and activities by three separate groups who exchanged ideas with each other that helped start the change on which this dissertation is built. Along the way, and many times, these separate group interests clashed. The groups are: the colonial authorities, the missionaries, and the Margi.

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## Dedication

This Dissertation Is Dedicated to all Margi people regardless of Religion, Clan, or Location

And to the following who all went to be with our Lord

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My Father, the late Awidau Papka Birdling

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## **Introduction**

This dissertation is about how the built environment of a particular ethnic group called the Margi has been gradually changing. Although I highlight changes beginning from 1927, when the Margi made the first contact with the American Church of the Brethren Missionaries, and subsequently with the Catholic Church, I concentrate more on the changes that occurred from 1960 to 2012. The Margi people are currently residing in two states in northern Nigeria. They occupy the geographical peripheries of northwest Adamawa and southeast Borno states. The change that occurred in the Margi built environment is more than just growth of Margi towns and villages due to an increase in the physical infrastructure caused by population growth. It is one example of a modernist project to influence the cultural landscapes of many ethnic groups in the global south, as part of an agenda to modernize the ‘others’ of the ‘developing world.’ The global north felt that advancement had been realized in their regions; they looked to the global south and saw stagnation, which required assistance in order to meet the minimum standard to be part of the modern world that the modernists envisioned; yet groups like the Margi were nonetheless agents in this project, adapting modernist standards in their own ways.

The evolution of the built environment of most African ethnic groups, especially those that experienced Colonization and Christianization like the Margi, does not necessarily include all the inhabitants. Therefore such places provide avenues through which to study and seek to understand power and powerlessness; the haves and the have-nots; and the ability of human greed to block empathy for fellow inhabitants. I also try to understand the causes for and the reasons that the Margi speaking people, whom I refer to as the Margi ethnic group, started to change their domestic sphere. Western institutions, such as schools, churches, hospitals, and fruit orchards were introduced into the Margi cultural landscape after 1927. I tried to understand how the Margi took these ideas and built on them;

how they travelled to different cities in Nigeria to work, and lived in homes that were different from their traditional mud huts, returned to their cultural landscape, and built similar structures.

I trace the historical development of the infrastructure and changes in the built environment, in precisely 52 Margi towns, villages, and neighborhoods. The inquiry also included the Margi people who reside and work in the two state capitals of Borno and Adamawa, regarding any structure they might have built in their various home towns or villages. To help me understand what I call the non-human elements of this research, I concentrated on: the type of structure, when it was built, what changes occurred to the structure, and the type of materials used. I also examined the individual group interests and activities of three separate groups who exchanged ideas with each other and helped start the change on which this dissertation is built. Along the way and many times these separate group interests clashed. The groups are: the colonial authorities, the missionaries, and the Margi.

The first group originated in the presence of the British Government on Margi land, initially through leaders like Frederick Lugard, who administered part or all of Nigeria, 1898-1906 and 1912-1919 (the latter period as Governor of the unified Colony of Nigeria). Lugard was responsible for initiating British power over the Margi, which included the Margi cultural landscape as well as the social and political aspects of the society. He then connected the power to the Margi laypeople via the district officers, followed by regional *emirs*, the district heads, the Margi *ptil* (chief), and the neighborhood heads (the *Bulama*'s). This unspoken power was in part exercised through the provision of things such as water wells, vaccinations for humans, and cattle, and security for the weaker groups like the Margi. These provisions by the colonial authorities were made in exchange for the things they took away from the Margi cultural landscape, such as tax monies, pyramids of peanuts, cotton, and extremely cheap labor provided by the Margi and other ethnic groups (the colonial subjects). The key actors mentioned above are

responsible for organizing, stabilizing and holding together the relationships between the environment, bodies, materials, and institutions that must be constantly refined and readjusted to facilitate the activities of the colonial government (Simone, 2009: 13).

This early era in the imposition of colonial rule was followed by the presence of the missionaries, representing two denominations of western Christian churches: the American Brethren Church, and the Roman Catholic Church. The missionaries were incapable of accepting the reality of Margi religiosity and culture as they found it at the time. On one hand they create places, in the form of both non-material and material culture, such as churches, schools, and dispensaries within the Margi cultural landscape. The main reason behind the missionary projects was to change the Margi religion and culture according to the missionaries' ideas of what they thought reality ought to be (Sack, 2001: 117). On the other hand, the Margi ethnic group, agreed to participate in exchange for security from enslavement or forceful Islamization by the major ethnic groups. The new ways of life that embraced western religion, western medicine, western education, and western material culture started to encroach into the towns, villages and neighborhoods. The wind of change that gradually blew across the Margi cultural landscape included the Margi's willingness to start modernizing their own domestic sphere, to conform to western norms brought to them by their new neighbors. In a short time period, the Margi started to buy the western-devised building materials to construct semi-western homes. The new norms clearly led many other ethnic groups in Africa that came in contact with missionaries, colonial authorities, or other European settlers to adopt the newly imported construction styles brought by these new neighbors.

Since this dissertation is a story about how space evolves into place, in the first chapter, I contextualize the research project within the framework of Nigerian evolution (from space into

place) itself, and embed it in the political and historical evolution of the general area where the Margi ethnic group resides. The evolution started when a variety of kingdoms in the eastern and western part of present-day Nigeria and kingdoms and a caliphate in the north all became colonial territories, and then finally part of a federal republic made up of small states. I show how Nigeria struggled with its new identity as a nation after its independence in 1960 – a struggle in some ways defined by intense ethnic differences, corruption, and a turbulent political history. I also show how the political boundary of the Margi cultural landscape was at various times renamed and reassigned to various political entities as new powers displaced old ones. It shifted from naturally free and fluid space to a bounded one, as part of: an Islamic Caliphate, a German controlled territory, a British controlled territory, a United Nation protectorate, and then a Nigerian nation state. Most recently, the Margi people - together for generations, with the same language and culture - were standing on the sidelines while their cultural landscape was divided between two Nigerian states, Adamawa and Borno, imaginarily and in material fact stopping the natural fluidity among Margi.

I theorize that, if any geographical area, anywhere in the world under a given territorial boundary evolves in new directions socially and politically like this, it follows that the built environment of the geographical area will also evolve. Therefore, I situate the Margi struggle within those of many other ethnic groups' domestic spheres in the larger context of experience with colonization and Christianization across Africa. From this context, I can begin to move further into the story of the evolution of the Margi built environment as an example of what occurred among many African ethnic groups. In addition, I establish that the Margi ethnic groups were in this general area for many centuries before European colonialism by telling the story of their contact with pre-modern world scholars, explorers and expeditionary activities of other

warrior-type groups. The following foreign persons came in contact with the Margi: Fra Mauro in 1450, Idris Alauma in 1564, and the explorers Richardson, Barth, and Overweg in the years beginning in 1851. Finally, I introduce the other ethnic groups that at least from independence have been living within close proximity to the Margi, the Kilba, Bura, Matakam, Higi, Sukur, and Wula (Lugard, 1959; Falola, 2008: 93; Akinola, 1981; Tibenderana, 2003).

In chapter 2, I detail the theoretical framework. I outline the human desire to reside in groups for safety and the construction of a habitable place for shelter; but these aspects of human need were capitalized on and used by proponents of modernization as a package in the 1960s. Prior to this and as a backdrop, I discuss how the missionaries from the American Church of the Brethren, Reverends Kulp and Helser, brought the ideas of safe and habitable shelter first to the Bura ethnic group in northeastern Nigeria in 1923, followed by the Margi ethnic group in 1927. Since the bulk of my discussion on the evolution of the Margi built environment starts in 1960, I therefore use the keynote address, delivered by Edward Shills in 1959 in New York at the conference on the political problems and prospects of the “new states” in the Middle East, Asia and Africa as a starting point, because the question of modernity was central to the influential speech. I then refer to how the United Nations World Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver, Canada in 1976 enforced the western notion of safe and habitable shelter on a global stage. A “...home for the human being,” the commission stated, is “the most important factor of social, cultural, and economic production” (United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, Canada 31 May to 11 June 1976). I incorporate Vale’s idea from his book *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* that “the globalization of architectural ideas and the physical construction of the Western type of building have played an important role in the enforcement of political control.” (1992: 10, 266; [2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2008]); While accepting his claim in general, I question – or test, rather - one dimension of Vale’s idea: since the Margi cultural peripheries are

changing rapidly along with their built environment, I wonder if this change actually equals the total outward sign of the Margi people's inward transformation. And if not, what are the Margi core culture traits or signs that are not changing rapidly and are still embedded in the society even as western architectural norms are currently being adopted? I then examine the extent to which the story of the Margi ethnic group's encounters with the western world that led to the change in their built environment can represent the stories of other African ethnic groups, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where all the land was colonized by the outside world with the exceptions of Ethiopia and Liberia.

Chapter 3 is the methods chapter. I detail the three locations I conducted research and the methods I used to gather all the information contained in this dissertation. There are elements of quantitative methods in my questionnaire and in the method I used to analyze the field data; but I used more qualitative methods for my one on one field interviews. I had to do a considerable amount of interviewing, archival research, and field-based cultural landscape interpretation – including photographic interpretation - because there is not enough literature available on Margi domestic architecture as there might be in the case of other cultures. For instance, the written scholarly record does not go back very far, nor is it deep: the first mention of the Margi living space in the scholarly literature that I can find is by Heinrich Barth, at the town of Mulgwe on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1851. He stated that "...[E]ach family has its own separate court-yard, which forms a little cluster of huts by itself, and often at a considerable distance from the next yard ... This kind of dwelling has certainly something very cheerful and pleasant in a simple and peaceable state of society" (Barth, 1857: 106). The second detailed mention of the Margi domestic architecture in scholarship is by Hamman Tukur Saad, some 134 years later. He briefly examined certain

aspects of the indigenous architecture of eight ethnic groups in northeastern Nigeria and published an article 'Folk culture and architecture in northeastern Nigeria,' in 1991.

In view of this massive lacuna, I had to go to the Margi cultural landscape, talk to as many people as I could, interview as many as I could, and distribute questionnaires (I distributed 500 and got 400 back). I was then able to construct the changes of the Margi domestic sphere from the bottom up. I relied heavily on twenty of my elders, some of whom were my elementary school teachers, pastors and relatives. The insight I gained on the Margi culture when I was writing my MA thesis and my childhood memories of growing up in a Margi household were an immense help.

I also went to Elgin, Illinois, to the Church of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. I researched files maintained on the activities of the field missionaries, paying attention to those files that contain information on Margi towns and villages. The next stop was the Rhodes House Library in Oxford, United Kingdom. I researched the files maintained by the District Officers that were residents of Borno and Adamawa Emirates. These two emirates were where the Margi ethnic group resided during the colonial period. While in Oxford as a visiting scholar, I had the opportunity to interview, and to spend time with, Professor Kirk-Greene, both at the university and at his home. He was Assistant District Officer in the colonial districts comprising both present Adamawa and Borno states, and he wrote the first history of the two areas. My last destination was northern Nigeria, where all Margi ethnic group members currently live (or, technically, I should say, all Margi who remain in Nigeria, rather than abroad), with hundreds of questionnaires in hand, a digital tape recorder, a camera and other supplies. I led the conduct of a survey taken in 52 of 72 Margi towns, villages and neighborhoods, including the two cities of Yola and Maiduguri that serve as the capitals of the states of Adamawa and Borno.

In chapter 4, I give the reader a sense of the character of the Margi ethnic group's domestic architecture prior to colonization; I then discuss the period from the coming of the missionaries until about 10 years after their arrival. That moment until about the time Nigeria won its independence in 1960 represents another section of the process of change. I use two examples each from two different terrains. First, I discuss two clans among the Margi that left and resided in the Mandara Mountains. Second, instead of choosing other clans, I examine two towns from among the Margi who left and settled on the plains. When I use the terms mountain and plains for Margi people, I am referring to the geographical differentiation in settlement patterns which occurred in the period after the Margi ethnic group left the Lake Chad area and dispersed in different directions and settled in these locations due to a forceful expedition to subdue them led by the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Kanuri leader Idris Alauma. I describe how those in the mountains construct their living spaces, using photos and sketches. I also describe how the domestic architecture changed; and the process that Margi who moved out of the mountains and settled on the plains used to construct homes. I present the role that women played in the construction of the Margi ethnic group's domestic sphere. Although some clans remained in the plains while others went to the mountains, the layout of the compound for both locations stayed very similar, but each group used the material available in the immediate vicinity to construct their living space. In other words, though the layouts stayed the same, the Margi used materials from the immediate surroundings, which meant that they used more stones in the mountainous enclaves and more mud on the plains.

In chapter 5, I present the answer to my research question 2: what have been the changes in the Margi domestic sphere from the influences of the American Church of Brethren Mission, the Roman Catholic Church, and the presence of the Islamic faith? To some degree, I present part of the role colonialism played, but in a limited fashion. I look at the increase of, and changes in the

infrastructure - meaning the evolution of the Margi built environment approached from historical, spatial, structural, and developmental perspectives. This includes: roads, residential structures and components of modernity such as schools, churches, mosques, hospitals, and stores (markets, bars, convenient stores, and restaurants). Between the American Church of Brethren Mission, the Roman Catholic Church, the Islamic faith, and colonialism, the institution that made the greatest impact in terms of public infrastructure development was the American Church of Brethren Mission, followed by the Catholic Church. With the exception of the town of Uba and Madagali, the missionaries owned almost all the schools in Margi towns and villages; likewise the dispensaries and orchards, and of course churches. The colonial officers built wells, district offices and prisons, and a few sheds on local open markets. There was no influence of Islamic architecture in the Margi domestic sphere, other than the mosques that were restricted to the Muslim neighborhood. One good example of that is in Gulak, where the colonial authorities built a district office, a prison, windmill well, and a home for the district head, who was a Muslim.

In chapter 6, I present the analysis of a section in my surveys, which was specifically designed for ages 17 to 25. In this section, I tried to find out what the young Margi generation remembers of their childhood home or what their parents told them. I was asking them what their childhood home was built of - was it a traditional mud hut or a modern bungalow? What changes have been made to the homes that they remember? I also asked where they will build their future home and of what type or style. Since the evolution of a place is a continuous process, the main purpose of this chapter is to help to give a glimpse into what might become of the Margi domestic sphere in the future, seeing the future of the Margi built environment through the eyes of Margi youth. Then I move to a section where the main idea is to evaluate the current problem

of the Margi built environment as the youth see it. I helped to orient their thinking by providing few suggestions, such as asking if the problem is lack of planning, unemployment, and lack of modern facilities, poverty, or something else.

Chapter 7 is my (lengthy) conclusion. I recount the activities that stalled the Margi ethnic group's development in the first place. The first reason, I believe, lies in the displacement that occurred beginning in 1564, when they were forcefully move away in smaller groups from around the Lake Chad area due to wars and oppression. This single action denied the Margi ethnic group the capacity to stay as a group, to invent and develop their own alternative modernity as a culture. Then I move to a discussion of the neoliberal economic order which replaced colonization. I use James Ferguson's ideas from his book, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*, where he makes a claim for how globalization "hops" in Africa, in this case *over* the Margi cultural landscape, rather than "flowing" to it (Ferguson, 2006: 54).

Then I move to the question of modern building itself. I question the sole ownership, or the right of any single civilization to say they solely invented high style residential structures. I theorize that the ownership of today's modern high style residential structure is not exclusive. I base this argument on how the structure of shotgun and bungalow housing developed. Then I shift to the issues of cultural landscapes. I compare the Margi cultural landscape to those of the supposed inventors of western civilization, the ancient Greeks, when they first started. I show how ancient Greek ideas became the basis for the City Beautiful Movement of the 1900s; and in part, the idea from the City Beautiful Movement was exported to the global south as part of the modernization efforts of the 1960s.

I argue that there were few differences between the Greeks' cultural landscape during their initial development in times of Hippodamus of Miletus, and that of the Margi cultural landscape

- at least at the time when the Margi had the freedom to freely thrive as a culture. Then I move to the actual change in infrastructure in the Margi built environment. My field data showed significance increase across the board. I wanted to know if the relationships between the changes and colonization or the coming of the missionaries are strong. Also, I wanted to tease out how sensitive the change was to the period when Nigerian independence was granted; and to the global financial activities in form of the development loans that started in the 1960s, via the World Bank, and the Structural Adjustment Program of the 1980s, among other things. I used analysis of variance to test the positive and negative changes of the total rates of infrastructures constructed in the Margi built environment over time.

Finally, I reiterate the development of the Margi domestic sphere starting with the contact with the missionaries, in the late 1920s to the point when the Margi started to change their domestic sphere. In general, until independence, the Margi compounds were still about 90% built in the traditional manner. In fact, only some of the schools, the churches, and a few teachers and other civil servants had square, rectangular and mud wall fences. Despite the fact that colonialism shifted into cultural imperialism, that is, the spread of ideas and values, norms, and knowledge, and the neoliberal economic activities that all seem to be flowing in a single direction, I argue that there has been resistance from the core Margi values that are still embedded in the evolution of their domestic sphere. I conclude with a summary of how the Margi in various towns, villages, and neighborhood in general were caught between resisting change and embracing it. While faced with the dilemma of trying to determine how best to adapt to the reality of change, somewhere along the way they created their own architectural modernity by producing a hybrid form of structures where the past was not totally lost nor the new totally

rejected, but instead another third space was created. Finally I turn my attention to and highlight a few disturbing failures along the way, during the Margi journey to this point.

## Chapter 1: Situating the Research Area: Nigeria

### 1.1: The Evolution of a Space to a Place; from Kingdoms, Caliphates, and Colonial Territories to a Republic of Small States

#### 1.1 Overview of Nigeria

As I stated in the introduction, I am writing about the evolution of the built environment of a particular ethnic group called the Margi who are situated in the northeastern Nigeria. The Margi ethnic group is just one of the 350 or more ethnic groups residing in Nigeria today. Therefore, in order to tell the story of how the Margi ethnic group evolved, first I lay the foundation by briefly outlining how the geographic area of today's Nigeria evolved into a nation-state, from autonomous villages, kingdoms, and a caliphate, into colonial territory, and finally into a federal republic of small states.



Figure 1: Current Political Map of Nigeria; source: [www.mapsoftheworld.com](http://www.mapsoftheworld.com) (2012)

Nigeria is located in the western part of Africa. The Nigerian territorial boundary as it is today is the creation of the United Kingdom during colonial rule. When the British came to the western coast of this general area called Nigeria today, they took control of an area at the coast that includes the present day city of Lagos and named it the Colony of Lagos, on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1861 (Lynn, 2006; Achebe, 2012). In the 1890s the British expanded their authority to the eastern

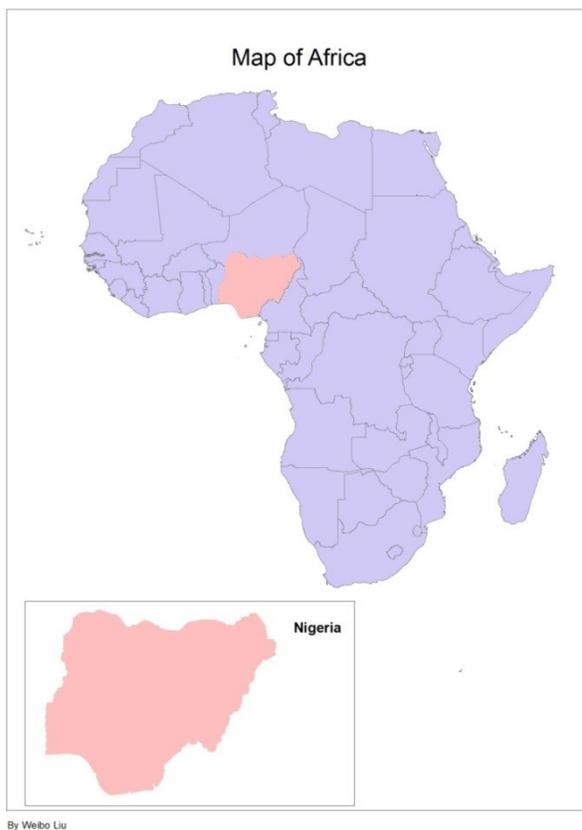


Figure 2: A Map of Africa showing Nigeria; source: drawn by Weibo Liu

and the northern part of present day Nigeria. Most of the northern part of Nigeria resisted the colonial authorities because, at that time, they had their own system of government under the Sokoto Caliphate (Kirk-Greene, 1966). The Sokoto Caliphate consisted of administrative units

called the emirates, and each emirate was headed by an emir. An Islamic scholar called Othman Dan Fodio forcefully established the caliphate through a Jihad in 1802. Dan Fodio went on to serve as the head of the caliphate (Carland, 1985; Post, 1973). During the Jihad, the Margi ethnic group and other minority groups were geographically situated in the caliphate, and they and other ethnic groups like them were constantly raided for slave labor by the emirs and their sultan.

The caliphate existed for almost 100 years, until the British colonial office appointed Lord Lugard to administer northern Nigeria in 1898 (Lugard, 1959). When Lugard took over, he used the West African Frontier Forces (WAFF) stationed in the city of Lokoja, Nigeria, and waged war against the Sokoto Caliphate (Falola, 2008: 93). Lugard, with his West African Frontier Forces, defeated the sultan and his emirs in 1903 (Smaldone, 2008: 123). Lugard renamed the old caliphate the Northern Protectorate. He also renamed the Colony of Lagos and kingdoms in the western and eastern parts of Nigeria collectively as the Southern Protectorate. Lugard administered the two protectorates separately, using direct rule in the Southern Protectorate and indirect rule in the Northern Protectorate (Kirk-Greene, 1966; Achebe, 2012). Indirect rule was first experimented with in India when the British ruled the Indian Colony through the Indian Princes during colonization; it literally means ruling the indigenous people in the colony through the traditional system of governance found in the region (Ferguson, 2005: 192). The British replicated the system in northern Nigeria and ruled the Northern Protectorate through the Sokoto Caliphate's emirs (Salamone, 2009: 39). Finally, shortly after his return from a stint as Governor of Hong Kong (1906-12), Lugard amalgamated the two Protectorates in 1914, creating one colonial territory named Nigeria. The name Nigeria was coined by a journalist Flora Shaw; She borrowed the name from Niger River running through the country. Flora Shaw coined the name Nigeria, in the period after her work for the *Manchester Guardian*, before she became Colonial

Editor for the *Times* of London. She was once the lover of Sir George Tubman Goldie's, the founder of the United Africa Company, which later becomes the Royal Niger Company. Show became Lord Frederick Lugard's wife in 1902. She suggested the name "Nigeria" in a letter to *The Times* of London, on January 8<sup>th</sup> 1897. (Suberu, 2002: 22; Falola and Heaton, 2008: 11).

In preparation for independence, a new constitution was drafted in 1954 that established three regional governments; this was followed by federal elections in 1959 (Osaghae, 1988: 33; Nigerian Gov. Cmd.9059; Row, 1954). On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1960, Nigeria was granted independence, but in 1963, Nigeria broke its direct links with the British Crown and became a republic within the British Commonwealth of Nations (Last, 1967; Kirk-Greene, 1971; Rathbone, 1971; Falola and Heaton, 2008; Sid-Ahmad, 1984). The new republic constitution provides for a federation of three autonomous regions: Northern, Western, and Eastern. Each of the three regions had its own regional constitution, public service system, and marketing board responsible for the import and export of goods (Fatile, 2011: 8). The federal government has powers limited to national issues only - the control of the police, army, and economic planning for the republic. In 1964, a fourth region, the Midwestern region, was created because of the demand by the people from the western region (Mackenzie, 1999; Uwechue, 2004). But soon after, the regional structure led to a series of crises and conflicts within and between each region. Competition grew among the regions for control of federal government civil service positions. A federal election was conducted in 1964, but was fouled by violence and rigging. Inter-regional and inter-ethnic tensions continued, leading eventually to a military takeover in January 1966 (Post and Vickers, 1973). All the military officers involved in organizing the military takeover were of the Ibo ethnic group, from the eastern part of Nigeria (Akpan, 1972; Nkwocha, 2010; Mshelia 2012). This was the beginning of the wars for domination by the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, and

this action legitimized northwestern and north-central Nigeria's Hausa-Fulani ethnic alliance to be the power brokers of the north, where the Margi ethnic group resides. Ultimately this newly legitimized power of the Hausa-Fulani, in collaboration with the Kanuri ethnic majority in the northeastern quadrant, was the reason the Margi ethnic group came to be evenly divided between the two states of Adamawa and Borno today.

In an attempt to avoid future conflict in the country, the Nigerian government abandoned the regional structure in 1967, immediately after a civil war had started in the southeast (the Biafra War). They created 12 states to replace the regional system (Uwechue, 2006: 74). Within the state system, all the Margi ethnic groups were in the Northeastern state. After the states were created, the federal government took back most of the power and created a new revenue sharing formula, which deprived the new states' governments the direct control of the monies earned from the resources derived from their various states. Instead, the federal government controlled all the revenue (De St. Jorre, 2009). The new revenue sharing formula favored the most populated and underdeveloped states amongst the 12 newly created states. But the new revenue sharing formula also encouraged the demand for more states by various ethnic, regional and interest groups, and as a corollary produced an incentive for the states to inflate their population numbers during the national census.

Additional states were created in response to demands from powerful local interest groups. In 1976, 7 additional states were created, raising the number to 19. In this phase of state creation, the Northeastern state, which was the largest among the 12 and where the entire Margi ethnic group was located, was divided into three states: Borno, Bauchi and Gongola states (Aguda, 1981; Tibenderana, 2003). This time, those in charge of creating the new states split the Margi ethnic group among two of the three states. One half of the Margi were placed in the new states

of Borno with its headquarters in Maiduguri and the other half in the state of Gongola with its headquarters in Yola. Some Margi claim that the undercurrent reason for the split of the Margi ethnic group into two states was fear of Margi intellectual domination, given the missionary-educated status of many in the Margi ethnic group, if they were to be placed in one state. This fear was still openly expressed by the two major ethnic groups of Kanuri in the new Borno state, and the Fulani ethnic group in the new Gongola state, because it was common knowledge among both of these two major ethnic groups that the American Church of the Brethren missionaries and the Catholic Church came to the Margi ethnic domain in 1927 and 1948, respectively, and established superior educational institutions. The Fulani and the Kanuri ethnic groups were unwilling to let the missionaries into their domain at that time because of their Islamic faith (Hickey, 1984).

Furthermore, in 1989, the government created three more states, making a total of 21; in 1991, 9 more states were created, making a total of 30 (Federal Govt. Printer, 1982; Suberu, 1991). During this later phase of state creation, the government divided Gongola state into 2 - Adamawa and Taraba states. The Margi ethnic group stayed in Adamawa state, with its headquarters in Yola. Again in 1996, the government created 6 more states, making a total of 36. The Margi remained in Adamawa and Borno states, without change, and these are the two states they reside in today. The long process has led to there being 36 states for a country with only one third more land mass than the state of Texas in the United States. Since 1996, the government has not created any new states, but pressures from different regions and interest groups for creation of more states always exist (Akinola, 1981; Fatile, 2011).

State creation is only one aspect of the shaping of space into place. Urban development represents another. The evolution of the Margi built environment in the Nigerian post-

independence era reflects or is a spillover of the evolution of other Nigeria cities, such as Lagos with population over 8 million, Ibadan over 3 million, and Kano also with over 3 million. In addition, there are four other Nigerian cities with a population of over a million people: Benin, Port Harcourt, Kaduna and Maiduguri, the state capital of Borno (Falola, 2004). Within these Nigerian cities and others that are not mentioned here, are where Nigeria's four major ethnic groups reside: Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo (Uche, 1990: 8). In addition, there are 350 or more other ethnic groups living in Nigeria, including the Margi. English is the official national language in addition to the regional languages of Hausa and Fulani in the north, Yoruba in the west, and Igbo in the east. There are two major religious groups, Islam, and Christianity; Islam is primarily but not exclusively the religion of the north and Christianity is primarily in the south (Kalu, 2011). Yet the northern Margi ethnic group is primarily Christian, due to the influence of the American Church of the Brethren and the Catholic Church. The two dominant world religions succeeded in phasing out many traditional religions, including Margi traditional religion, which existed prior to colonization and the coming of the missionaries in Margi land (Falola, 2004; Kalu, 2011).

### **1.1.2: Abundant Resources, but a Poor Built Environment, and a Poor Populace**

Nigeria is the second largest economy in Africa, and the world's 10<sup>th</sup> oil producer with a current output of 2.4 million barrels per day. Although there has been increasing focus on diversifying the economy, it is still highly dependent on oil and gas, which are very sensitive to price fluctuations (Odukoya, 2006). In 2011, oil accounted for about 1/5th of Nigeria's GDP, 80% of government revenue and over 95% of export earnings. Agriculture accounted for 35% of GDP while employing around 70% of the population. The services sector is just over 30% and manufacturing is 5% of GDP (UNDP, 2012). The majority of the Margi are subsistence farmers;

just like other ethnic groups, they are among the poorest Nigerians. The national economy is dominated by the major ethnic groups. Since the Margi are located in two northern states that are predominately Muslim, religion plays a role in who becomes what and what region within the states is to be developed.

In view of the fact that Nigeria is the second largest economy in Africa and the 10<sup>th</sup>-biggest oil producing country in the world, its Human Development Index (HDI) is not doing as well as it should be (Wilkinson, 2005). The Human Development Index is a summary of the long term human progress of a country in three ways: access to knowledge, a long and healthy life, and an adequate standard of living, the last of which indirectly includes the built environment (Wilkinson and Clapp, 2010; UNDP, 2011). According to the United Nation Human Development Report for 2011, the Nigerian HDI value for 2011 is 0.459. The country ranks 156 out of 187 nations; it is perhaps encouraging, though, to know that, from 2005 to 2011, Nigeria's HDI value rose from 0.429 to 0.459, an increase of 7.0 %, or an average annual increase of about 1.1 percent (UNDP, 2011). Still, the standard of living for the Margi ethnic group and others like them is not adequate in terms of the availabilities of basic amenities that are part and parcel of the built environment. For example, in all Margi towns and villages, there is no running water other than from privately owned bore holes, no paved roads other than the main roads that lead to Lassa, Maiduguri, Mubi, and Yola, which happen to pass through Margi towns and villages; nor is there any sewer system, to say nothing of any urban planning for the towns.

The table below shows Nigeria's HDI indicators between 1980 and 2011: even though the indicators seem to be going up, the indicator for education is not growing. In the western world, the provision of education is considered an essential role of the government in order to transform and develop human potential and the society as whole. Since the Nigerian state governments

took over missionary schools in the 1970s, the educational standards of the schools have been deteriorating all over the country including in the Margi ethnic group's domain (Maier, 2002: 220; Campbell, 2010: 75; Kant, 2010).

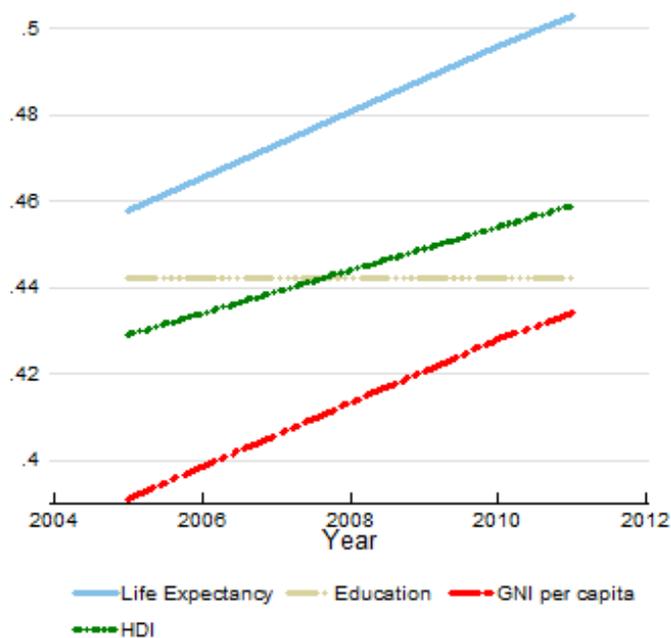
Even though the Nigerian life expectancy increased by 6.4 years, and the expected years of schooling increased by 2.2 years, note that the table shows the figures went down from 16.7 in 1980 to 8.5 in 1995. Also the Nigerian Gross National Income (GNI) per capita increased by 30.0 percent between 1980 and 2011 (UNDP, 2011). But considering the income Nigeria has earned from oil revenues since independence in 1960, and yet the country still ranks 156 out of 187 nations, most development scholars say that the oil resources do not translate into improvement in the people's living standards. This is especially so among the marginalized groups like the Margi who do not have access to government resources. In fact the oil resources have been said to be a curse by some scholars (Watts, 2008; Kashi, 2010).

Table 1: Nigeria's HDI Trends Based on Consistent Time Series Data, New Component Indicators and New Methodology

	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Means years of Schooling	GNI per capita (2005 PPP\$)	HDI value
1980	45.5	16.7	..	1,597	..
1985	45.9	8.5	..	1,223	..
1990	45.6	6.6		1,271	
1995	45.1	7.1	..	1,286	..
2000	46.3	7.8	..	1,289	..
2005	49.0	8.9	5.0	1,530	0.429
2010	51.4	8.9	5.0	1,990	0.454
2011	51.9	8.9	5.0	2,069	0.459

Sources: UNDP, 2011 Report

Table 2: Trends in Nigeria's HDI Component Indices 2005-2011



Sources: UNDP Report for 2011

Table 3: Human Development Index Comparing Nigeria, Sub-Saharan Africa and the World

Year	Nigeria	Low human development	Sub-Saharan Africa	World
2011	0.459	0.456	0.463	0.682
2010	0.454	0.453	0.460	0.679
2009	0.449	0.448	0.456	0.676
2008	0.446	0.443	0.451	0.674
2007	0.441	0.437	0.445	0.670
2006	0.438	0.430	0.438	0.664
2005	0.429	0.422	0.431	0.660

Source: UNDP report for 2011

### 1.1.3: Overview of Northern Nigeria

After giving a brief background on Nigeria as a country, I now turn my attention to northern Nigeria, and more specifically to the two northern states of Adamawa and Borno where the Margi reside. As indicated in the previous section, northern Nigeria became a British protectorate in 1903 (Smaldone, 2008). The sultan and his emirs had resisted British colonial authority in the past. For example, the requests by the British authority that the Sokoto Caliphate stop slavery and the maltreatment of the minority groups which were constantly raided for slave labor in the caliphate were disregarded (Vaughan, 1995; Salau, 2008; Falola, 2011; Collingwood, 2010). At the time of the British defeat of the caliphate, although the Margi were within the domain of the caliphate, technically they were not in the newly acquired British territory, because the part of the caliphate where the Margi ethnic group resided was in the German territory of Kameroun (K). The Margi of the current Adamawa and Borno states had been in the Adamawa emirate, which constituted part of the Sokoto Caliphate, but this was already in German hands when the British defeated the Sultan in 1903 (Vaughan, 1995). During World War I, the British invaded Kameroun from Nigeria in 1914. The last German fort in this general area surrendered in February 1916. After the war, the former German colony was divided between the United Kingdom and France as of June, 28<sup>th</sup> 1919, based on a League of Nations mandate (Schnee, 2007: 85 and 151; Kirk-Greene, 1964). The British portion in today's Adamawa state was then ruled from Lagos as one of the two British Cameroons (*British Parliamentary Publication, Report on the British Sphere of the Cameroons*, May 1922: 62-8).

The ethnology of the world's languages listed the Margi population of Borno state in 2006 to be 158,000 in a state with a population of 4,151,193; and those in Adamawa state number 166,000 out of 3,178,950 in the state (Lewis, 2006; Gates Jr. and Appiah, 2010: 139). In each state the Margi ethnic group is thus one of many minority ethnic groups. Some Margi are

also found in the northwestern parts of the Republic of Cameroon, where the Wandala subgroup resides (Meek, 1931; Kirk-Greene, 1962; Migeod, 1923: 186).

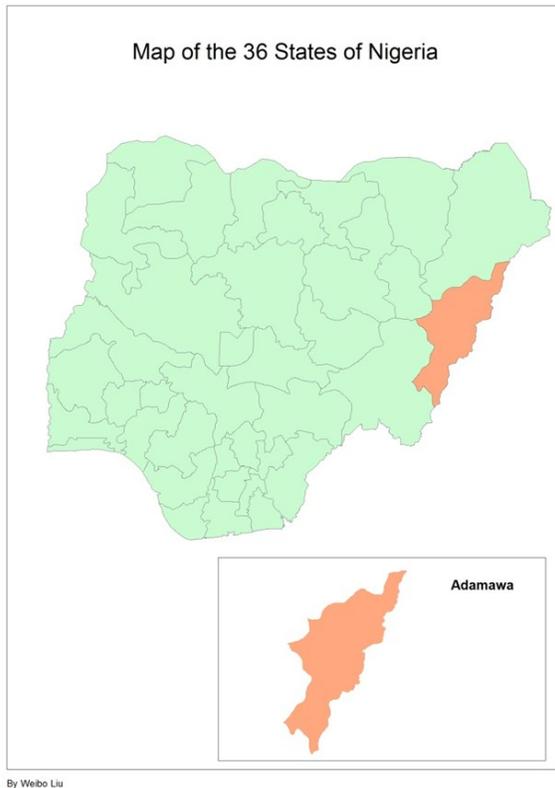


Figure 3: A Map of Africa showing Nigeria; source: drawn by Weibo Liu

#### **1.1.4: Adamawa State**

The disunion of the Margi ethnic group's cultural landscape between two states leads to approximately half being in Adamawa. For a time, the Margi ethnic group of Adamawa state was placed in Mubi administrative area, one of the major towns in Adamawa state. When the Local Government system was introduced in, 1976; the Margi ethnic group was placed in Michika Local Government Area before the current Madagali Local Government was created in 1991; this is where all of the Margi towns and villages of Adamawa state are presently located.

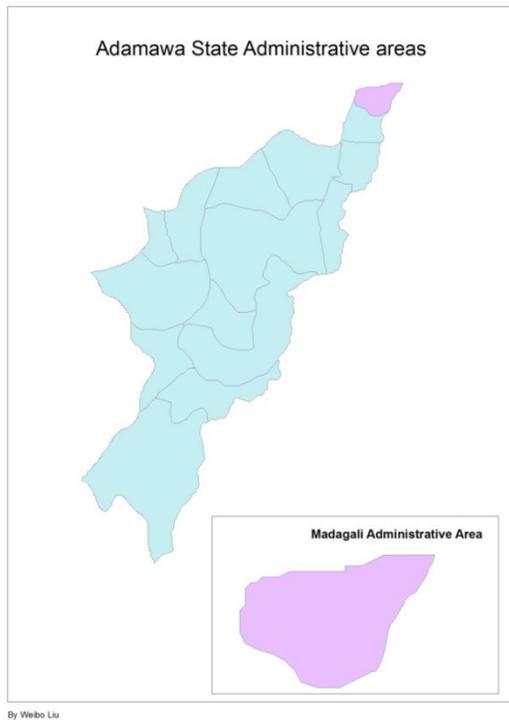


Figure 4: Map of Adamawa State showing Madagali Administrative Area; Drawn by: Weibo Liu

The Margi residing in Adamawa state constitute the north Margi, based on C. K. Meek's classification (Meek, 1931).

The State of Adamawa derives its name from Madibbo Adama, a Fulani cleric who led the 19th century Jihad in Upper Benue Region under Othman Dan Fodio (Diouf, 2003: 16). Modibbo Adama was the son of Ardo Hassan, born at Wuro Cheke in Adamawa around 1770. He had his early Islamic studies under his father and later proceeded to Birnin Ngazargamu, for further studies (Njeuma, 2012). Madibbo Adama became a flag-bearer, undertaking successive conquests to establish the kingdom of Fombina. Since then, families connected to the lineage of Madibbo Adama have formed the ruling class of Adamawa emirate, with the palace located in Yola. Since the establishment of the kingdom of Fombina under Modibbo Adama, the

relationship of the kingdom with most of the minority groups in the general area, including the Margi, has been a tense one (Abubakar, 1977). Because early on, there was constant slave raiding attempts and forced Islamization of the minority groups by the Fulani majority (Vaughan, 1995: 14).

Adamawa state is a mountainous land, crisscrossed by the Benue, Gongola, and Yedsarem river valleys. The valleys of Cameroon and the Mandara mountains form part of this surging landscape, often referred to as the Adamawa Massif (Stock, 2012: 59). Adamawa state is known for its diverse cultural heritage; in addition to the dominant Fulani, the state is inhabited by other minority ethnic groups besides the Margi, such as the Bachama, Mumuye, Higi, Chamba, Hausa, Kilba, Gude, Wurkum, Jukun, and Bata peoples (Heine, 2008). All these groups are primarily engaged in farming and herding cattle, goats, and sheep, but fishing is also important along the riverbanks. Peanut, cotton, sorghum, millet, rice, and corn are the main crops. Peanuts and cotton are exported, as are cattle, dyed skins, and gum Arabic. Some of the Fulani are still nomadic cattle herders, while majority of the Hausas are traders. The state has a network of roads linking all parts of the state and the country. There is also air and water routes that now make the state accessible during all seasons (Kirk-Greene, 1958; Abubakar, 1977; Chilver, 2010; Blench, 2011; Njeuma, 2012).

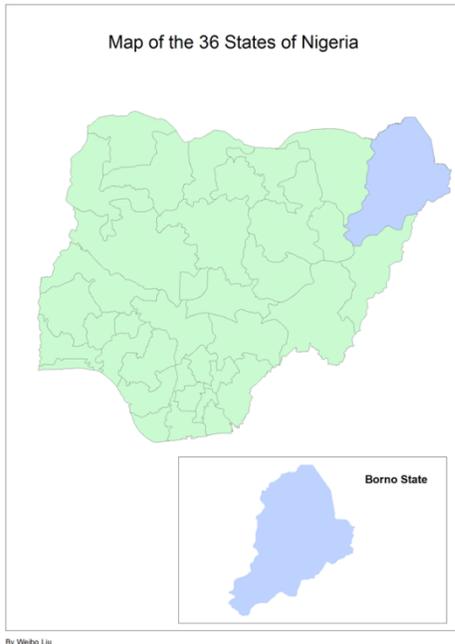


Figure 5: A Map of Nigeria showing Borno State; Source: Weibo Liu

### **1.1.5: Borno State**

Borno state is the other state in which the Margi ethnic group resides; it has a land mass of 61,435 square kilometers, the largest state in Nigeria and the last on the northeastern frontier bordered by Niger to the north, Chad to the northeast and Cameroon to the east. Within Nigeria, the neighboring states of Borno are Adamawa to the south, Yobe to the west and Gombe to the southwest. The climate is hot and dry for most of the year with the Harmattan season from late November through early February. Harmattan is a fine white powdered dust brought by the wind from the nearby Sahara desert, and settling on everything, including humans (Rothmaler, Seidensticker-Brikay and Tijani, 2008; Mohammed, Seidensticker-Brikay and Tijani, 2011; Rothmaler, 2007).

The Margi homeland in Borno state is situated at the southern peripheries, in the towns of Lassa and Uba along with many other villages, designated as the Askira/Uba Local government

area for administrative purposes. The towns of Askira (which means gratitude in the Kanuri language) and Uba are currently becoming cosmopolitan in nature (Kirk-Greene, 2006: 234). The Margi residing in these two main towns and surrounding villages are those that constitute the south Margi, according to C. K. Meek, based on geographical and dialectical intonations (Meek, 1931; Kirk-Greene, 1958; Heine and Nurse, 2011: 20, 83). Although many members of the Margi ethnic group have built homes in the larger cities of Borno state, it is customary for them to build their first homes in towns and villages of their origin; many Margi are working in the Borno state capital of Maiduguri and other major towns in the state.



Figure 6: A Map of Borno State showing Uba-Askira Administrative Area

There are about thirty languages spoken in Borno whose speakers have for a long time resided in the general area. These languages are considered independent of each other, and 26 of these languages, including the Margi language, are classified by linguists as Afro-Asiatic, from the Chadic family of languages (Heine and Nurse, 2011: 166). The Kanuri-speaking people are the majority and are members of the Saharan group of languages. There are also Shuwa Arab people in Borno who speak mainly the Arabic language (Palmer, 1936; Rothmalar, Seidensticker-Brikay, and Tijani, 2008; Mohammed, Gisela Seidensticker-Brikay, and Tijani, 2011).



Figure 7: Ethnic Map of Nigeria; Source: 2012 www.mapoftheworld.com

## **Section 1.2: The Accounts of Contact of the Margi Ethnic Group with the Outside World**

### **1.2.1: The First Record of Margi in the Literature**

The first record in literature which places the Margi ethnic group around the Lake Chad was that of Fra Mauro, recorded on his mid-15<sup>th</sup> century map, on which he placed the Margi southeast of Lake Chad (Falchetta, 2006; DeCorse, 2001: 142, 2006). There are two accounts of when Fra Mauro drafted the map. On the web page of the Mandara publishing company, which is based in the United Kingdom, it is indicated that Fra Mauro drafted the map in 1459 (<http://www.mandaras.info/Margi.html>). But Piero Falchettas' book and CD-ROM (2006), *Fra Mauro's World Map*, indicates that the map was sketched around 1450. In any case, the point is, Fra Mauro placed the Margi ethnic group around the Lake Chad prior to the year 1564, when the leader of the Saifawa Dynasty of the Kanuri, Idris Alauma, started his campaign against the Margi and the Touareg ethnic groups (<http://lah.soas.ac.uk/projects/megachad/gallery/FraMauro-1000.html>).

Fra Mauro's map of 1459 is important because it placed the Margi together as a group in one location prior to the diaspora under family patriarchs - primarily to the mountainous enclaves and to the plains - due to Idris Alauma's expedition. Consequently, the present Margi towns and villages were established as a result. Figure 8 shows the map of 1459 by Fra Mauro, showing the Margi at the south east corner. Fra Mauro spelled Margi as 'Mergi' at that time (<http://lah.soas.ac.uk/projects/megachad/gallery/FraMauro-1000.html>). At the top of the map, one can see the word, Palude, encircled and two tributary streams coming into the circle from the opposite side; this Palude, which means swamp or marsh in Italian, is most likely Lake Chad.

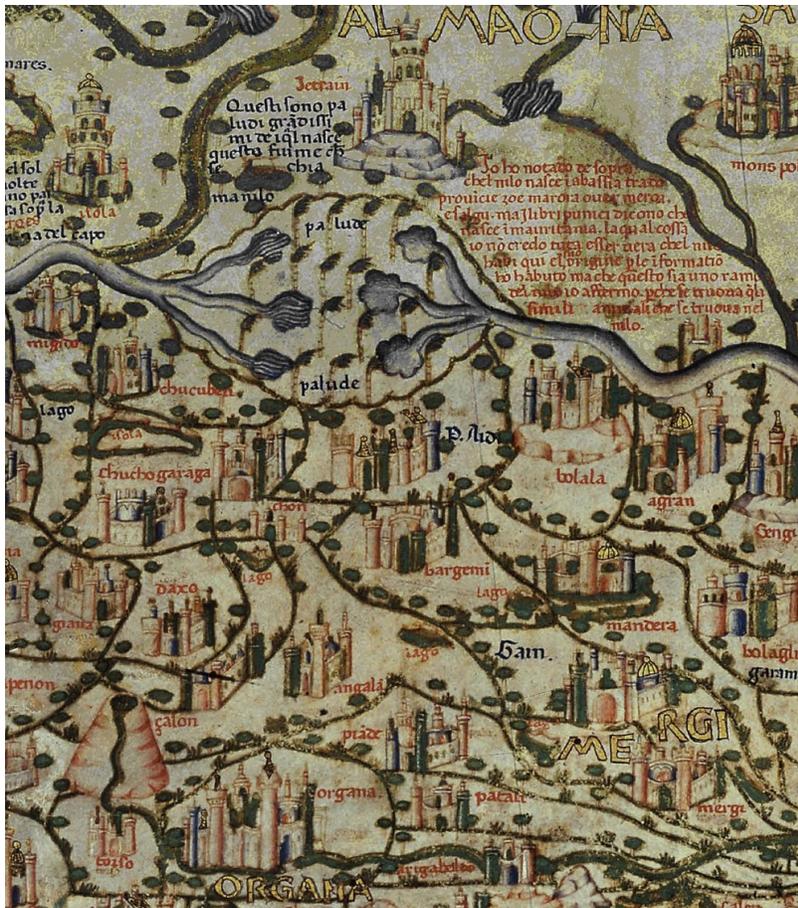


Figure 8: Fra Mauro’s Map of 1459 showing Margi (Mergi); Source: Falchetta, 2006.

### 1.2.2: Idris Alauma’s Contact with the Margi

Oral traditional stories passed down by the Margi elders also placed the Margi to be in the vicinity of the current Lake Chad area prior to Idris Alauma’s expedition of 1564. This Margi story has been substantiated by Ahmad B. Furtu (Lange, 1987), who was Idris Alauma’s personal scribe. Ahmad B. Furtu recorded Idris Alauma’s daily expedition activities in Arabic from 1564 – 1576; it was translated into English in 1987, by Derrick Lange.



Figure 9: Lake Chad and its Surrounding Area; Source: <http://www.google.com/imgres>

According to the oral Margi account passed down, the Margi lived in an area called Gazargamu around Lake Chad prior to the Alauma expedition. On his arrival to the Lake Chad area, Alauma waged war against the Touareg and the Margi ethnic groups (Lange, 1987: 76). Overwhelmed by this expedition, the Margi migrated in subgroups under family patriarchs to different directions and established the modern Nigerian Margi towns of Kwapchi, Uvu, Ezige, Mulgwe, Dille, Lassa, Gulak, Uba, and surrounding villages. Despite living in different locations, the Margi continued to share a language and culture; and each subgroup has maintained that they come from “the East” at a point in time earlier than the 1450s (Kirk-Greene, 1958; Lange, 1987; Meek, 1931: 215-216 Vol. II).

Based on the record translated from Arabic to English by Derrick Lange in 1987, the expedition against the Margi started because at a certain point the ruler of the Margi, named Adwa, refused to join Idris Alauma on expeditions as he had previously done. Adwa, who had held the position of chief *Umura* under Idris Alauma during previous campaigns, rebelled and

totally abstained. Adwa's refusal angered Idris Alauma and the conflict began between the two. Idris Alauma requested Adwa on various occasions to come back to assume his previous position as Umura, and upon receiving no reply, Idris Alauma went after Adwa with vengeance. Idris Alauma marched his army to Kopci, Mitku, and the rocks of Humdi but did not find Adwa; instead, Idris Alauma found Adwa's first wife, Gamsu, with abundant provisions. He captured her and brought her with him to Birni Gadzargamu where Idris Alauma was residing (Lange, 1987: 34). When Adwa came back home and learned that his wife had been captured, he followed Idris Alauma to Gadzargamu.

The ruler of the Margi then came to the town of Birni, and entered into the presence of the Sultan and settled down before him, kneeling and prostrating himself, casting earth upon his head with both hands together humble and abject (Ahmad B. Furtu, in Lange, 1987: 76).

### **1.2.3: Dr. Heinrich Barth's contact with the Margi**

Heinrich Barth's document from 1857 is the first record in literature to mention Margi domestic architecture. Barth was born in Hamburg Germany, educated at Berlin University and graduated in 1844. Though a German, he joined the British service where he learned Arabic and other African languages in England; thereafter, he joined an expedition to western Sudan in 1849, organized and sponsored by the British Government. He was interested in the Islamic culture of western Africa, and this curiosity led him as far as Timbuktu in present day Mali (Barth, 1857; Kirk-Greene, 1962). From there he found his way to the general area of the present northern Nigeria, where he visited the Margi, the Fulani, the Hausa, and many other ethnic groups. In his 1857 book, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa Vol. II*, Barth recorded his contact with the Margi ethnic group, beginning with 'Molghoy,' which is modern



certainly something very cheerful and pleasant in a simple and peaceable state of society” (Barth, 1857: 106) After describing the Margi hamlets at Mulgwe, he turned his attention to the inhabitants: “I was struck by the beauty and symmetry of their form, which were thus entirely exposed to view, and by regularity of their features, which are not disfigured by incisions, and in some had nothing of what is called the Negro type” (Barth, 1857: 106). He described a young Margi child in the village as follows: “The boy’s form did not yield in any respect to the beautiful symmetry of the most celebrated Grecian statues, as that of the praying boy, or that of the diskophoros” (Barth, 1857: 107). This is how the Margi built environment was in 1851, based on Dr. Barth’s observation. This is the first detailed written description of the Margi settlement pattern and the Margi people, as a distinctive group (leaving aside whatever racial prejudice Barth may have held). This description – of a distinctive people with a distinctive cultural landscape - is similar to what I saw in the late 1960s, as a child. This sets the stage for me to show how the Margi built environment was, and I endeavor to sketch out how this simple way of living evolved into modern mansions, schools, churches, stores, modern open markets and mosques.

In view of the Margi folklore passed down from one generation to another, Fra Mauro’s map, and the daily records maintained by Ahmad B. Furtu, Idris Alauma’s scribe, Heinrich Barth’s records of his contact with the Margi ethnic group recorded in his book, and the Map of Part of Central Africa Showing the Routes of the Expedition performed under the sanction of H. M. Government by Messers Richardson, Barth, & Overweg in the years 1851 and 1852, I argue that the Margi were living in the town of Gazargamu, or at least in the general area, prior to the expedition by Idris Alauma. The Margi ethnic group dispersed to their present locations after that.

#### 1.2.4: The Margi Neighbors

Since at least from the time of Nigerian independence, the Margi ethnic groups have been and are still neighbors with the following ethnic groups: Kilba, Bura, Matakam, Higi, Sukur, and Wula. As mentioned earlier, the Fulani and Kanuri ethnic groups are the majorities in the two states where the Margi reside, and they live in the major towns of Yola and Maiduguri, with a few Hausa in each city. This is not to say that there not any Kanuri, Fulani or Hausas living alongside the Margi ethnic group in certain Margi towns or villages. But what it means is that these groups that are considered Margi neighbors, including groups both large and small, have their own towns and villages even if they share common geographical vicinity with the Margi ethnic group. Here, I examine only the smaller ethnic communities, to show their general commonalties with the Margi.

The first two, the Kilba and Bura ethnic groups, share words that have common meaning with the Margi. There is no definitive evidence that any two of them have lived together. But because of the geographical proximity which all the groups share, they become closer and tend to do things together. The ethnic groups cooperate with each other, especially when they find themselves in distant cities of Nigeria; I witnessed such cooperation among them when I was staying with my uncle in Kaduna in the 1970s. Like the Margi ethnic group, some of the Margi neighbors speak an Afro-Asiatic language belonging to the Chadic group of languages.

Considering how difficult it was to travel to this territory especially prior to independence, when it was declared a closed territory by the British authorities, one can understand why scholars like John Iliffe (2007: 1) consider parts of the African continent like this to be a frontier territory and the African people as those that are able colonize the most hostile region of the

world on behalf of the entire human race. The northeastern Nigerian physical environment is typical of the frontier territory about which Iliffe is talking. It is rugged and very difficult to penetrate especially the mountainous areas; but somehow these ethnic groups residing in the region were able to cope. They learned to use the material within their vicinities to construct their living space. The ethnic groups mentioned above have all lived in the Mandara mountains in different sections of the enclave.

### **1.2.5: The Kilba Ethnic Group**

The Margi and Kilba probably lived together or at least in close proximity with each other starting a long time ago. This is based on oral folklore passed down in each group that tells of the past in which the ancestors of the two groups were cousins who then got separated a long time ago. The Margi call them “*bzir huba*,” a phrase that means “the son removed” in Margi. Legend has it that, when both groups were still together, the ancestor of the Kilba group was bad and he was ordered removed from the group, hence the Margi name for them. Each ethnic group jokingly calls the other *mava*, meaning slave, but this claim has never been substantiated, even though it continues in use even today. There is a striking similarity between both languages.

### **1.2.6: The Higi Ethnic Group**

Previously, I indicated that there are Margi called the Margi Wandala in the Republic of Cameroon. Just like the Margi ethnic group, another section of the Higi ethnic group is still residing in the Republic of Cameroon. The Cameroon Higi are called Kapsiki (van Beek, 1987: 157; De Bruijn, Van Dijk, and Gewald, 2007: 115). C. K. Meek opines that Higi is a Margi word meaning aboriginals or locust (Meek 1931: 262); but I have never heard it used in either way when growing up and I do not think Higi is a Margi word. The Higi ethnic group lives mainly in

the towns of Michika and Baza in Adamawa state. The two towns are almost surrounded by the Margi towns and villages. Scholars like D. Barreteau (1984) went as far as classifying Kapsiki/Higi under the Margi group; there is no evidence that my informants know of to suggest that this is a correct classification. Yet most of the Kapsiki/Higi thinks that they originate from Gudur (Barreteau, 1984: 168), and this is the same Gudur the Birdling clan of the Margi ethnic group claims to have originated from.

Unlike the “teasing-cousin” relationship of the Margi with the Kilba, relations between the Margi and the Higi can be strained. A fresh graduate from the University of Oxford, who supervised the Northern Cameroons Plebiscite in the area of the Margi and their neighbors, put it this way: “So far I have been appalled by the contrast in attitude to a stranger in Higi and Margi lands. The Margi are embarrassingly generous. Among the Higi we have to struggle to obtain every morsel” (Cooper, 2010: 17).

### **1.2.7: Bura Ethnic Group**

This is the ethnic group the church of the Brethren Missionaries first settled among in 1923. Therefore they are highly influenced by the missionaries, and a highly educated ethnic group. But unlike the Margi, where only half reside in Borno state, the Bura ethnic group primarily resides in Borno state, with only one Bura town of Garkida in Adamawa state. This is because of their proximity to the Borno. The group is also known as Pabir or Babur. The Bura language is closely related to Margi; the group lives in small, autonomous villages; and they have many very similar cultural characteristics with the Margi (Gates Jr. and Appiah, 2010: 210; Mshelia 2010).

### **1.2.8: Matakam or Mafa Ethnic Group**

Just like the Higi, and Margi ethnic groups, the Matakam or Mafa are known by different names in Nigeria and Cameroon - as Matakam in Nigeria, and as Mafa in Cameroon. In fact, though, in Nigeria, they consider the name Matakam as an insult. Based on my interviews with my informants, all agreed that the Matakam ethnic group started to come to Gulak in 1958, crossing the Mandara mountains from border towns in Cameroon. They travelled to Margi towns to look for farm work, and gradually they started to live in Margi towns. Their general characteristic is that they prefer living around the town or the village market area, simply because they specialize in preparing *pito*, a local brew known to be their native beer, and then to sell it on market days. Also many of the Matakam men engage in the animal butchering trade, so they are mostly meat sellers to the Margi ethnic group on the open market days.

### **1.2.9: Wula Ethnic Group**

The Wula ethnic group is still mostly in the Mandara Mountains, with only about 1/3 of them that have come out to the plains or mountain slope. The Birdling clan of the Margi ethnic group claims to descend from this ethnic group. In fact the word 'Wula' might have been the ancestor name of the family patriarch that led them into the Mandara mountains when they left the Lake Chad area. Their way of life is very similar to the Margi ethnic group.

### **1.1.10: Sukur Ethnic Group**

There are quite a few studies written on the Sukur ethnic group. In fact their ancestral homes in the Mandara mountains received an inscription in 1999, as a UNESCO World Heritage site (<http://whc.unorgesco./en/list/938>). They live in the Mandara mountains, but a lot of families have moved out of the mountains and are settled on the mountain slope. Just like the Birdling

clan, the Medugu Kirngu clan claim to have paternally descended from the Sukur ethnic group. Their way of life is identical to that of Margi and they all have lived in the mountains in different enclaves.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have provided the study site's general cultural-historical geographic context. I have provided a broad introduction to Nigeria, and then to northern Nigeria. I have given an accounting of the place of the Margi ethnic group – and of neighboring ethnic groups – in regional history and historiography. In the chapter which follows, I move to the conceptual framework of the dissertation.

## **Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework**

### **2.1: Shelter**

The need for residing in groups for safety and construction of a habitable place for shelter is part of human nature. This need is as old as the first human. Over the years, the idea of shelter for safety has evolved in various types and forms in different cultures, and the trend continues into modern times (Trotter, 1971: 235; Gabel, 1985: 259). As recently as 90 years ago, 90 - 95% of the world's population resided in the types of shelter built without architects, commonly known as folk or vernacular architecture (Rapoport, 1969; Silberfein, 1998). But the western world has since decided to rewrite the codes regarding what is considered safe and habitable shelter and succeeded in globalizing the idea as a modern standard of living. Safe and habitable shelter of a particular character is now considered to be a prerequisite for a modern living standard for all mankind: for the head of household on behalf of his or her family, for ethnic groups and the survival of their members, and for any nation that seeks for their populace to thrive (Williams and Parkman, 2003: 452; The International Building Code, 2012).

### **2.2: Modernization, Modernism, and Modernity**

I write on how the idea of safe and habitable shelter propagated by western science has reached some of the most remote corners of the world. In particular, I examine how the idea of safe and habitable shelter reached the Margi in northeastern Nigeria. I examine how the domestic sphere, and consequently the built environment of the Margi ethnic group, evolved as a result of their coming in contact with westerners. The new western way of construction adopted by Margi is gradually replacing or reshaping the 'round huts built with mud', which the Margi ancestors used for hundreds of years.

I am conscious of the cultural influence and the power struggle between the current major ethnic groups of northern Nigeria, the Kanuri and the Hausa-Fulani, with the Margi prior to colonization (Kirk-Greene, 1958; Cohen, 1967; Njeuma, 2012). This struggle and the cultural influence of the larger groups in Margi land were intensified when the colonial officers and the missionaries came with their new idea of safe and habitable shelter into Margi land. These newcomers' influence likewise accelerated the change of Margi architecture and made it even more complex than ever. The common thread of the social order between the Margi and their new neighbors is the modernization of the "others" in the form of cleaner ways of living for the Margi ethnic group.

The United Nations, in consideration of the percentage of world population which still resides in vernacular or folk architecture, organized for the first time a world conference in Vancouver, Canada in 1976 to address human settlement problems around the globe. This was in part, a response to how state ideologies around the globe are reflected in their human settlement policies. The Vancouver conference, through "The Vancouver Action Plan," addressed issues of safe and habitable shelter and its effect on global population, such as congestion, safety of building structures; and the physical and spatial organization of human settlements. Prior to the conference, development concepts such as building, planning, and housing were discussed in development literature as separate topics (see the following, with Susan Feinstein as the primary contributor- - <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/619445/urban-planning>). For the first time at this conference, the topics were linked and redefined to mean the fabric of the human settlements, either in a village, a town, or a city. In other words, these topics were linked and redefined to mean the components which support the cultural, material, spiritual, organizational,

safety and other activities of the human settlers around the globe (UN Chronicle, Sep 1989; UN Habitat, 2006).

While the UN conferences have put human settlement around the globe and its redefined concepts in proper perspective, the conference also legitimized the western notion of safe and habitable shelter on a global stage. A “...home for the human being,” the commission stated, is “the most important factor of social, cultural, and economic production” (UN Chronicle, Sep 1989). To the west, a building for human habitation must have mechanical heating and cooling systems, plumbing, electricity, gas supply, toilet, shower, and/or bathtub, mechanically heated hot water, working smoke detectors, main entrance, windows, and much more (The International Building Code, 2012; The International Residential Code, 2012; The International Fire Code, 2012; The International Energy Conservation Code, 2012; The International Plumbing Code, 2012; The International Mechanical Code, 2012; The International Fuel Gas Code, 2012; The International Electrical Code, 2011; and UN Habitat Report, 2008/2009).

The Vancouver Action Plan has in essence approved the new western ideas as criteria to define global shelter for human habitation as a new world order. But on the other hand, these codes embody various power relationships between the have and the have-nots, the rich and the poor countries. This in fact was the case between the Margi and other similar groups in Africa and their new western neighbors. In addition, this new western idea reflects the western notions of modernity as a prerequisite to the global neoliberal economic paradigms (Gilman, 2003; De Angelis, 2005: 229-257). I argue that these rules are globalized by the west as a criterion for the purpose of modernizing the “others” and to prepare seedling beds for global neoliberal economic governance. At the same time, as De Angelis rightly argued in his review of the *Political Economy of Global Neoliberal Governance* (2005: 229-257), “the purpose and rationale of

Neoliberal governance is not so clear-cut and 'linear.' The main problematic of the governance is the accommodation and articulation of conflicting interests, not the achievement of a goal, which is external to the process itself."

Edward Shills in 1959 delivered a keynote address in New York, at the conference on the political problems and prospects of the "new states" in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. In this address he placed the question of modernity at the center of a debate on conceptions of development. He emphasized that the main problem was not only how to spur development in the postcolonial world, but also what kind of society the development proposed should strive to create. Therefore, at least from this keynote address, one can theorize that being modern to the modernist means being western without the burden of following the West; and it should start with detaching the western model in some way from its geographical locus and transporting it to the so-called developing parts of the world (Shills, 1959; Gilman, 2003: 2).

Since the inception of modernism as an idea during the age of enlightenment, but more pertinently during the age of development, the modernist ideas have been problematic. For since then the modernist has viewed the world in a binary form, as "the traditional" and "the modern." The modernization theorists of the 1960s regarded modern society as sophisticated, in control of its environment, money-oriented, friendly to change, and characterized by intricate division of labor. Traditional society on the other hand, is viewed as interior looking, unreceptive towards environmentalism, illogical, apprehensive of change, and economically simple. This is how modernists' practitioners defined most African, Latin American, and Asian countries as underdeveloped, which also meant unequal in power and influence (Slater, 2004; Power, 2004; Robinson, 2006; So, 1990; Gilman, 2003; and Willis, 2005).

In fact, prior to Shills' public declaration, the notion of "the traditional" on one hand, and "the modern" on the other was silently present between the Europeans that came to Africa and most African ethnic groups during the pre and the post-colonial era. Using the Margi ethnic group as an example, I show the existence of this phenomenon between the living space of the African ethnic groups and the living space of their new neighbors who could afford the modern building materials to build modern homes, while the African ethnic groups could not afford to do so (Myers, 2002). The economic limitations of the Margi ethnic group, just as it was with others like them in the colonial territories, was exacerbated by the colonial tax system that became a heavy burden on a group who were mere subsistence farmers (Kirk-Greene, 1958). Unlike the contemporary world's safe and habitable shelter such as that of the colonial officers' and the missionaries' big and modernized houses which were built with cement blocks, modern window frames and doors, the Margi vernacular architecture homes were built of mud surrounded with thatch mats tied to wooden stakes. Within these mundane Margi living places, firewood was used for heating and cooking. The drinking and cooking water had to be fetched from a well or a pond usually shared by the neighborhood. There were no indoor toilet or bathtub; in short, none of the amenities individuals in the West take into consideration in defining safe and habitable shelters were available in most of the pre and early post-colonial Margi domestic sphere.

Missionaries from the American Church of the Brethren, Reverends Kulp and Helser, brought the ideas of safe and habitable shelter first to the Bura ethnic group in northeastern Nigeria in 1923. In 1927, as part of their mission expansion, they planted a station among the Margi ethnic group in Lassa, a town currently in Borno state. The missionaries came to this general area for the purpose of preaching the Christian gospel (Hickey, 1984). When the missionaries started to live among the Margi at Lassa in 1927, they built a round hut for

themselves with the help of the Margi people, but used cement for flooring and plastering of the internal wall – perhaps the first example of what may be termed “hybrid housing” in the Margi area (Harris and Myers 2007). Next the missionaries build a square-shaped church, school house and a western type two-story residence for themselves. They followed the same pattern each time they planted a new station and brought more church workers from the United States to manage the stations. The two main examples are that of Lassa in 1927 and Gulak in 1948. These two places are currently the two major Margi towns where the Brethren Missionary first Christianized the Margi ethnic group. When the Roman Catholic mission saw these developments by the American Church, it planted its first station among the Margi at Kaya, a village west of Gulak in 1948, soon after followed by the village of Shuwa, another Margi settlement 5 miles south of Gulak, in 1958. The Catholic Church built similar structures for school, church and residence for themselves in the two villages. These two former villages now both grown into what can be called towns, Kaya and Shuwa, are main Margi ethnic group settlements that are predominantly Catholic Christians. These schools, churches and residences built by the two denominations were the first western buildings that the Margi living in these four towns had seen, structures quite different from their usual mud huts. The settlement of the Fulani (who are Muslims) in Gulak since 1953 did not have any effect on Margi architecture; in fact my research shows that the Fulani built in the same ways that the Margi built their mud huts. Some of my informants are of the opinion that the Fulani learned how to build compounds from the Margi. This is because in the past, the Fulani move frequently with their cattle looking for pasture; they had no permanent settlements. The Fulani first migrated from Madagali in 1953 to Gulak. There were cattle Fulani who settled in Duhu and Shuwa villages as well during the time when some of them came to Gulak.

Upon seeing how their built environment was being transformed by these western sojourners, the Margi embarked on the change themselves starting in the mid-1960s. The evolution became more evident in the early 1970s, primarily started by the graduates of the American and Roman mission schools. This started to be possible because these mission-school graduates started to become part of the civil service system that came with Nigeria's independence in 1960. These Margi 'elites-to-be' started to receive salaries in jobs such as teachers, police constables, clerks and soldiers. These educated classes were the first among the Margi ethnic group to start altering and incorporating non-Margi vernacular architecture that they saw from the missionaries, the colonial officers, and elsewhere into the Margi built environment. The most common styles then were '*Gidan Soro*,' a single square room, or '*Chiki-da-Parlor*,' two attached square rooms with main entry via one of the rooms that served as a living room. The terminology is borrowed from a synthesis of both Hausa and English vocabulary.

Thus these shotgun styles of building being adopted by the educated Margi serve as the starting point of the transformation of the Margi settlement pattern and in essence served as a link between the modern missionary residences, the rectangular missionary school building, the rectangular Christian Churches, and the traditional Margi round huts fenced by thatch mats. The embedded ideologies that came with these new structures, either the guest houses built for the travelling colonial officers or the American and Roman missionary buildings, started to transform the Margi built environment. Therefore any discussion of the transformation of settlements initiated by the missionaries and the Colonial Officers, including the architecture of the missionaries, the colonized, and the colonizers, needs to include a discussion of the nature of colonialism and how the power relations played in the subsequent chapters (Willis 2005; Myers, 2003).

The power differentials between the colonial officers and the emirs are clearly shown in the architectural landscape and social control over the colonial spaces, where there is the making of a distinction between the established 'inside' and 'outside' (Myers, 2003). The style and size of elite colonial houses, along with their location on a higher altitude as central sites of observation, were essential to the power dynamic of colonial northern Nigeria. The sizes of colonial residence were powerful indicators of wealth and status. For instance, during the colonial period, housing was built for colonial administrators on large lots and estates called the Government Reserved Areas (GRA). These reserved areas were separated from the colonized middle class and the urban majority (Kawka, 2002; Myers, 2003; Myers, 2005; Willis, 2005). Thus, the power differential started with the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate followed by German, and then British colonization, and continued into the Nigerian independent state. The caliphate or colonial power was inherited by the indigenous elites, and subsequently wealth differentials have grown exponentially in post- independence Nigeria.

During this research, the differences between the haves and the have-nots are shown in their living spaces. Unfortunately, few of the Margi elites who build the mansions do not take into consideration the eco-friendly aspects of the Margi settlements that have existed side by side with the traditional Margi domestic sphere. For example, during my research, I observed many areas of the Margi cultural landscape dotted with residential structures; some are exclusive, with gardens and beautiful landscaping that are like any of the homes in western suburbia, some of which I have personally inspected in the Kansas City area. But the majorities are unsystematically built without regard to proper drainage, space for roads, water supply and provisions for future public utilities. The effort to blend the present modern buildings and the existing Margi domestic sphere needs to be re-assessed, because, as Vlach (1976) argued, to

understand the modern house building and city planning clearly, African architecture such as that of the Margi ethnic group must first be understood beyond ecological necessity for shelter; in fact it is a complex whole or “interlocking whole and intensive continuity” of group living space (Vlach, 1976: 48). In another work, identifying the Brazilian house in Nigeria as the emergence of a 20th-century vernacular house type, Vlach (1984) asks two questions: (1) How does the traditional change? (2) How do new traditions begin? These two questions are at the heart of what I am seeking to understand. Why it is that the Margi traditional mud huts in northeastern Nigeria are evolving or at least transforming into a hybrid form; and how the old traditional method of occupying the mud huts becomes compatible with the new rectangular shotgun-like or the bungalow structures.

It seems the colonial presence, with its embodiments of various modernizing ideas, the coming of the missionaries with new religion, and the creation of the Nigerian nation-state by the colonizers which replaced the power of the ethnic clan patriarchs (as revealed and argued against by the writings of theorists like Myers, Willis, Villach, Rapoport, and others) have set in motion the evolution of the Margi settlement pattern, and are reflective of other similar African ethnic groups - especially those African ethnic groups that went through a similar marginalizing experience to that of the Margi. Therefore, the goal of this project is to understand the evolution of ethnic built environments in Africa by examining the examples of changes in the Margi built environment, from the mud huts and thatched fences to the contemporary European bungalows in Margi towns, covering the period starting from 1960 when Nigeria became a nation-state to the present.

### 2.3: Vernacular Architecture

AlSayyad (1992: 41) argues, in the book *Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise*, that "colonial urbanism can only be understood in its true temporal framework; once this framework ceases to exist, then its urban products can no longer be seen as colonial... What then, we may ask, does colonial architecture turn into after independence?" His question, in part, inspires this study. My answer is complex for the Margi case, but one key legacy is the transformation of vernacular architectural forms, as they became refracted through the imported colonial (or in this case also American) forms.

In the article 'Folk culture and architecture in northeastern Nigeria,' Hamman Tukur Saad briefly examined certain aspects of the indigenous architecture of eight ethnic groups in northeastern Nigeria (the Higi, Margi, Bura, Bachama, Riverine Jukun, Angas, Taroh and the Rukuba). This is probably the single-most important text from which my study draws and from which it extends. Saad clustered them into three groups: (1) the Mandara highlanders, comprising the Higi, Margi, and Bura; (2) the Benue Valley dwellers, consisting of the Bachama and the Riverine Jukun; and (3) the Jos Plateau cluster, made up of Angas, Rukuba and Taroh (Saad, 1991). Saad's article briefly describes compound structure, space and symbolism, the similarities and differences, and the construction techniques. He made sketches of the compound layouts and elevations of the huts for all the groups. Saad combined these ethnic groups based on distances between the settlements of one individual group to the other. The first group comprised three ethnic groups living around the Mandara Mountains; hence he called them Mandara highlanders. The second group, which is comprised of two ethnic groups, lives in the Benue River valley. The last group is comprised of three ethnic groups living around Jos plateau about 500 miles from the first two groups. Saad shows that other writers such as Denyer (1978), King

(1980), Schwerdtfeger (1984), Moughtin (1985), Bourdieu and Minha (1985), Prussin (1985), and (Oliver 1969, 1971, 1973, 1975 and 1986) have used Amos Rapoport's work, *House Form and Culture* (1969) as a gospel to reinforce the notion that "buildings and settlements are social and cultural products." Saad believes this theory downplays the roles of physical determinants such as climate, topography, available materials, level of technology, mode of defense, and methods of construction. Saad therefore highlighted the influences of various cultural and physical elements on the settlement and dwelling forms of these ethnic groups.

I write on how the Western concept of safe and habitable shelter has taken root among these ethnic groups and others like them in Africa, using the Margi ethnic group as an example. These changes started with modernization ideas that were advocated in the 1960s and into 1970s, among many planners and development specialists who considered African cities as pre-industrial. This was followed by the global or the world cities paradigm under the canopy of globalization beginning in the 1980s, 1990s, and into the 2000s, which sees most African cities as not belonging to the map of globalization's urban impact. But the modernist ideas have trickled down to the African villages and engulfed mundane groups like the Margi and convinced them that changing their mud huts to something similar to Western architecture is better and is a more modern way of living. Needless to say that, embedded in this cultural battle is the need to procure a larger market for western building materials.

People like Amos Rapoport and others are, on the other hand, busy trying to establish how dimension, position, shape and exterior of traditional dwellings are above all governed by social and cultural factors, such as spiritual beliefs, family and kinfolk configuration, power structure, privacy, forms of economic organization, historical circumstances, symbolism and the vision of an ideal environment (Rapoport, 1969: 46-60; Saad, 1991). But they are not saying much about

the impact of the western architecture on the indigenous forms of housing, an impact which started with the modernist ideas of the 1960s. In reality, with the changing economic situations and the introduction of modern materials that came with the modernist ideas, the forms of dwellings of the ethnic groups in the developing world, including the Margi, started to change. Above all, capitalist economic and social formations are entrenched and implicated in the change of domestic architecture and the built environment of most African ethnic groups such as the Margi. This in turn changed everyday life for the Margi and other African ethnic groups.

#### **2.4: Globalization in the Post-Independence Era**

I have indicated earlier that I concentrate on the evolution of the Margi built environment beginning when Nigerians created a nation-state in 1960. This period was the prime of decolonization for the African continent. During this time, America, as the leader of the victors of World War II, came to the forefront in the global spread of western economic, political, and cultural ideals. This effort on the part of the western nations was intended to stop the spread of communism by the former USSR to the new or soon to be independent African states (Thomson, 1999). The ideological showdown of ‘the Cold War’ and the rush to stop communism were critical to why certain African leaders were left in power despite their lack of legitimacy. The leaders in turn often felt obligated to accept western devised development plans without question (Power, 2003). Since the African ethnic groups were the building blocks of the African populace in each of the newly formed nation-states, it follows that the transformation of the domestic architecture of any of the African ethnic groups is an avenue by which to start investigating the efforts by the west to modernize African people (Hungerford, 2007). Therefore, modernization of architectural style provides a framework for understanding how globalization connects to the

local realities of African ethnic groups, as in the case of the Margi ethnic group, and thus is a major part of the theoretical framework for my research.

This project combines the change in the Margi's understanding of the urban form of domestic architecture and the complexities of post-independence western architectural production. This is done in order to explore how the creation of space is implicated by this evolution of the domestic sphere and their meanings in Margi everyday life. It is this space of architectural change, this space of everyday life for the Margi ethnic group that contains the tools to understand more about what it means to be the poorest group placed by mandate in the emirates by the colonial authorities (Vaughan, 1964). There are no scholarly studies of Margi architecture other than the aforementioned article by Hamman Tukur Saad (1991), and an unpublished Master of Arts thesis by Stephen Dzugwahi at the University of Jos, Nigeria in which he wrote on Margi traditional worship places. However, in geography, studies by Myers (2003, 2006), Murray and Myers (2006), Simone (2001), Robinson (2004), Watts (1983), Willis (2005), and many others have influenced my approach, and because colonialism established the frame for modernization, it is crucial to mention it.

What Simone (2001) has called "urbanization for engagement" may as well mean relocating, renaming, and building new cities in Africa to engage the continent, because that is what the colonial powers did. Those whose colonies were bounded by the ocean located their headquarters on the coast for easy export by water. The colonial powers with landlocked territory also relocated, renamed, and even established new cities in the interior as their headquarters, therefore making the engagement with Africa more economically feasible for them using railway lines (Lugard, 1892; Lugard, 1959; Simone 2001). "In Africa at least, the building of transportation infrastructure of railway and harbor in each British colony, linking the coastal areas to the

interior... In this way, Nigerian colonial railways and British shipping systems linked Lagos, Ibadan, Zaria, and Kano to London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow” (Carland: 1985: 135).

The African urban residents living in these relocated and renamed cities were caught-up in segregated urban geographies created by the white settlers or the colonial administrators (Simone, 2001; Myers, 2003). The interior and distant villages like those in the region occupied by the Margi ethnic group in northern Nigeria were facing a different type of segregation based on religion and economic suppression by the major ethnic groups like the Hausa-Fulani and the Kanuri (Kirk-Greene and Vaughn, 1995). The segregated geographies continued into the Nigerian nation state in the form of an invisible glass ceiling in the local and national public service for promotion and appointment, and subsequently the economic means to improve the built environment.

In northern Nigeria, the city of Kaduna, which served as the administrative center of the British colony, was the first to be industrialized and served as the nucleus where all the ethnic groups came to seek economic opportunities. Other northern cities such as Kano, Jos, Zaria, and Maiduguri continued the growth in post-independent northern Nigeria as people moved to these cities seeking the new opportunities that came with independence (Simone 2004). In fact, these cities succeeded in providing the newly independent Nigeria with the right of entry to the emerging political and economic avenues of African independent states (Hull 1978; Winters 1983; Anderson and Rathbone 2000; Simone 2004; Njoh 2006; Freund 2007). The growth of these cities almost drained villages from around the country, as the new revenues from the oil wells helped create new opportunities. When Nigeria gained independence from Britain in 1960, oil production was barely 17,000 barrels per day. With the offshore discovery in 1963, the

barrels per day production increased rapidly, and was up to 1 million barrel per day by the time Nigeria joined OPEC in 1971 (Heussler, 1968; Watts, 2003; Frynas and Paulo, 2006).

These new developments encouraged farmers to abandon their farming implements and move to the cities in search of the wealth created by the oil revenue. The Margi, especially the missionary educated ones, were no different from the others. They went to the cities, worked and lived in various non-Margi types of buildings, and therefore acquired new ideas, which they brought back with them to the Margi cultural landscape. The people who returned from the city often built non-Margi buildings on their family lands. The growth of these big Nigerian cities was unsustainable, because there was no balancing fiscal, infrastructural, or technological growth to correspond with the chronological type of urban growth seen in the developed Western world, because most of the development proposed by the colonizers was to facilitate the exportation of raw materials (Beauchemin and Bocquier, 2004; UN, No. 44, 1969: 1-124).

## **2.5: The Basis for Western Architectural Modernism**

In the post-colonial era, the Western notion of safe and habitable shelter is tied into the universal theories of urbanism as an instrument of modernizing ‘others,’ using the dualistic perception of “the traditional” and “the modern” as a concealment that allows the modern to replace the traditional. It is therefore arguable now, just like Gideon Sjoberg argued earlier during the modernist era (1961) followed by people like Robinson during the global and world cities era (2004) that these ethnocentric attitudes of the modernist comparative conclusion on cities solely based on data obtained from the study of the Western cities is unfortunate, because it give the impression that there is little to learn from cities other than the Western cities. These conclusions overlooked the rich historical origins, the growth, and the spread of the cities of the global South. Most of the proponents of the urban ecological models, which led to the ideas of

global cities or the world cities paradigms (Myers, 2003, 2006, Myers, eds, 2006; Simone, 2001; Robinson, 2004; Willis, 2005) urged that the modernist ideals that hope to modernize others in the name of progress are residues from ideas such as those of the Chicago school of urban ecology and sociology. These ideas are responsible for producing the discourse of ‘backwardness’ of the cities of the global South in relation to the Western cities by focusing on cities such as London, Tokyo, and New York (Robinson, 2006).

In response, Robinson borrowed the notion of ‘Ordinary Cities’ from an article by Ash Amin and Steven Graham to argue for giving all cities the global character of ordinariness, and to appreciate all the world’s cities as sites of modernity. The categorization of all cities as ordinary, Robinson argued, would end the current hierarchical categorization that privileges cities of the global North over those of the global South. Most Western development planning and geographical literatures pre-judge the cities and the inhabitants of the global South as dysfunctional, traditional, and underdeveloped and therefore in need of re-making, while innovation and progress were properties of the cities and the inhabitants of the global North (Robinson, 2006; Myers, 2011; Pieterse 2008). This idea of the need for re-making their domestic architecture was internalized by the educated and working class among the Margi ethnic group just like among other African ethnic groups. The result was an unplanned eruption of modern building in various places (Elleh, 2002).

## 2.6: Architecture as a tool of control

Vale, in his book *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (1992, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2008), charted out the intricacies of the post-independence production of Western architecture in Africa. Vale opined that the globalization of architectural ideas and the physical construction of the Western type of building have played an important role in the enforcement of political control. The West used architecture to re-orient the built environment, the social characteristics of the urban areas, the geographical divides, and the economies of the post-independence African states. The so-called modernization of cities is often hidden behind the notion of national styles. In addition, architecture served the developing economies of the new states to articulate the appearance of economic growth and national progress in an environment of global economic competition, while at the same time concealing the ills of neocolonialism, in the form of the unseen strings that came with developing capitals cities like Nairobi, Lilongwe, Abuja, and others (Myers, 2003; Elleh, 2002).

Examining the geography of the evolution of settlement patterns with an emphasis on the evolution of domestic architecture of the Margi ethnic group can be a window from which the ordinariness of cities Robinson talked about can be viewed, as a building block of the ordinary in contrast with the grand, national architecture. Buildings, including commercial, high-style or vernacular, are the cell units of all cities. Earlier studies of African settlement structure in geography and development planning focused primarily on the dualistic comparativeness of already settled cities as traditional or modern, developed or undeveloped, and as the modern city of the global North versus the primordial city of the global South, and now all global and world cities as sites of modernity (Myers, 1998; Prussian, 1999; Rapoport, 1990; Geddes 1998, Robinson, 2006, Myers 2003). In geography, there is a great tradition in North America and

Europe for studying the evolution of settlements and cultural landscapes (Sauer, 1925, 1930, 1931, 1971, 1975; Kniffen, 1931, 1932, 1968, 1987, 1990; Vlach, 1986, 1993; Barns and Vlach 2003). But there is a limited literature of this type for Africa. Since most previous studies of city settlement are regionally based, they often neglect the local or village level, such as the Margi ethnic group. The local or the village level evolution process and its distinctiveness is the starting point for settlement that gradually becomes the city (Zurick, 1988).

The best example of such work that directly engages the relationships between rural settlement structure and the development process in Sub-Saharan Africa is the book, *Rural Settlement Structure and African Development*, edited by Marilyn Silberfein (1998). Silberfein and six other geographers, four anthropologists, and a planner, including three African scholars based in African universities (Myers, 1999), developed case studies of Burkina Faso and Nigeria in West Africa, Rwanda and Tanzania in East Africa and then Botswana in southern Africa. The focus of this book of case studies was on rural settlement seen from historical, spatial, structural and developmental standpoints (Mortimore, 1998).

What makes this book one of the unique examples is that, in addition to the geographical diversity of study areas across Africa; there is also the diversity of the researchers in terms of their discipline. A geographer, anthropologist and a planner each will take a different approach, yet the diversity of African settlement and the process of evolution remained a common theme. Also, as Garth Myers noted in his review of the book (1999), “there is a general trend that, if not directly speaking for Africa in geographical theories, at least leads to an advocacy of caution about the applicability of Western theories of the relationship between settlement form and development processes in African rural communities... what matters, after all, is what causes the

trends or whether they are progressive, in the interests of bettering the lives of most rural Africans.”

Historically, the evolution of village territory and land occupancy patterns has been subject to political power relations. Western planners by and large do consider preset, nucleated, reduced settlements as more resourceful for development purposes. Most native rural settlements in Africa involve much less permanence, clustering, or inflexibility, leading to outsiders' common opinion of them as "disorganized." African native patterns are not, per se, the impediment that western planning theorist or many postcolonial African governments make them out to be (Myers, 1999). This history has mediated the relationship between local inhabitants, in this case, the Margi ethnic group and newcomers such as the colonial officers, the missionaries, the Hausa-Fulani, traders, travelers and the Kanuri. Also, the arrival of these newcomers to Margi villages encouraged more newcomers to occupy portions of the local land, using other portions of the land for other uses such as schools, offices, and livestock grazing. The new neighbors ended up determining the social relations of production and channeling productivity away from the Margi ethnic group, tilting the power dynamic (Silberfein, 1998; Kirk-Greene, 1959; Myers, 1999; Vaughan, 1964 and Mortimore, 1998).

As Arif Dirlik (2003: 278) opined, “Over the last decade, globalization has replaced modernization as a paradigm of change-and a social imaginary. The discourse of globalization claims to break with the earlier modernization discourse in important ways, most notably in abandoning a Eurocentric teleology of change, which in many ways has been compelled by real economic, political and cultural challenges.” One can then argue that the evolutionary element of globalization which exerts itself in the presence of an intensifying inequality, within local-level dynamic as in this case among the Margi ethnic group, in other distant lands, among different

nationalities, and among primitive or civilized societies, has modernization elements embedded. The process describes the development by which societies, cultures, and their economies have turned out to be incorporated through universal association, communication, travelling, and trade. Scholars often use this term “globalization” to refer specifically to economic globalization, but clearly it involves the transfer of ideas, craftsmanship, and material culture as in this case the art of architecture (Short and Kim, 1999; White and Robertson, 2003) However, I argue that there is also a forceful globalization which is usually driven by a combination of economic greed to acquire raw materials for industrial purposes and reselling the product to the same people, technological superiority, and the feelings of socio-cultural, political, and biological superiority (Bebbington and Batterbury 2001).

According to sociologists and comparative political scientists, modernization under the cover of globalization helps to explain the causal relationship between political and economic growth, the high level of urbanization, increasing industrialization, high GNP per capita and education, which all taken together will lead to increases in the level of democratic participation, or so the capitalists say (Lipsett, 1975; Harvey, 2005; Smith, 1994, 2003, 2005). But I urge that key essentials of modernization under the cover of globalization that displace primitive modes of production may be the key driving factors among other things. While industrialization as the modernists’ main objective creates a demand for labor in city areas, at the same time, the extension of capitalist ventures and establishments into rural areas like the Margi lands makes it increasingly difficult to maintain a rural subsistence lifestyle. This rural populace, which makes up the majority in the early stages of modernization, is characterized as unskillful, diffuse, and with little structural opportunity for collective action (Lipsett, 1975; Smith, 1994, 2003, 2005; Harvey, 1972, 1989, 2003, 2005, 2010).

Furthermore, modernist advocates hope to look at the internal factors of societies within developing countries, while assuming that with assistance, "traditional" societies can be brought to development in the same manner more developed societies have by attempting to classify the social variables which donate to the social evolution and improvement of societies, and seeks to explain the process of social evolution. But not unpredictably, modernization theory is subject to criticism originating among world systems theorists, free-market ideologies, globalization theorists, and dependency theorists to mention but a few. While the modernists stress the process of change, and at the same time responses to that change, modernization also looks at the inner dynamics while referring to social and cultural structures and the adaptation of new technologies (Dirlik, 2002; Sauer, 1981).

For Dirlik (2002: 611-615) the euphoria over globalization, in this case architectural production, has served to disguise the very real social and economic inequalities that are not simply leftovers from the past, but are yields of the new developments. There is some question as to whether globalization represents the end of the implementation of the Eurocentric style. That globalization has an understandable appeal to a political left that has been devoted all along to internationalism, in equality, and closer ties between peoples. For Soja (1989: 159) making theoretical and practical sense of this contemporary restructuring of capitalist spatiality has become the overriding goal of an emerging postmodern critical human geography (See also Soja, 1968; Berry, 1969).

Dirlik is right, the social and economic inequalities among the Margi ethnic groups and their new neighbors, in the form of transnational corporations, and dominant ethnic groups are not simply leftovers from the past, but are yields of the contemporary developments. The new neighbors determine the social relations of production and channel productivity away from the

Margi, and other ethnic groups in Africa, therefore tilting the power dynamic. Equally, Soja is right; understanding these current dynamics should be the overriding goal of an emerging postmodern/critical human geographer like me. I therefore seek to examine these developments through the evolution of the domestic architecture of the Margi ethnic group as an example of other African ethnic groups.

As indicated earlier, the only published work that mentions Margi architecture is the article “Folk Culture and Architecture in Northeastern Nigeria” by Saad (1991: 253-289). The article briefly described “Compound Structure” as it was, as well as the similarities and differences compared to Bura and Higi ethnic groups. Saad also sketched the compound layouts and elevations for all the groups as they were. In response, my project seeks to understand how the architecture of the Margi was affected by the “tilting power dynamic” mentioned and gradually changing into what the Western world considered safe and habitable shelter. I believe this work contributes to cultural, and political geography, and how indigenous domestic architecture evolves into contemporary architecture, and in turn changes the occupants’ everyday life along with their culture, and their cultural landscape.

This leads me to the hypothesis for this dissertation in order to provide the basis for logical reasoning, and from which I hope to draw my conclusion. I hope that by first establishing how the Margi lived prior to contact with the outside world, then analyzing my field research data, which includes the changes of physical infrastructure started during colonization, the coming of the missionaries, and the effort of the Margi ethnic group themselves, the study will serve as a mirror from which the answers to research questions, and how these changes affect the Margi ways of life, can be viewed. Framed around the missions of these groups, my hypothesis is: The Margi cultural peripheries are changing rapidly along with their built environment; are these



## 2.7: Significance of the project

The significance of this project is that the stories of Margi encounters with the Western world that led to the change in their built environment, either with the colonial officers or the missionaries, are representative of the story of a majority of other African ethnic groups, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where all the land was colonized by the outside world, with the exceptions of Ethiopia and Liberia. Furthermore, the stories of the Margi's regional encounter with larger groups influenced by Islam like the Hausa-Fulani or the Kanuri in West Africa is similar to other regional dynamics on the continent, such as the encounters of the Africans and the Arabs that led to the development of the Swahili architecture in east Africa (Donley, 1990; Allen, 1979; de Vere Allen, 1981; Horton, 2004). There is also a need to rethink the desire to modernize the 'others' that emerged with western modernist thinkers which has altered the built environments of many global societies especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

I chose this region, the Margi ethnic group, and this topic because most studies done in the vicinity such as those by geographers like Michael Watts (1983), J.R. Thompson (1992), Simon Batterbury (1998), or anthropologists like James Vaughn (who spent his life studying the Margi, and other ethnic groups in this general area), and former colonial officers like Anthony Kirk-Greene have not mentioned the living space of the people or the evolution of the built environment of this region, including the Margi ethnic group. There is considerable work by people like Shwerdtfeger (1982), Saad (1995), Nast (1997, 1998, and 2005), Pellow (2008), and Eneh and Ati (2010), on Hausa cities, culture, and architecture, but this literature bypasses the Margi, who have a distinct story in domestic architecture as in many other cultural factors.

Also the Margi cultural landscape/territory has a history of changing hands between the colonial powers. It was first a part of German Kamerun (K) then later divided amongst the

World War I victors, where French Cameroon (C) lay to the east of the Mandara Mountains and British Cameroon to the west of the mountains, and finally placed under UN protectorate status prior to joining Nigeria in 1961 through a plebiscite (Lippmann, 1960). During all these changes, the Margi ethnic group was at the center of this global drama. In fact, the section of the British territory in which the Margi ethnic group resided was off limits to travelers until 1954. This decision was made by the colonial powers with only limited permission granted to the missionaries. Although my study focuses on the period beginning with independence in 1960, this complex and divisive colonial backdrop played a role in differentiating the domestic sphere of the Margi ethnic group.

## **Chapter 3: Methods**

### **3.1: Quantitative and Qualitative**

Although there are some elements of quantitative methods in my questionnaire, and the approach I used when analyzing my field data, I used more of qualitative methods for my field research. In this chapter, I mention the specific locations of my research and time period spent there, describe the types of methods I used, and indicate number of people, and the places involved. Finally, I provide justifications as to why I think these are the right routes that can lead me to the answers to my research questions that were generated by my hypothesis. The specific locations I went began with Elgin Illinois, - to the Brethren Historical Library and Archives in June 2011. While there, I researched all the files that were maintained on the activities of the field missionaries located in northern Nigeria. I paid special attention to those files that contained information on Margi towns and villages. Since I already knew the names of the missionaries that were specifically stationed in the Margi general areas, it was easier to streamline my search. In fact, prior to my arrival at the archive, I had been in correspondence with the archival staff for over two years; as such they had in depth knowledge as to what information that I needed. They separated all the specific boxes that contained the files that were related to my area of interest. In these boxes I found correspondence, meeting minutes, and articles on what was happening in the general area of the Margi ethnic group. I was able to find the mentioned information from 1927 when the first station started in the Margi domain, until 1976, when the missionaries handed over the school to the Nigerian State Governments; the information about the activities of the church after 1976 also was available to me in Elgin.

The next location where I conducted archival research was at the Rhodes House Library in Oxford, United Kingdom. I sought and obtained attachment to the African Studies Center at

Oxford University as a visiting fellow for the Michaelmas Term October 9<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup> 2011. While I was in Oxford, I concentrated on the British colonial activities in Nigeria; specifically the files maintained by the District Officers that were residents of Borno and Adamawa Emirates, the two emirates where the Margi ethnic group resided during the colonial periods. The most important colonial files pertaining to these areas, and the activities that directly concerned the Margi ethnic group, were those that came from Professor Anthony Kirk-Greene. During the Colonial period, Kirk-Greene was the Assistant District Officer of Adamawa, and then Borno Emirate. He wrote the first un-published history of the Adamawa, and then when he was transferred to Borno, he also wrote the first history of Borno. He was also chosen by the first premier of northern Nigeria to start an institute for training native District Officers in preparation for Nigerian independence. Prof., Kirk-Greene helped to start what is today the Institute of Public Administration at the oldest university in northern Nigeria, the well-known Ahmadu Bello University. After his colonial appointment, Anthony Kirk-Greene became a professor at the University of Oxford, at St. Anthony's College where he taught for 30 years and from where he has written extensively on northern Nigeria. I had the opportunity of meeting him and discussing my research with him several times over the course of my visit. I also interviewed him for three hours. He shaped my thinking on the Margi cultural landscape, an area he regularly toured and for which he kept detailed notes on his activities as the assistant district officer. He directed me to information that was directly related to the physical infrastructure that the British Government developed in the Margi cultural landscape. In fact when I was given the opportunity to present my work to the faculty and students in Oxford (in a lecture hall named after him), he was there. He and other faculty members redirected my thinking on the influence of Islamic culture on the Margi built environment.

My last destination was northern Nigeria where the Margi ethnic group lives, with hundreds of questionnaires in hand, a digital tape recorder, a camera and other things I would need. During the nine hours' flight to Abuja, I had time to reflect on what Howard S. Becker wrote in his article on "The Epistemology of Qualitative Research," that "the variety of things called ethnographic aren't all alike, and in fact may be at odds with each other over epistemological details." He opined that he would "concentrate on the older traditions, (e.g., participant observation, broadly construed, and unstructured interviewing), rather than the newer trendy version" (Becker, 1996: 57). In addition, I began to take solace in what Michael Quinn Patton wrote in his book *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (2002). Patton informs our understanding of ethnographic research - more specifically in my case, on the 'emic' perspective, in which an observer not only sees what is happening but feels what it is like to be part of the group, including how to avoid oppressing and preventing harm to those with whom we research. The group, in this case, is the Margi ethnic group of northeastern Nigeria. My consolation became even stronger when it occurred over and over to me that I belong to the Margi ethnic group, and grew up in a Margi household, and therefore I am a participant observer and share as intimately as possible in the life and the activities of Margi culture, which evolved along with Margi built environment that I write about (Birdling, 2009; Gilman, 2003).

I now describe the types of methods I used, from a qualitative standpoint, and in part as a summary of what I have already mentioned. I used the combination of archival research, ethnographic perspective, semi-structured interviews and surveys, to investigate the evolution of the Margi built environment. This includes the corresponding spaces shaped by such changes, and what it means for the future of the Margi ethnic group. I utilize scholarly texts in order to

explain how the west used modernization under the umbrella of globalization as a disguise to transform the cultural landscape of the “others” to be more like them.

The area where the research was conducted is situated at the border of northeastern Nigeria and northwestern Cameroon Republic. The ages of the subjects of my research ranged from 17 to 93 years old. There were 105 of those that were between ages of 17 to 25, ages 26 to 60 were 240 in number, ages 61 to 85 were 40 in number; and finally ages 85 to 93 were 15 in number. Exactly 13 of the subjects within the 85 – 93 year group did not remember their exact ages; but 5 of the 13 are sure they were at least 5 years old or more when the missionaries arrived. It had been 84 years from the time the missionaries set foot on Margi cultural landscape and the time this research was conducted. I believe those of them that were born in the year 1922 (which made them at least five years old on the arrival of the missionaries, and first built a station among the Margi at Lassa in the year 1927) do remember most, if not all of the changes, that have occurred in the Margi built environment; there were a total of 5 of those that were 5 or more years old in that year who took part in the research.

There were 10-12 of the interviewees who were 65 years old or more, and who had attended the missionary schools, went on to obtained college degrees, and attained mid-management positions or higher during their career in the government or private organizations. This group provided my research with in-depth and highly intellectual opinions of the human drama that had been and is still being played out in Margi built environment between the Margi, the Fulani, the missionaries, and the residues of colonial activities, including how the effects of these forces still linger in the Margi domestic sphere.

I started the research among the Margi by conducting interviews with several first generation teachers of the Margi ethnic group and non-teachers that have spent their lives in

Margi land; since the intent of the dissertation was to document as much as possible how the Margi built environment evolved from independence to the present. I hope that the future generations and scholars can build on this dissertation. Furthermore, knowing fully well that the Margi domestic sphere is where it is, and nothing can change the past, I turned to the younger Margi generation for their opinion to see if they can give a glimpse into what they think will become of the Margi domestic sphere in the future. Their opinions are presented in chapter six.

My survey was taken in 52 of the Margi towns and villages, including the two cities - Yola and Maiduguri - that serve as the state capitals for Adamawa and Borno states. To reasonably manage the information obtained, I grouped some of the smaller villages under the bigger ones, as described in the following subsections.

### **3.2: Margi Towns and Environs**

In both Adamawa and Borno, the Margi live in total of 11 administrative areas, with a total of 72 towns and villages. I visited 52 out of the 72 and distributed questionnaires and conducted some detailed interviews. During all the visits, I used Global Positioning System equipment to record the latitude and the longitude points. With the help of a fellow PhD student studying GIS, Weibo Liu, we selected at least one town from each of the 11 administrative areas and plotted the general research area in both Adamawa and Borno states. As Figure 12 shows, the Margi of Adamawa are located at the most northern part of the state while the Margi of Borno are located at the southern part of the state. I would like to state that the GPS reading used to plot the town of Kaya, is taken on the exact site of my late grandmother's room where I was born. My mother's elder brother Hidarawa Sikari was able to pinpoint the exact location.

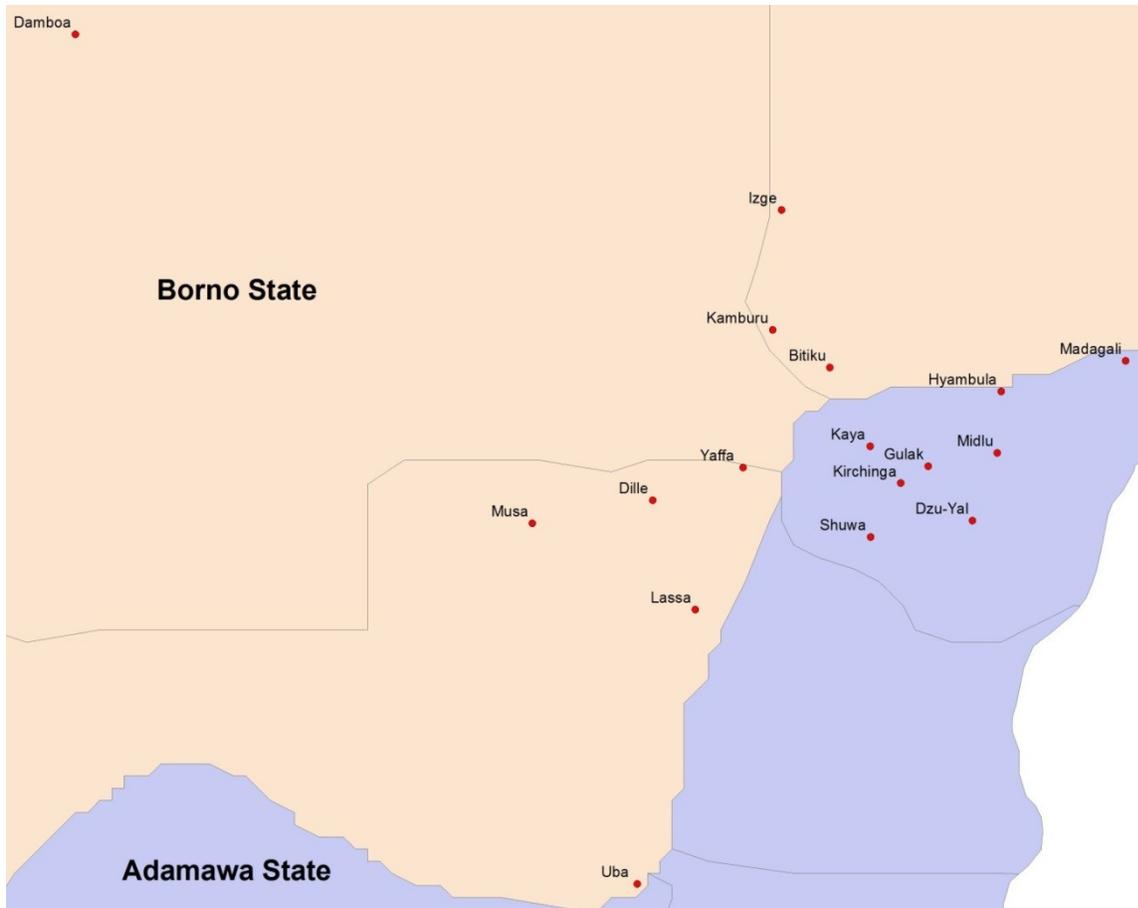


Figure 12: A Selected Town from the 11 Administrative Areas in the General Research Area;  
 Plotted by: Weibo Liu

**3.2.1: Adamawa State: Yola State Capital**

**3.2.2: Gulak District and Environs: Distance from Gulak in Miles/ Cardinal Direction**

- Gulak.....Headquarters
- Kaya.....3 West
- Kuda.....4 West
- Hyambula.....6 North
- Mazhinyi.....4 North

- Bitiku.....7 West
- Ghumbili .....4 East
- Yinagu.....9 West
- Jalingo.....2 North East
- Jilang (Kafin Hausa).....7 North

**3.2.3: Duhu District and Environs: Distance from Shuwa in Miles/ Cardinal Direction**

- Shuwa.....Headquarters
- Duhu Yelwa .....4 North
- Duhu Ki.....4 North East
- Mayowandu (Brishishiwa).....4 East
- Kwambila.....3 West
- Pallam.....7 East
- Dzu'yel.....6 North East
- Kwajiti.....10 South east

**3.2.4: Madagali District and Environs: Distance from Madagali in Miles/ Cardinal Direction**

- Madagali.....Headquarters
- Wagga.....3 North
- Bebel.....3 South East
- Sukur Dorowa.....2 South

**3.2.5: Kirchinga, Kopa and Wuro Ngayandi District and Environs; Distance from Kirchinga in Miles / Cardinal Direction**

- Kirchinga .....Headquarters
- Kopa.....4 South West
- Kuda Higi.....2 East
- Wuro Ngayandi-Ki.....2 West
- Wuro Ngayandi.....5 West

**3.2.6: Sukur District and Environs: Distance from Vilangadi in Miles / Cardinal Direction**

- Vilangadi.....Headquarters
- Sukur
- Midlu Shalmi.....3/4 West
- Midlu Vapura.....4 West
- Gubla.....6 West

**3.3.1: Borno State: Maiduguri State Capital**

**3.3.2: Lassa District and Environs: Distance from Lassa in Miles / Cardinal Direction**

- Lassa.....Headquarters
- Samuwa.....2

**3.3.3: Izege District and Environs: Distance from Izege in Miles/ Cardinal Direction**

- Izege.....Headquarters
- Karli.....2 West
- Chakuraku.....5 North East
- Bita.....9 North
- Mbulanggiling.....11 South West
- Valanguri.....7 North East

- Kamburu.....4 East
- Dagumba.....8 North West
- Tuhum.....2 South
- Gu’u Amulu.....2 East
- Madubu.....9 North West
- Kwamdu.....9 North East

**3.3.4: Ngurthafu district and Environs: Distance from Ngurthafu in Miles / Cardinal Direction**

- Ngurthafu.....Headquarters
- Yaffa.....2 North East
- Maikadiri.....5 North East
- Bdagu.....9 West
- Gurgyangol.....10 East
- Bagajau.....4 East
- Giwahigi.....5 East
- Dzodzoma.....3

**3.3.5: Dille District and Environs: Distance from Dille in Miles / Cardinal Direction**

- Dille.....Headquarters
- Pumbum.....4 North
- Kwang.....6 North
- Huyim..... 2 North

**3.3.6: Musa District and Environs: Distance from Musa (HQ) in Miles / Cardinal Direction**

- Burda.....2 East
- Sabongari.....8 South east
- Kelle.....5 South East
- Chul.....5 South
- Kundlindila..... 3 South
- Dubunkwa.....2 South

**3.3.7: Damboa District and Environs: Distance from Damboa (HQ) in Miles/Cardinal Direction**

- Damboa.....Headquarters
- Talala.....32 North west
- Mulqwe .....26 South east
- Kurjan.....22 South West
- Kauji.....19 South West
- Azur.....24 West
- Gamsuri..... 24 South
- Bale.....12 South east
- Bego.....37 South east

Table 4: A Table Showing the Survey Proportion of the Main Towns and their Environs

Town and its Environs	Percentage of Questionnaires Answered	Cumulative Percent
Damboa	4.1	4.1
Gulak	40.2	44.3
Izge	5.2	49.5
Lassa	12.4	61.9
Madagali	10.3	72.2
Maiduguri	8.2	80.4
Shuwa	9.3	89.7
Yola	10.3	100.0

In addition to the interviews conducted in various Margi villages and towns, I also conducted interviews with the Margi living in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state; and Yola the capital of Adamawa state. As mentioned earlier these two states are where the Margi cultural landscape is currently located in northern Nigeria. It is very common, perhaps the norm, that the Margi people that live in these two cities own homes in the city where they reside in addition to the homes they own in their various towns and villages in the Margi cultural landscape. By the time I started the analysis, I had 400 detailed questionnaires answered by men and women of the Margi ethnic group including those that were mailed to me after I left research area, and an additional 35 detailed interviews. In each house hold, there might be two to four separate changes made to separate structure at different times. I believe the combination gave me a reasonably representative sample for the analysis I have made in chapter five. Based on the age groups, it is reasonable to conclude that the majority of them have witnessed the evolution of the Margi domestic architecture beginning from 1960, while the younger group talked about what they foresee the future of 21st century Margi built environment would be. Having a mixture of educated and older non-educated groups is a good thing. They are not opposed to each other, but

rather complement each other in the sense that, when the educated ones went left Margi villages to attend school or work in other non-Margi towns around Nigeria, the older groups were at home, gradually altering their domestic architecture. When the educated ones came back home with new ideas, they helped to accelerate the changes even further. The only difference between these two groups is that the older ones were not able to afford modern buildings materials, but have in some ways modified their domestic sphere.

The younger and more educated groups have more resources, and they have travelled to other city, which allows them to see different ways of living by the Nigerian major ethnic groups, and some of them have come back home and constructed structures using modern building materials in the Margi cultural landscape. The group ages 17 to 25 reflects the views of the Margi of the 21st century and what safe and habitable homes mean to them. This group has not seen the total process of change that the older groups have seen. I have also observed building components such as roofing, windows, walls, shapes of rooms to evaluate the percentage of what is modern and what is not in order to compare this with the result of the survey; the two results seems to be consistent. Furthermore I have used photos taken in the 1950s of Margi people made available to me by James Vaughn, an American anthropologist who spent his career studying the Margi and other ethnic groups in this general area. The difference among the photos showed some of the changes compared with photos I took during my research. I have interpolated my samples, generalized and made conclusions about how the evolution of the Margi built environment reflects the process of globalization, as a pretense of modernizing the others; and the Margi ethnic group experience might be representative of other African ethnic groups.

### How I analyze the field data

I got total of 400 questionnaires out of the 500 distributed, I subdivided it based on the number of villages/or neighborhoods under each main town. This means I had 52 groups. I then went through each group looking for any duplication in the count of public buildings such as schools, churches, Mosques and Markets. Most of the stores were counted because in most cases it is owned by the home owner as part of his compound with the store door facing the street or outside. See the following table.

Main Town and Environs	Percentage of Questionnaires Answered	Cumulative	Number of Villages/or Neighborhood Surrounding Main Town
Damboa	4.1	4.1	8
Gulak	40.2	44.3	15
Izge	5.2	49.5	7
Lassa	12.4	61.9	7
Madagali	10.3	72.2	6
Maiduguri	8.2	80.4	1
Shuwa	9.3	89.7	7
Yola	10.3		1
Totals:8 Main Towns	400 Questionnaires	100%	52 Village/or Neighborhoods

Note that in each house hold, there was an average of 3 or more alterations, addition/ and or new buildings built by the owners or the person that inherited the compound. Each of these alterations, addition/ and or new buildings were built in different years. This is where the numbers used for the analysis of variance and the bar graph came from.

## Chapter 4: Margi Built Environments in the Past

### Section 1: Typical Margi Domestic Architecture Prior to the External Influence

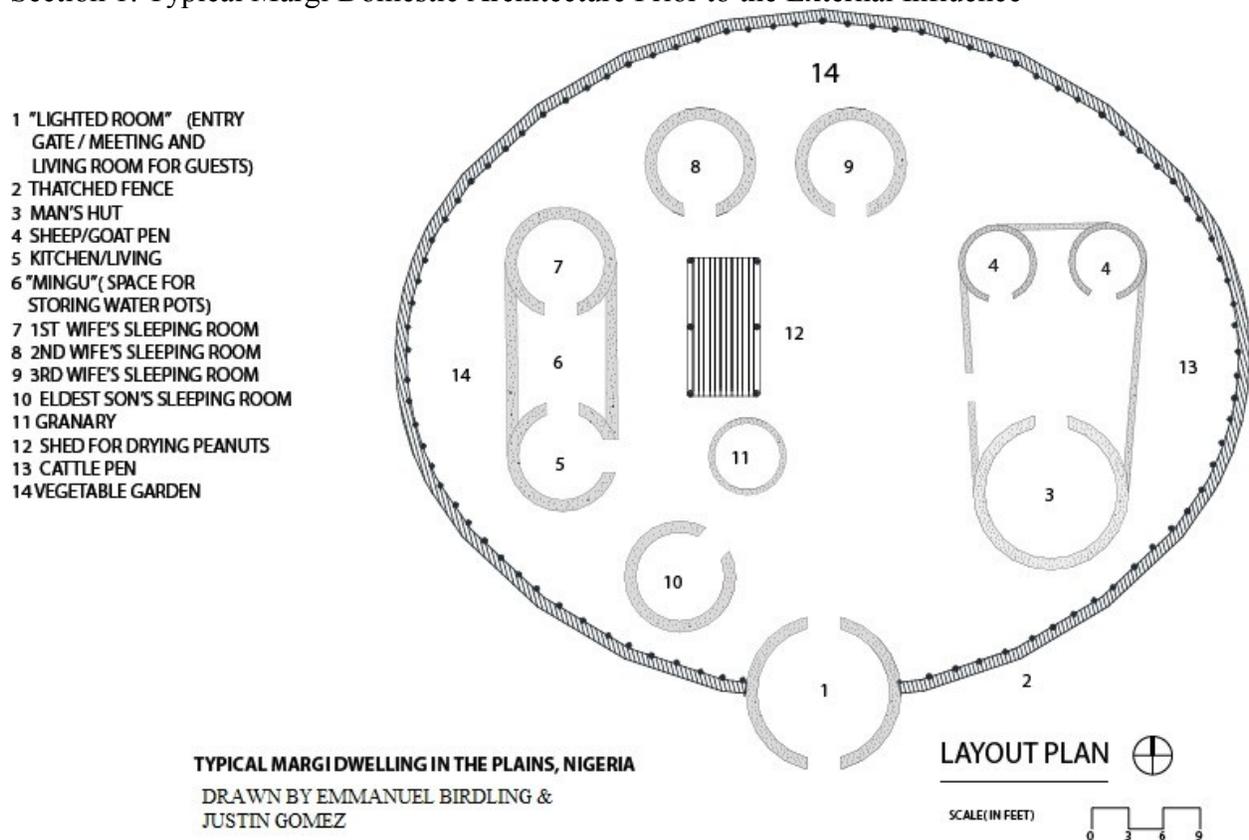


Figure 13: A Typical Margi Dwelling in the Plains

[I]n Great Britain, as elsewhere in Europe, the evidence leads us to the conclusion that the earliest form of dwelling, fit to bear the name of house, was round. Round huts are still used in Africa, and such huts seem to have been common to many different races at an early stage of their development. In Italy the type of the round form of house lasted down to historical times in the temples of Vesta. In England it may have been preserved in the round temple found at Silchester and one or two round churches, like that at Little Maple stead in Essex. In Ireland, says Professor Sullivan, 'round houses were made by making two basket-like cylinders, one within the other, and separated by an annular space of about a foot by inserting upright posts in the ground and interweaving hazel wattles between, the annular space being filled with clay; Upon this cylinder was placed a conical cap, thatched with reeds or straw (Addy, 1905: 1).

In this chapter, I present the Margi ethnic group's domestic architecture prior to colonization, the coming of the missionaries, and the period prior to independence. I use two examples from

two different terrains, using two Margi clans and two Margi towns for the other: a) I chose two clans among those that left and reside in the Mandara Mountains; b) Instead of choosing clans, I worked with two towns from the Margi that left and resides on the plains. When I use the term mountain and the plain, I am referring to the period after the Margi ethnic group left the Lake Chad area and dispersed in different direction and settled in these locations. I describe how those in the mountains constructed their living space, using photos, and sketches. I also describe how the domestic architecture changed and the process for the construction after they moved out of the mountains and settled on the plain. Above all I present the role women play in the construction of the Margi ethnic group domestic sphere.

As indicated earlier, the Margi people lived peacefully around Lake Chad before the expedition of the Saifawa Dynasty under the leadership of Idris Alauma from 1564 -1576. Due to the expedition activities of Idris Alauma, the Margi ethnic group dispersed in various directions under family patriarchs. The groups dispersed to two general locations: some groups went into the Mandara Mountains enclaves and other groups went and settled on the plains. This explains why the majority of the Margi towns or neighborhoods are of the same clan. But all the clans maintained the same language and culture, and all have always maintained that they came from the east (Kirk-Greene, 1962). However, in due course some variations in pronunciations started to appear because of contact with other ethnic groups, especially larger groups. One example of such a larger group is the Kanuri ethnic group. The Margi that went to Mulgwe plains started to adopt Kanuri words because of the close proximity to Borno, where the Kanuri ethnic group still resides (Barth, 1857: 106; Kirk-Greene 1962; Cohen, 1967).

In this chapter, I show how the built environment of the Margi ethnic group evolved in the two locations, for those that were in the mountains and those in the plains. The compound layout

for both locations stayed very similar, but each group started to use material available in their immediate vicinity to construct their living space. In other words, though the layouts stayed the same, the materials used are from the immediate surroundings. There are two main differences between those that went and settled at the plains and those that went to the mountainous enclave in the manner they construct their architecture and re-order their environment. Those that were in the mountains used pieces of stones, and those that resided in the plains used mud as the main material. I start with those that went to the mountains. I chose two clans as examples from among the Margi ethnic groups that chose to flee into the mountains: the Medugu Kirngu clan and the Birdling clan.

#### **4.1.1: The Medugu Kirngu Clan**

Both of these groups are Margi, they have been living in the same mountain, relocating from one section of the mountain to the other for over 350 years - that is, approximately from the time they left the Lake Chad general area because of Idris Alauma's expedition until the 1930s to the 1950s, when the majority relocated to the mountain slopes and plains. There is no evidence the two groups have lived together in the mountain, but have had occasional contacts when attending market or other activities especially from the beginning of the colonial rule when massive slave raids stopped. There have been intermarriages between the groups as well, and this continued into the modern day.

During the field research, I organized two trips to the abandoned villages at the top of the Mandara Mountains. The first trip was to the Medugu Kirngu clan area and the other to the Birdling clan area. During my trip to the Medugu Kirngu clan's old village, I was accompanied by 25 people from the Medugu Kirngu clan. Among them were: the *ptil* (chief), Sa'ad Danburam, a middle-aged veterinary doctor who inherited the chiefdom of this particular

Medugu Kirngu clan, whose authority extends over the modern day town of Gulak; and a well-respected member of the Medugu Kirngu clan and the Margi ethnic group in general, Bello I. Pur, a former cultural officer who started and developed Adamawa State Arts Council, a public department charged with the planning and implementation of all the cultural activities for the state. Pur headed the department for 24 years and finally retired as permanent secretary in the Adamawa state public service after 32 years. In his former position, as the director of the state cultural office, he was the custodian of the state cultural history and affairs; in fact, his department documented and wrote brief histories of all the ethnic groups in the state. Beyond these two, my companions included a traditional custodian of the Medugu Kirngu clan history, Denis Lagu, a pastor of a Christian church; and a leader of the Islamic faith. All are members of the Medugu Kirngu clan. The rest of the group was comprised of retired military, and police officers, civil servants, several university students, and lay people. After a tiresome mountain climb for two hours, we reached the mountain top where the Medugu Kirngu clan was staying until 1956. There we found remnants of a culture that once thrived on the top of the mountain range. Figure 14 shows the *ptil* (Chief) with some of the member of the research team sitting at the spot, a flat granite rock, which is halfway between the base and the top of the mountain, where the *ptils* that preceded him sat and rested on their way down to the plain or on their way back to the village on top of the mountain

Figure 14: The Ptil (Chief of Gulak) with some of the Research Team and (Informants)



Source: Photo by the author (December, 2011)

All of these people I mentioned agreed with the clan's oral history custodian who was part of this research trip that their ancestor, a man called Kumavudu, was one of the sons of the chief of Sukur (Sukur is another ethnic group which Henrich Barth referred to as Sugu people). The Sukur Chief is referred to as "*la*" in the Sukur language (Barth, 1857: 114; Vaughn, 1964; Kirk-Greene, 1962). Kumavudu was driven from the Sukur chiefdom by his father, who was the chief in collaboration with the Chief's advisers, because Kumavudu had only one testicle, a deformity that was regarded as a curse, and, therefore, he was not supposed to stay among the people or in the chiefdom for that matter. When Kumavudu left Sukur, he wandered within the mountainous enclaves alone and finally settled in a cave close to the Ghuwa and Kwazhi clan's village, two clans living together. Ghuwa and Kwazhi clans are another two of the Margi clans that fled into the mountains. Kumavudu hunted mountain animals for food and on several occasions he brought some meat and gave it to the children of the Ghuwa and Kwazhi clans after all the adults had gone to the farm. Some of the parents of the Ghuwa and Kwazhi clan had asked their child who has given them the meat, the children told the parents that they did not know his name but that he was a male and they did not know where he came from. Then one day a dog brought the

meat of a small animal from which the hairs had been burned and the meat prepared. They knew the dog could not have done that, it had to have been done by a human. So they kept an eye on the dog in case the dog decided to go for another trip. Someone followed the dog one day, until the dog and the man reached the cave where Kumavudu was staying.

As a gesture to Kumavudu's kindness in bringing meat to the Ghuwa and Kwazhi clans' children on several occasions, the Ghuwa and Kwazhi clans' leaders invited Kumavudu to live in their neighborhood. In addition, the clan elders gave him one of their daughters whom they believed to be barren because she had been married for long time without giving birth and her husband had divorced her for that reason. To the surprise of the Ghuwa and Kwazhi clans, Kumavudu's new wife started to have children. The children of this union are the ancestors of the Medugu Kirrngu clan. So this clan comes from the Margi maternally, and Sukur paternally.

Figure 15: Shows the Abandoned and Rundown Stacked Stone Fences of the old Medugu Kirrngu Homes in the Mountains



Source: Photo by the Author

Figure 16: This Photo Shows Remnants of Circular Rooms on the Left inside the External Fence



Source: Photo by the Author

These photos shows the remnants of how the Medugu Kirngu clan lived for hundreds of years; it is fair to say that slave raiders would have thought twice before venturing up there. From what I saw, this group chose a strategic location which will allow them to see whoever was coming toward the village before the person could see them, and they had poisoned arrows, spears and other weapons waiting. Within this mountainous region, they managed to find farming areas, water sources and plenty of mountain animals to hunt, in addition to the animals they kept. According to the informants' narratives, it took the colonial officers quite some time to convince the chief and his advisors to agree to leave the mountain top and relocate down to the foothills in 1956.

Figure 17: A Remnant of the Chief’s Horse Stall, just by the entrance to the Chief’s Compound



Source: Photo by the Author

As part of the built environment of the Mountain Margi ethnic groups, their burial ground is a significant part of how they have changed and shaped the enclave of the Mandara Mountains for generations. This aspect of the Margi ethnic group that was residing in the mountains also changed after they relocated to the plains. The Christian and Islamic faiths have changed the way burial is taking place on the plains. I give the details of the new ways of burial in my research findings.

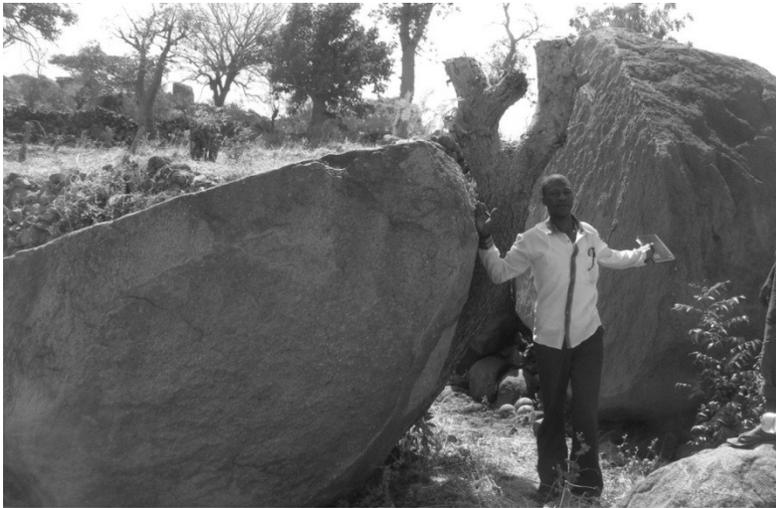
Figure 18: The Burial Site of the Medugu Kirngu Clan; the Circular Pile of Stones is all about 4 feet above the ground



Source: Photo by the Author

The last aesthetics of the Mountain Margi culture that I will mention as part of how the Medugu Kirngu clan lived in the Mountains is the circular boulder that was split in half. The flat part of one half of the boulder is facing up; that is where the *ptil* rested, to receive guests such as the colonial officers, the American missionaries and others who wished to visit the chief. Tradition has it that the boulder was initially unsliced. A special herb was used by the village shaman to draw a line around the boulder dividing it into half in the evening. The following morning, the boulder was found split into two. This story is identical to one in the Sukur chieftdom as well.

Figure 19: A Circular Boulder Spliced into Two. The one on the left, facing up is used as a throne by the Chief.



Source: Photo by the Author

#### **4.1.2: The Birdling Clan**

The location of where the Birdling Clan lived in the mountainous enclave is about 6 miles from where the Medugu Kirngu Clan lived. The Birdling Clan believes they came from Mchakili (another name for the Mchakili is Gudur) currently placed under the present day Cameroon (Kirk-Greene, 1960: 433; Kirk-Greene 1967). In order to write this section, I conducted intensive interviews with 5 elder members of the Birdling clan before the trip to the old village where they lived in the mountains. This is in addition to the occasional conversations I have been having with my grandfather from when I was in the elementary school until his death when I was about 23 years old. The conversations with my grandfather continued, in content terms, with my own father for a long time after that. Furthermore, although I was residing in the United States, I had hours of conversation with my father and his peers on the telephone over a period of 6-8 months regarding the history and other activities of the Birdling Clan, while I was writing my MA thesis in 2008. He was still living during my field trip to Nigeria for this dissertation research. I had further conversations with him and a few of his friends who are members of the Birdling Clan. I interviewed my old headmaster, Bulama Wajilda, the first native headmaster of the American Church of Brethren Primary School in Gulak, and later headmaster of the largest Church of the Brethren primary school in the divisional headquarters located in Mubi. Bulama also became the administrative officer for the first Church of the Brethren Mission hospital in Lassa and finally the first member of the Gongola State House of Assembly, representing a huge portion of the Margi ethnic group. Another person I interviewed is Abasiryu Wajilda, the first native son among all the Margi ethnic groups that were residing in the Mandara Mountains to receive a history degree within a Western education. He taught in the American Church of the Brethren Mission post-primary school for long time, then as the principal of the largest teachers college in

Mubi, the divisional headquarters for the entire south Margi ethnic group. In addition, this first native historian went on to be the Director of Education at the state level and finally the state director for the National Youth Service for the Nigerian Government. Furthermore, I also interviewed another retired teacher, Jilantikiri Sinamai, former member of Adamawa State House of Assembly who also attended to the church of the Brethren Schools and has live all his life in the Margi land. All of the mentioned interviewees are members of the Birdling Clan.

It is a general consensus among the Birdling clan that they came from Mchakili, and settled at Wanu, a portion of the mountainous enclave where the Margi Wanu clans have lived for generations, and thus the location is named after Margi Wanu clan. When they were living at Wanu; the Margi Wanu clan felt threatened by the sheer number of the Birdling clan, in the event of a war breaking between the two groups. For this reason, according to them, someone they believed to be one of the Wanu clan poisoned the water sources in form of a spring or a well from which the Birdling clan fetch their drinking water. As a result, almost half the children of the Birdling clan lost their lives. This was the reason the rest of the Birdling clan left Wanu and moved to their last location in the mountainous enclave, a neighborhood called Makwan. It was from this location they moved out of the mountains in 1934 and settled about two miles away from the mountains. The common phrase they use for this migration is “*Latu dumir adzia a du ngu*” meaning when “when we’ came down from the Mountain.”

When I organized the trip to the Birdling clan old village in the mountains, which is called Makwan, a group of 14 people accompanied me. One of them was a former Vice Chairman of the Madagali Local Government, where both of these mountain clans are currently residing. He is a member of this clan. Also included were some civil servants, a local pastor, and some university students. The most informed informant that accompanied me for this trip was Glanda

Udurwa, who is the direct descendant of the chief of the blacksmith for the Birdling clan. As the chief of the blacksmith, he is the traditional funeral director for the Birdling clan. He knows the old village very well, and he still resides very close to it. Within all the rundown remnants of the piles of stones, he knows whose compound was where. His ancestors passed down this information to him. He showed me where my 4th great grandfathers' home was located, as he was told by his ancestors. Figure 20 shows the team that accompanied me to the old Village of the Birdling Clan in the Mandara Mountains; 6th from left standing (in a white robe) is the current chief of the black Smith for the Birdling Clan.

Figure 20: The Photo of the Research Team (and Informants) to the Birdling Clan Old Village in the Mountains



Sources: Photo by the Author

Figure 21: The Photo of rundown piles of stones that was once a compound fence at the Birdling Clan Old Village in the Mountain



Source: Photo by the author

Figure 22: A Circular Animal Pen at Makwan, the Birdling Clan's Former Village



Source: Photo by the Author

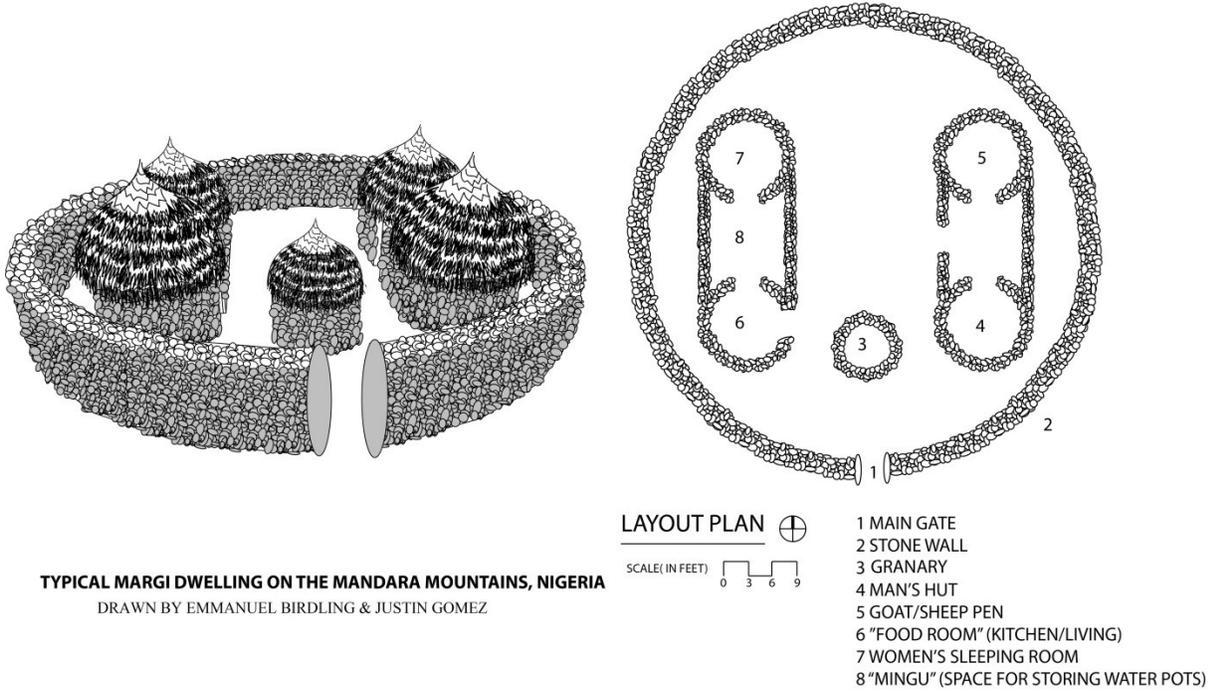
Figure 23: An Entry Gate comprised of Two Large Granites split stones left and right, into my 4th Great Grandfather's Compound at (Makwan); the old Village of the Birdling Clan



Source: Photo by the Author

Surprisingly, most of the entry gates of the old stacked stone fences are all facing to the south; a similar orientation was repeated at the new settlement on the ground. This is how I remember it during my childhood when growing up in the new settlement “on the ground.” After a series of consultations and inquiries about why the entry gate for the most part faces the south, the answer is that it is because the wind blows from the north to south. If the gate faces north it will bring in the dust and diseases that come with the wind into the house. With time, the orientation started to change, especially when there was a main dirt road passing through, the residents of the new settlement started to orient the main gate of the compound to face the dirt road, and homes were lined up on both sides of the dirt roads.

Figure 24: A typical Margi Dwelling while in the Mountain



#### **4.1.3: The Margi Residing on the Plains**

There are several Margi ethnic group clans that left and settled on the plains after their dispersion from Lake Chad. In the previous section, I chose two Margi ethnic group clans that were living in the mountains and analyzed their architecture while they were still in the mountains. But for the Margi ethnic groups of the plains, I chose two towns instead of clans. This is because there are no clear separations between the clans because of how the towns have grown over the years. This makes the clans' neighborhoods as units of the towns. In fact in some cases they are all related, and at times they are sons and daughters of distant relatives or brothers who settled very close to each other on the plains for security. This can also be said of those that were in the mountains; they maintained their clan identity by staying together, and also for security. I chose two towns of the Margi from the region that came under the influence of the American Church of the Brethren mission. The reason is that the Catholic Church did not start a station in this part of the Margi ethnic group's domain. Furthermore, the Islamic influence is a recent phenomenon among the Margi ethnic group. There is no Margi neighborhood that is primarily a Muslims neighborhood, with the exception of that of the Medugu Kirngu clan, who converted to Islam as a group in 1964. Using these two towns from the Margi ethnic group of the plains, I trace how their architecture evolved prior to their contact with the missionaries and the colonial officers. I show how their architecture differs from those that went into the mountains simply because of the type of material available within the proximities of the two locations, which each group used to construct their domestic sphere. The two locations are Lassa and Tampul towns. During the field research for this dissertation, I went to both locations that are six miles apart.

#### **4.1.4: Lassa Town**

During my visit to Lassa, I had an extensive interview with one of the first native teachers for the American Church of the Brethren primary school in Lassa, Thawur Njabdi. Note that Lassa is the first Margi domain where the American Church of the Brethren built a station for the purpose of preaching the Christian gospel. Thawur Njabdi is 83 years old with a very sharp memory. He wrote the first book in Margi, *Ndir Mji Tsintsil*- meaning the sayings of the wise. During the interview, he described his childhood home, his days at the missionary primary school as a pupil, and then as teacher, the missionary living space that they built for themselves, his own first compound, and his present compound.

I believe the first thing that will come to the mind of any person who has the opportunity to listen and analyze Thawur Njabdi's story is a picture of the chronological evolution of a built environment that can be representative of any culture anywhere in the world. But it is certainly representative of most cultures across Africa that was influenced by foreign missionaries. In fact he repeated how the missionary neighborhood developed in Gulak. Gulak is the next main town that changed because of the activities of the same American Church of the Brethren mission when they planted a new station there in 1948. The description of the setup of Njabdi's boyhood home is similar to the setup by the mountain Margi after they left the mountain and relocated to the mountain slope/the plain.

He also described how the native teachers, including him, started to build the shotgun-like structure, but using grass for the roofing in the beginning, later switching to corrugated iron sheets. A shotgun (at least the Margi style) is a rectangular structure that consists of one, two, or more rooms that may have one entry door or individual entry doors. The town of Lassa, Njabdi's home town, is the first Margi domain to come under the influence of the American Brethren

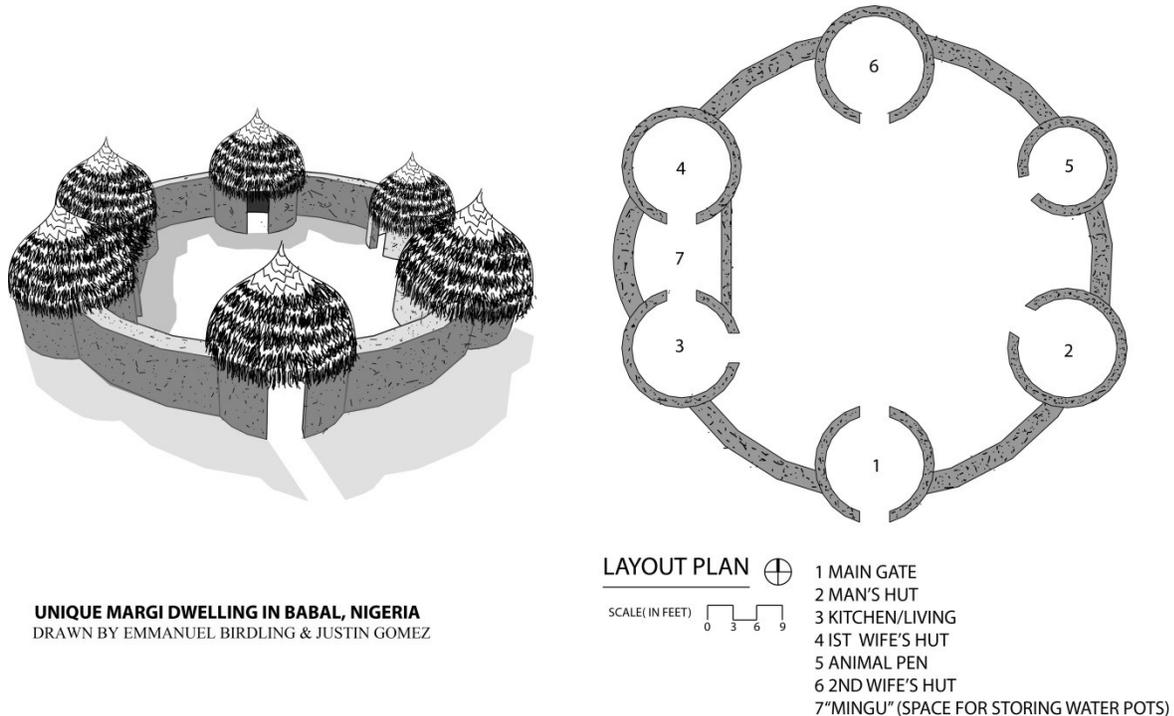
Church activities, and so people from Lassa are the first Margi to receive western education; the first person of the Margi ethnic group ancestry to attend the Church of the Brethren affiliated Universities in the United States (McPherson College in McPherson Kansas) came from Lassa. It took 21 more years before a similar mission was planted in the next largest Margi town, Gulak. I show in my research finding that the impact of the missionaries on Margi intellectual development went hand in hand with the evolution of the Margi built environment. The beginning of the changes the teachers started, as Njabdi's story indicates, was a direct influence of the missionaries. The teachers were in essence imitating the missionary residence, school building and the church building which were all built in rectangular or semi-square shapes.

#### **4.1.5: Tampul Town**

I drove through Tampul on my way to Lassa town. I made observations but did not interview anyone, because I felt I already had sufficient sources in the United States and Tampul is a secondary example or model for my findings in comparison to Lassa. A major source is Philip Musa, who is from Tampul, and whom I have known since 1993. He is a registered electrical engineer, who worked for Texas Instruments as a designer for 6 years before going back to school; he is now a professor of information management system at the University of Alabama in the United States. Musa was born and raised in Tampul; he recalls vividly how Tampul was like over 45 years ago. Within this time frame, he remembers who moved into his neighborhood and who moved out, how the buildings changed with time, and who built what. Based on my conversation with Musa, he recalled during his childhood in the mid-1960s when the whole village, now a town, was using the traditional round huts fenced with thatch mats. The next phase of change, according to him, began in the 1970s when the thatch mat fence was replaced with a mud fence; but in the case of Musa's village, the mud fence is attached to the circular mud

huts from center to center leaving the other semi-circular half of each mud hut to serve as the external fence.

Figure 25: A Sketch Based on Philip Musas’ description of his Childhood Home



The information obtained from Musa, about how the first mud fence is constructed is a new phenomenon to me, as a descendant of the Margi who were living in the mountainous enclave. This is a variation that did not appear among any other Margi ethnic group that were in the mountains and then moved out to the slopes and plain. This seems to have been limited to this environs and the Margi ethnic group in this general area, the Margi of the plains. In other Margi areas, either among those that have been on the plains from the beginning or those who were in the mountains but moved out to the plain, the next step after the thatch fence was a rectangular mud fence which did not attach to any room, but surrounded all the rooms in the compound.

When I interviewed another Margi man, Emmanuel Mdurvua who is from the general area where Musa is from, he confirmed what Musa said, that he has also witnessed the same changes in his own village of Burda: a mud fence attached to round huts center to center, leaving the other semi-circular half of each mud hut to serve as an external fence. Burda village is part of another Margi town called Mussa, a town that has been in the plains for over 350 years. (Note that Musa's name with one -s is similar to the town of Mussa with two- s, but this should not be confused as one word.) My second informant, Mdurvua, was on my MA committee. He was born and raised as a Margi from Burda neighborhood of Mussa town. He has a PhD in Veterinary Medicine, and was a research professor for over 15 years, and now a senior scientist at the United States Department of Agriculture. Both of these informants went to the schools that the Church of the Brethren Mission started in Margi land, but in their individual towns, just as I went to the same mission school in my town of Gulak.

#### **4.2: Margi Domestic Architecture in New Hamlets on the Plains, Prior to and For About 10 Years after the Coming of the Missionaries**

“Since the coming of the missionaries, people came and built homes closer and closer to them because of the school, the dispensary, the church, the orchard, and the desire to be with each other until the mission neighborhood developed” (Njabdi 2011). What I mean by new hamlets on the plain, I am referring to those that never went to the mountain because of Idris Alauma and those that just moved out of the mountain from hiding because of the presence of the colonial power and the missionaries. Margi domestic architecture started to change with the coming of the missionaries, but it took another 6 to 10 years after their arrival. This is because it took a while for the pupils that started the mission schools to complete at least standard four (the equivalent of fourth grade of today). In addition, the children recruited to attend the missionary

school were older than today's traditional school age. It took fellows like Njabdi almost 10 years to reach grade three, before coming back to the mission school as a teacher. Furthermore, it took the new teachers, or those who joined the police force, became soldiers or did office work for the new Nigerian nation-state another year or so before they could have enough money to start building their own homes. One thing is for sure, though: they started to build structures similar to the buildings the missionaries introduced or to what they saw in other places where they worked.

#### **4.2.1: The Construction Process of the Margi Ethnic Group Compound on the Plains**

To understand the construction process of the Margi ethnic group new compound, it will help to understand the Margi relocation process. Apart from the coerced relocation as in the case of the chief of the Medugu Kirngu clan and his chiefdom, the Margi relocations were done in groups, as happened during the mass dispersion from around Lake Chad due to Idris Alauma's expedition. For example, when my ancestors moved out of the mountains, they came out in groups of three or four brothers. This account is narrated by my father and other elders I talked to. This account is similar as told by most Margi clans. The family patriarch initiated the idea to the men of the clan based on certain things that had happened to the group at the present location, or a foreseen opportunity in the next proposed location. This was followed by consultations among the men during which the selection of direction and the spot to move to was agreed upon. Some of the reasons that influenced the decision to pick the time for moving, going to a particular direction, and choosing particular spots were: rainy season for the year was over; the farm work was about to come to an end, the crops (Guinea Corn) were maturing, generally a month or so to the harvest time; the availability of water in the new location or a sign of low water table so that a well could be dug; a sign of fertile farm land near or within walking distance; the availability of other ethnic members in the general area; and how far the location is

from fellow ethnic members or relatives. Generally the preferred spot for the compound is the presence of sandy soil for easy discharge of rain water or drainage because, if mud huts' foundations remained water-logged, they could easily collapse. Therefore an area without proper drainage are avoided. All the arrangement was kept secret within the group. As I recall from two relocations my father did during my childhood, the moving occurs very early in the morning before sunrise, generally in early November; because that is when all farm work has been done except the crop harvest. This time of year is the coldest (lows of about 40 degrees Fahrenheit) in the region occupied by the Margi ethnic group.

The relocation after the rain stops was preferable for the following reasons: mud hut can only be built during the dry season; there are no attempts to do so during the rainy season, because the tropical storms are so intense and can easily accumulate inside circular structure and can compromises the strength of the foundation especially when the mud is still wet. Another reason is that the temporary shelter made of thatch mats at the new site in which the family would stay before the mud huts were built could not adequately stop the occupants and their belongings from getting wet during the rainy season. And finally, perhaps the most important reason was the help from men and women of the new location, since their farm work was complete, with the exception of the harvest.

#### **4.2.2: Construction Materials**

Just like other cultures across Africa, the Margi ethnic group of the northeastern Nigeria used the available materials in their immediate vicinity to construct their architecture. As I indicated in the previous section, the part of the Margi ethnic group that was living in the mountains used pieces of stones as the main portion of the building material for both the round hut and the surrounding fence. After moving out of the mountains, the main portion of the material became

mud for round huts and mats woven with tall grass for the fences. The mats used for the fences were about 8 foot high x 15 foot to 25 foot in length. The mud used for the huts were dug out of a pit on a specific location at a reasonable distance from the building site, because it was carried to the building site by human labor. This particular type of tall grasses are called *tsaba*, *misham-disu*, and *ghatsila* in the Margi language; the first two of these type of grasses are generally called ‘*misham*’ when used for roofing; and the name changes to ‘*ubsar*’ when the intent is to be used for making the fencing mat, called ‘*thafu*’. The reason for the name change is because of the usage and the purpose intended. The structural frame that supports the *misham* for the roofing is also woven out the third type of the grasses mentioned above, the bigger and stronger type called ‘*ghatsila*’. Please note that even though many of the processes that I am describing in the rest of this chapter are in the past, I use the present tense from here on out, in the interests both of readability and of instilling the idea that the “traditions” of the Margi can be, despite the changes I show as still occurring, contemporary and “modern.”

#### **4.2.3: Preparation of Materials on the Plains**

The mud is dug out of a pit on a specific location at a reasonable distance to the intended building site. The women help by bring water from the local well or a stream to mix the soil, while the hard job of digging the mud out of the pit and mixing it with water is left for the men. If the soil is too clayish some sandy soil will be added during this time of mixing with water; also two to three inches of chopped grass or straw is added until the right mix is obtained, just as described in Exodus, 5: 10 when the Jews were making brick in Egypt. This process which is locally known as ‘*Tubu i’i*’, is the first step in the mud preparation; this is repeated over and over as needed throughout the building process. The mixed mud has to remain in place for at least three days after the first mix or more prior to the final mixing before it is used for the building.

The final mixing before it is handed to the builder in a ball shaped form is done in batches. The builder can be any of the clan elders, because most of them have been building their own mud huts for long time. The last mixing prior to the building must be malleable enough or it is continuously tramped on with bare feet until the correct and proper mix is obtained including additional pieces of straw if needed before it is used for the building.

#### **4.2.4: The Tools**

The type of implements used to harvest grass and dig out the mud, prior to and shortly after the arrival of the missionaries, have been in use in Margi culture for hundreds of years. Prior to the arrival of the missionaries, Margi implements for harvesting grass were sickles, just as a hoe was used for farming. When venturing to distant place to harvest the grass, a man would carry his bow and arrow, spear and, occasionally, a shield (if deemed necessary to defend in case of attack by enemies). In addition to the farming, the hoe would be used to dig out the earth, to mix it with water, and other preparations necessary prior to the building of the hut, including setting out for the hut foundation. There are two types of hoes: the light one used by women for farming (*mintsu*), then the bigger one (*kwaji*) used both for farming by men and for construction work.

Figure 26: A Photo showing Men's Farming Hoe; also used to dig out Earth for Construction



Source: Photo by Peter Awidau on request

Figure 27: A Typical Sickle used to harvest all type of Grass used in Construction



Sources: Photo by the Author

A few years after the coming of the missionaries, followed by the formation of Nigeria nation state, a shovel and a digger were introduced. In the early 1960s, as I recall, only a few people could afford it. Some people had to borrow it or rent it for their own use.

Figure 28: The Digger that was introduced shortly after the coming of the missionaries



Source: Photo by the Author

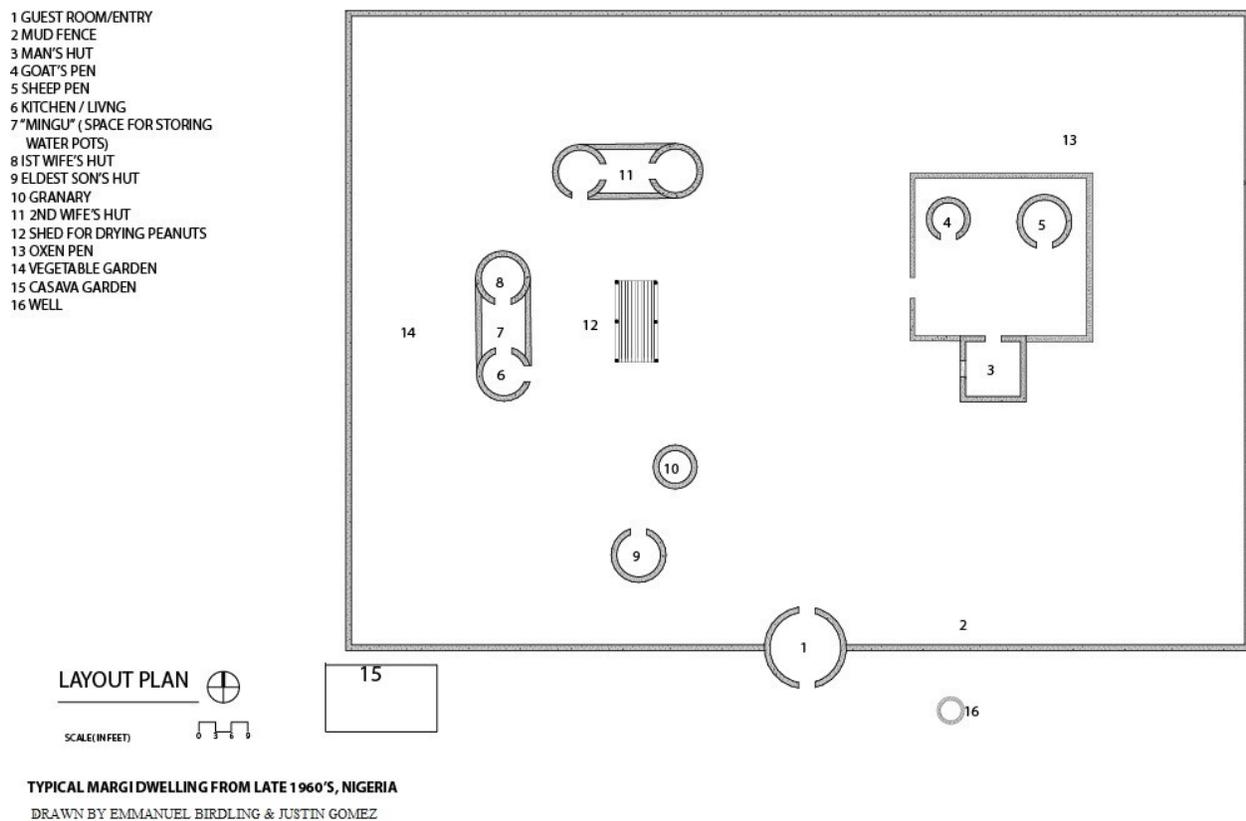
#### **4.2.5: Positioning of Mud Huts Based on Sex, Statues, and Usage**

As far as I can remember the entrance into Margi compound has always faced the South. At least the village I lived in now a town of Gulak, when entering the compound, the man's hut will be on the right with the door facing west; on the left will be the first wife's two huts with entrance facing to the east. The entrance into the women's huts is usually through the kitchen/living hut, which is built about 8 foot to 10 foot next to the sleeping room hut. The second wife's hut is situated north east of the first wife's hut; and if there is the third wife, her hut will be situated north east of the second wife's hut. In other words, the newer the wife, the closer her hut is to the husband's hut.

The only structure between the newest wife's hut and that of the husband is the sheep and goats' pens, and oxen if available. Animals are kept close to the man's hut because of hyenas or thieves that might attempt to steal any of the animals in the night. The man is the protector of the compound. The girls, regardless of their age, stay in their mother's huts until they move to their

husbands' home. As for the male children, from age 12 to the time they move out, a hut is built for them in the family compound generally located southeast of the first wife's hut, who in most cases is their mother. The family guinea corn granary is situated in the mid-way between the first wife's kitchen door and the boy's door, but not directly in the center of the courtyard of the compound. For the most part, the location of the family granary is intended to shield the boy's door from the main empty space of the compound. The general layout makes the view something close to a semicircular arrangement, as all doors face the court yard in the middle of the compound.

Figure 29: A Sketch of the General Layout of the Margi Compound in late 1960s (Awidau's Compound)



#### **4.2.6: Setting Out of the Huts**

The setting out of the huts is done after enough mud has been dug and mixed, covered with grass and has spent at least three days ‘setting’. The reasoning for letting it remain for three days is for it to ‘*mthu*’...which means setting, and the organic substances that found their way into the mud are fermented in order not to create bubble in the wall. The size of foundation depends on the intent. If the intent is to bring the thatch roof from the previous compound, then the measurement is based on the mud hut size in the previous compound; and if the intent is to prepare a new roof then the owner can set it out, sizing it based on his needs. Two people are required to perform the setting out. A rope woven with grass called ‘*dankwadu*’ is looped around the hoe and one person holds one end of the rope at the desired center of the hut, while the second person will make two to four inch mark on the ground by stretching the rope with the hoe and pushing the hoe to the ground at the same time, then moving backwards. The rope controls the distance of the hoe from the center, making a circular line while going round and round. This movement continues until the desired depth of 2 –3” is obtained. The width of the blade of the hoe is about 6”.

#### **4.2.7: The Foundation**

The circular foundation mark made on the ground by the hoe is the guiding center line for the mud hut builder when placing the first layer of the mud in place. The helper will scoop a portion of the previously mixed mud and add water and pieces of grass cut in batches of 2 to 3 inches in length to the mud and tramp on it with bare feet as needed to attain a thorough mixture and make it malleable enough for the builder; this will facilitate easy placement to form the foundation.

Figure 30: Men Building a Mud Hut



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland, photo taken 1968 to 1977

The foundation thickness is based on the intended height of the mud hut. Typically, the height ranges from between 7 foot to 8 foot for the women's and 8 foot to 9 foot for men's. The thickness of the foundation ranges from 16 inch to 24 inch for all. Before forming the foundation, the loose top soil on both sides of the circular line is cleared with a hoe before the foundation mud is placed using the circular line previously drawn as the center guide. The first layer ranges from 8 inch to 12 inch in height and it will be left to dry out before the second layer is placed. The actual building continues within the next several days until it is completed.

Always without exception, the women's sleeping hut is built first so that the women and the children can be safe. The second hut to be built is the hut used for both kitchen and living space for the woman and her children; which is built about 8 foot to 10 foot next to, and parallel to, the woman's sleeping room.

Prior to the 1970s, there were seldom any windows, especially on women's huts, with the only door leading from the cooking hut /living room through the walls of the shed between the

living/cooking and the bedroom hut, leading directly to the bedroom hut door. The men's hut may have one window facing the sunset, the west, directly into the court yard. When I asked some of my informants why the Margi ethnic group huts did not have windows, and especially the woman's hut, the answer given was "because of snakes." Snakes can come in through the windows during the day time and hide somewhere in the room and bite occupants as they are sleeping.

#### **4.2.8: The Thatch Roof Structural Frame**

The roof structural frame for any of the huts are woven, folded and covered with thatch *misham* on the ground before it is raised by a group of men and placed on top of the mud hut. It takes a week or two to finish the process of constructing the thatch roof structural frame out of the strongest type of tall grass available. It is important for the *hatsila* (the special tall and the strongest grasses in the Margi plain) to dry out first after it is harvested and then soaked in water before it is used. It starts with laying the dry bundle of *hatsila* in a pond or the bundle covered with grass and frequently sprinkled with water. The head of the household or the man announces the weaving of the roof structural frame to potential helpers in the neighborhood earlier, about a week before the time. Note that most works done on building is done during the dry season from January to the middle or end of April. That is why it is easier to solicit help from neighbors and obtain it in a short period of time since there is no farm work during the dry season. Above all Margi architecture is not doable in the rainy season because the mud can easily be destroyed by the rain. The women or the woman of the house prepares the local brew for the structural frame weaving occasion. In the early morning the men will gather and start the process. The weaving is started by the eldest and most experienced men while the younger and less experienced ones

watch and help in any way they can. First the weaving is in the same manner as that of the thatch mat but the ends are left loose.

After it reached the desired height the mat is raised and folded in a hat shape and the two loose ends are woven together, forming a circular shape. Usually the weaving and the reinforcement can be accomplished in two days, depending on the number of participants. The reinforcement is done with a special type of elongated shrub called *kugil*. This type of shrub is only found in the mountains.

The *kugil*, which will be used for reinforcing the roof frame, is harvested and dried out in the same process as the grass that is used for the frame. A bundle of the *kugil* is soaked in water a week prior to use. The method of installation is accomplished by three people. Two people go under the circular roof and one stays outside. The reinforcement material is installed from inside, beginning from the bottom, using an 18 inch needle-like piece of equipment made of iron with a grass rope attached to it. A small bunch of the *kugil* is rolled up about 1 ½ inch in diameter, then attached to the roof one roll at a time, then tightened-up with a rope called *vivi* made out of a special grass called *ihidagu*.

Figure 31: Internal Reinforcement of the Roof Structural Frame



Source: Peter Awidau, on request

This process is continued in a circle around the internal part of the structural roof with the new one installed on top of the previous bunch until it reaches the height of 8 inch to 10 inch, which is approximately 4 to 5 layers of the rolled *kugil* tied to the roof frame. The same process is repeated every twelve to eighteen inches. The construction of the frame for any round hut in the compound is the same, with the exception of the animal pen, for which the roof's frame may be made out of wood or corn stalks. The art of roof making is a point of pride for a Margi man; one is laughed at when he constructs any roof frame out of wood or corn stalk for sleeping rooms, because it is considered a sign of laziness.

The next step is to cover the structural frame with grass called *misham*. In the same manner with the stronger grass that is used for the roof frame, *misham* is harvested, dried out and used. All grass harvesting is done from the middle of November to early February and the bundles are left to dry out before they are woven with the special grass mentioned earlier called *ihidagu*. The weaving of *misham* is done by obtaining a small bunch about ½ inch in diameter at a time, then the *ihidagu* is looped around it on both sides about 12 inch from the bottom. A typical woven bundle could be about 30 foot when stretched out. After it is woven, it is rolled and stored until the time for use. The installation of the *misham* on the roof frame is achieved by rolling the bundle of woven *misham* grass around the roof structural frame until a depth of about 6 inch is obtained, or enough depth to make it water tight.

Figure 32: Roofing; the Roof Structural Frame being covered with Misham



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland, photo taken 1968 to 1977

The installation continues upwards towards the top. For every round, the bottom part of the next round is moved up about 1 inch above the last round until it reaches the top of the roof frame. At the top, the *misham* top ends are bent over the opposite sides and sewn down by the needle- like iron *mbuti* with the grass rope, creating a conical shape.

The last cover is called *wata*. From a distance, it looks like a cap on the roof. It is woven in the same manner like the roof itself but using a smaller and a finer grass. It is installed and tightened in place with the same type of grass rope, *vivi* used for installing the *kukil* to the roof structural frame.

Figure 33: The Roof Cap-Like Top Cover (*Wata*) being woven



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland, 1968 to 1977

A needle like slim iron which is about 24” long is used to sew the *wata* on top of the roof. Cow dung is used to seal the hole the iron needle might have generated during the process. After all the process is complete, the home owner tells several men in the evening before the roof is placed on top of the mud. The raising of the roof, as the Margi call it, “*hu umbwa*” is done mostly in the early mornings. The men are situated around the roof at two to three feet distance, center to center. After a signal is given by an elder person who may or may not be part of the raising effort, the roof is lifted and placed on top of the hut. An adjustment is made until they feel it is perfectly placed.

Figure 34: Finished Roof Being Raised, to be placed on Top of the Mud Hut



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland, 1968 to 1977

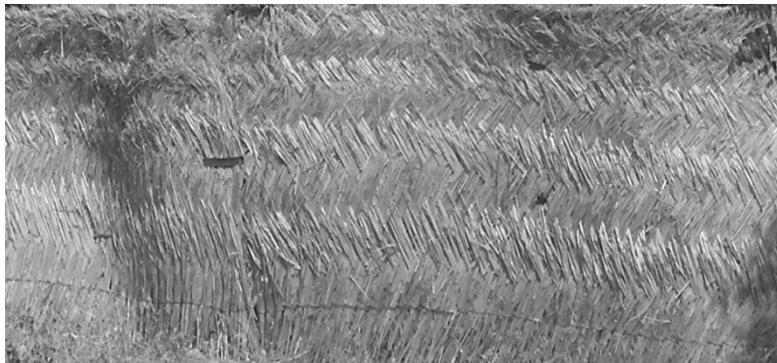
#### **4.2.9: Construction of the External Fence**

The construction of the external fence is entirely the men's job. It starts with the harvesting of the tall grass called '*tsaba*,' which is amply available in the savanna grassland of northeastern Nigeria. The men either weave the mat while the grasses are still fresh or leave it to dry out. Either way several thatch mats ranging in sizes from 8 foot x 15 to 25 foot are woven, but the actual quantity depends on the size of the compound, which in turn depends on how many wives and children the man has. The next step is to harvest enough (3 inches to 4 inches in diameter x 9 ½ foot to 11 foot long) poles from the backwoods. In most cases the men prefer the type of species of trees that can grow roots and leaves, so that the termites cannot destroy it and no replacement is needed in future.

After sufficient grass mats and poles are obtained, the process starts with marking out the line for the fence, and along the line, the points for holes. The holes are dug along the line 2 ½ to 3 foot center to center x 2 foot deep, with enough circumferences to accommodate the individual poles. In my experience the male children help their father dig the holes required for the poles when constructing the fence around the buildings. After the poles are placed into the

hole, then the earth previously dug out of the hole is used to refill the remaining space around the poles, the hoe is removed from the pole which was used to dig the hole, and the sharpened edge of the pole is used to tamp down the loose soil around the pole to compact the soil in order to make the pole to which the fence mat is fastened stable. When this process is completed, it gives the appearance of stretches of standing grass mat externally from a distance because all the poles that the mats are fastened to can only be seen from the inside of the compound. The next step required to complete the external fence is to harvest enough branches from shrubs with thorns on them from the surrounding savanna. The commonly used thorn shrub is called '*wuya*.' The thorn shrub is neatly arranged and fastened around the mats from the external sides of the fence mat for the sole purpose of stopping goats or sheep from using the fence to scratch their body and subsequently penetrating the fence for an easy way in and out of the compound.

Figure 35: A Portion of Installed Thatch Mat Fence

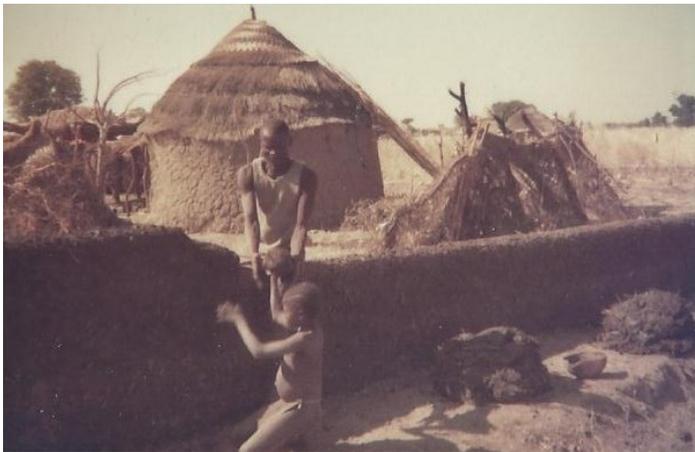


Source: Photo by the Author

In the early 1960s, it occurred to the Margi that the best way to stop hyena from stealing their goats, sheep and even the barking dog is to replace the easily penetrable thatch mat fence with a mud wall. This subsequently became a style, and in a short period it became a sign of wealth and added additional security to the compound. In fact, with the introduction of mud walls as a fence, families started to spend the night in the open court-yards during the hot season. The usual fear

of mad dogs biting and infecting humans, which are very rampant in the Margi cultural landscape, started to disappear.

Figure 36: The Beginning of the Change; a Man and Son Building Mud Wall Fence



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland 1968 to 1977

Just like this little boy is doing, I have helped my father build the first mud wall around my family compound. The practice helped my father become the chief mud hut builder of Gulak. There were other men as well who were making extra income building mud walls for other people.

#### **4.3: The Role of the Women in the Construction of a Margi Compound.**

A familiar model or stereotype of the African people is one of living on savanna plains, trailing herds. In this model, it is thus implied that for the major part of their existence, they are highly mobile, living in small bands, led by dominant males, the females submissive to male demands. *This stereotype does not apply to the Margi.* The Margi are not male-dominated bands, but families cared for and trained by the females; the family is the basis of *Margi society*. The men might roam to ‘*dandi*’ Nigerian towns and cities to look for temporary work during dry seasons when they are not working on their farms; but the women seek a place at which to stay,

a home where the offspring could be left in safety, a place convenient to the daily provision of water and food, where supplies and possessions could be stored (Sauer, 1981: 133).

Figure 37: Margi Women in 1960/61



Source: British Library at LDO-Electronic@bl.uk. Photo by Malcolm Cooper, the Plebiscite Supervisor for Madagali/Chibunawa Districts: The Northern Cameroons Plebiscite 1960/61

The roles of women in the evolution of the Margi built environment are central to all aspects of it. In fact, in the absence of women's role, the Margi domestic sphere is 3/4 incomplete. Prior to completing the proposal for this dissertation, in my mind, I always incorporated the role women played during construction of the Margi sphere into the total whole. I never concretely separated women's role from the total effort. One day one of my female advisors casually asked "what role do women play in all this?" Since then, it is like a window has been opened, and light was let into a dark room. It did not take me long to recall what my mother and the other women from my village were doing when someone moved to the village or relocated within the village from one site to the other. In this section, I will use the narratives from five Margi women: Aisa Yakubu, Rhoda Amtagu, Ladi Denis, Sidayu Dzugwahi, and Martina Abba Sashi. The information obtained from these women adds to the evidence of my

personal memory from seeing what my mother, her friends and relatives did when my father moved the family two times from one site to the other.

#### **4.3.1: Cooking for the Working Men and Women**

Relocation of a compound is mostly done after all farm work has been completed except harvesting the crops. During the mud hut construction, when men and the women of the village come and help, they are not expected to go back to their various houses to eat lunch and then come back. So the woman or women of the house cook (s) large meals that will feed everyone around. This involves more work than the western cooking where everything is purchased from the grocery store and ready to be put into the pot. In the case of the Margi women they have to grind the corn by hand on a flat stone. This was the way corn flour was prepared in Margi land until mid-1960s when guinea corn grinding machine started to appear in Margi cultural landscape. The vegetables, beans, and other ingredients are sometimes fetched from the farm including the fire wood from the surrounding woodland.

#### **4.3.2: Fetching Water for the Whole Project**

The mud requires a lot of water to mix it, so that it can be malleable for building the huts. The men are responsible for the physical digging of the mud out of the pit from a chosen site within a reasonable distance from the building site. A group of men start digging out the dirt until a substantial amount is dug out enough to build at least one mud hut to start with. Then a day is fixed for the mixing; that is when another group or the same group of men but including some women will show up to help. The responsibility for fetching water used for mixing the mud falls on the women; the work usually starts very early in the morning, and the women use a big calabash (gourd) called '*u'dabra*', going back and forth to the well or a pond to bring the water while the men are doing the mixing with hoes. This continues for hours until the time the woman

of the house will start preparing lunch for the group. This may continue after lunch until dinner time, but it depends on how much was accomplished and how soon the mixed mud is needed.

#### **4.3.3: The Interior Finishing and its Arrangement inside Women's Quarters**

In this section I concentrate on how the women do the finishing inside the sleeping hut and the hut used for kitchen and living room for the mother and the children. This will include the beds, storage cooking space and the general finishing that only women know how to do.

#### **4.3.4: The First Plastering of the Interior Walls with Finer, Smoother and More Watery Mixed Red Earth**

The first thing the woman does is to prepare a more malleable mud with finer, smoother, and more watery mixed earth, preferably without too much sand, and use it to plaster the walls and the floors of both the mud huts. This will smooth out the uneven spots left by the men during the building, and the uneven floor surface created when leveling the coarse earth brought in to raise the floor level. This first plaster by the women is not the final one. This plastering is left to dry for few days before the women begin the installation of the internal finishing.

#### **4.3.5: Building of Timbul (a Flat Wooden Bed)**

Then the next thing is to build her own wooden bed called '*timbil*' (Saad, 1991). The bed consists of three 1 inch x 12 inch x 7 foot flat planks cut out of local woods by the husband or a relative. It is the responsibility of the man to obtain these flat planks, and six Y shaped pieces of wood, each about 4 inch in diameter x 24 inch long; and three 3 inch in diameter x 3½ foot wooden log for the construction of the wooden bed for the woman. Then the teenage boy if one is available or the woman will dig two rows of six holes 2 foot center to center in each row, in a rectangular fashion with two opposite holes parallel and facing each other. The construction of the woman's bed has been traditionally been built on the eastside of

the sleeping mud hut. The Y shaped wood is placed into the holes, and the exposed Y shaped sides is left about 12 inch above the floor. A wet mud will be placed around the Y shaped woods to keep them in place, and then left for two days or more to dry out. After that, then the 4 inch x 3½ foot poles are placed on each pair of the Y shaped wood across from each other. This is followed by the flat planks placed perpendicular to the poles; and this completes the Margi women's wooden bed construction.

The same process is repeated on the west side of the sleeping hut for the children, but because of the labor involved in obtaining the flat planks, an earth bed is constructed for the children instead; in a similar way the earth bed is made in the living / kitchen hut or a base is constructed similar to that of the mother, but a grass mat is made in place of the flat wood planks. This is accomplished by building a rectangular wall about 16 inches above the ground with one side attached to the external wall of the mud hut. The opening is filled with sand and earth leaving about 3 inch below the wall. The top 3 inch left is filled with wet mud, plastered and left to dry. All that is needed is a mat placed on top of the earth bed for the children to sleep on. Usually two to three children share such bed.

#### **4.3.6: Installations of 'Bra' (Guinea Corn Grinding Stones)**

In Margi culture, the corn used for cooking, be it maize or the traditional guinea corn, is ground on a large flat-top, granite stone, using another hand held smaller one flat side to press down the corn. The flat topped granite stone measures about 2 ½ foot in length x 1 ½ foot in width x 1 foot in depth, in a semi-circular or egg shape, is used for generations for grinding corn flour among Margi ethnic group. The man of the house and his friends are responsible for locating, breaking and chipping away the granite in the mountains and bringing home the two fairly flat granite stones for the woman, who will work on the finer shaping of the stones into

grinding stones. This includes 4 to 6 smaller pieces about 6 inch x 6 inch x 2 inch in size. One side of each of these stones will be chiseled flat by the woman and her friends using a piece of a stronger type of granite stone. This takes days or weeks to complete. The corners of the bigger stones will be shaped in a semicircular form, and so are the smaller ones. The grinding stones are installed on the south side of the kitchen hut, because the two doors on the kitchen/ living hut are almost both in the first quadrant of the hut. A semicircular short wall is built about 1 ½ foot above the ground, and after the wall has dried out, the big stones are placed inside the wall side by side with about a 2 inch gap between the two with the flat sides up. In addition, as part of this traditional hand grinding mill, two clay pots are placed inside the wall, each directly east end of each grinding stones close enough for the corn flour to drop into the pots during grinding. Then many pieces of stones are used to brace the grinding stones in place, making sure the flat sides are facing upward and upper surfaces of both the grinding stones are slightly tilted towards the catching pots. This is followed by placing a well-mixed wet earth around the flat stones leaving the flat upper sides about ½ inch above the surface, and it is left to dry out for several days until the final finishing with red earth. The smaller stones are the ones the women hold in their hands when grinding the corn into flour, by pushing forward and backward on top of the bigger ones, with small batch of the corn pushed between the bigger stone and the smaller ones that is being held by hand, during the grinding process (Pur, 2005).

#### **4.3.7: Building of ‘Val’ (a Secondary Granary for the Storage of Guinea Corn in the Women’s Sleeping Rooms)**

The next structure to be constructed is the secondary guinea corn storage granary; I call it secondary because there is a larger granary for storing all family guinea corn after it is threshed and wind threshed. If there is more than one wife in the compound, each woman has her secondary granary storage in her room. This is used to store the woman’s portion of guinea corn that the husband distributes monthly or bi-monthly. Each month or every other month the man fetches guinea corn from the larger family granary that is situated in the open court yard and distributes it to the women; the amount handed out is based on the number of children each woman has. The secondary granary is a circular, a tube like structure build on a mud tripod legs, and entirely built with a rich strong red earth. The construction is slowly done with 6” layer at a time and left to dry out properly before the next layer is placed. It takes about three weeks for this process to be completed. A typical secondary guinea corn storage granary is about 4 ½ to 5 foot above the floor level, one or two in number installed in the sleeping hut. The internal part is plastered with even a finer red earth mixed with the roots of shrubs called “*mdzimdzu*” which becomes slippery when crushed and mixed with water and red earth.

#### **4.3.8: Building of Kangir (a Mud Bed in the Living/Kitchen Hut)**

The process used to build the children’s bed using short mud wall in the sleeping room is repeated in the kitchen/ living hut. As it is done in the sleeping hut, a rectangular wall is built about 16 inch above the ground with the western side attached to the western wall of the mud hut. The opening is filled with sand, crushed rock and earth leaving about 3 inch below the wall. The top 3 inch left is filled with wet mud 2 ½ inch plastered and left to dry and leaving the ½ inch for the final finishing with red earth. The earth bed in the kitchen/ living room is used for

sitting by the children during evenings when the mother is cooking, especially during the rainy season and for women visitors to spend the night. The kitchen/ living room is where all activities such as cooking, grinding and storage of few dry fire woods and dry greeneries used for cooking soup are stored out of the rain.

#### **4.3.9: Installation of ‘Lamti’ (a Tri-Pod Built of a Red Earth for Supporting Cooking Clay-Pot)**

This cooking tri-pod structure called “*lamti*” in Margi language is constructed on the east side, and south of the kitchen/living entry door. This is protected from view by a 3 inch x 3 foot x 3 foot dwarf wall called “*liwa*” built perpendicular to the entry door. In other words the cooking tripod is between the tips of the north east corner of the grinding stones ‘*bra*’ and south of the dwarf wall. The dwarf wall protects the cooking activities and the woman doing the cooking while sitting on a stool from view through the door. The construction of this horn like three earth legs-like tripod is done with red earth. All the circular bases of the three pods are about 4 to 6 inch in diameter, gradually becoming smaller in diameter upward. All the three are must be equal in height, about 8 to 12 inch above the ground.

#### **4.3.10: Installation of ‘Zaka’ou’ (a Suspended Fire Wood Storage Ropes Directly Above ‘Lamti’ the Cooking Tripod)**

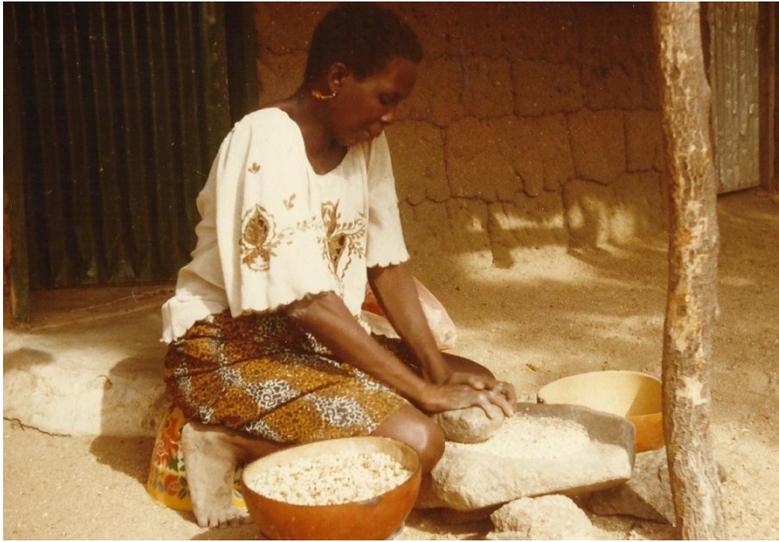
*Zaka’ou* is used for storage of dry firewood for cooking meals during the rainy season. This is a simple installation of three looped ropes attached to the roof frame about 1 foot center to center used to store dry woods suspended from the roof by the zak’ou ropes during the rainy season. The man weaves the ropes and help with the installation. Both ends of each rope is attached to the roof frame with one end about 1 ½ foot above the other end of each rope on the roof frame. The same process is repeated for all the three rope installed 1 foot from each other center to center. The fire woods are inserted into the loops of all three ropes, one by one, making all the three loops acting as one to supporting weight of the bundle of fire wood. This is about 4’ suspended above the ‘*lampti*’ the cooking tri-pod. The woman doing the cooking can reach the

fire wood if she needs to add some to the burning fire while seating on a stool; also this dries the wood out in case some are brought in wet from rain.

#### **4.3.11: Construction of ‘shasha’ (a Ceiling Level Storage Space Suspended Directly Above ‘Bra,’ the Grinding Stones)**

This is a rectangular shade like simple storage space suspended at the roof level using 4 wooden Y shaped poles as columns or posts. All the 3 are installed on the north side of the grinding stone (*bra*) to support the north ends of the beams, while the south ends are rested on the mud hut wall. The arrangement is done in this manner so that each pair of the posts or columns support 4 inch x 4 foot wooden beams; that in turn support a smaller woods placed on the top of the beams in a perpendicular fashion. The voids between the woods on top of the two beams are filled with corn stalks. The final processes in the installation is to tie down the wood on top together in a wave like manner using a strong rope to prevent the pieces from moving or falling off. The space above created in this process is used to store dry greeneries in pots or gourds and other things needed for cooking. In addition, this is where the already cooked food is kept away from the dogs and chickens. During my primary school days my lunch was always kept there. This suspended storage structure is directly above the grinding mill stones. High enough to allow the women do the grinding while kneeling on their knees.

Figure 38: Photo of a Margi Woman Grinding Food Item on extra uninstalled Grinding Stone



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland, photo taken 1968 to 1977

#### **4.3.12: Installation of ‘Talagu’**

This is a circular tube woven with rope; and hanging from the internal thatch roof frame of the sleeping hut for storing decorated calabash or gourds. The prides of the Margi women are their decorated calabashes of all sizes. The calabashes or gourds as it is called in the west is used as spoons, drinking cups, carrying water, as a basket to carry goods to the market, and to store sun dried food items, usually on top of the suspended storage space or the *shasha*. The calabash seed is planted and grown alongside the red guinea corn which is planted closer to the compound. The red guinea corn is the first to be planted and the first to be harvested as a security for food shortage. Gourd seed are planted at the same time as the red guinea corn seeds, but gourds take longer to mature.

Figure 39: Finished Margi Women's Calabash and Kundai (Cover for the calabashes)



Source: Photo by the Author

It grows in different sizes and shapes, depending on the type of seed planted. When the gourds become ready and are harvested, they are left to dry out covered with leaves and corn stalk usually in swampy area. Finally they are split into two round sides, the seed taken out and the product stored away again to dry out completely. The women spend part of their dry season decorating the external part of the gourds using hot knives to make black marks and lines and shapes on the gourds. The internal part is treated with Shea butter and the decorated external side as well. The gourds are stored away in the *talagu*, about 4 foot long and 18 inch to 24 inch in diameter, the tube like net woven with strong ropes. The calabashes are arranged by inserting them into the *talagu* with the bigger ones at the bottom and stored in the sleeping room suspended from the roof frame.

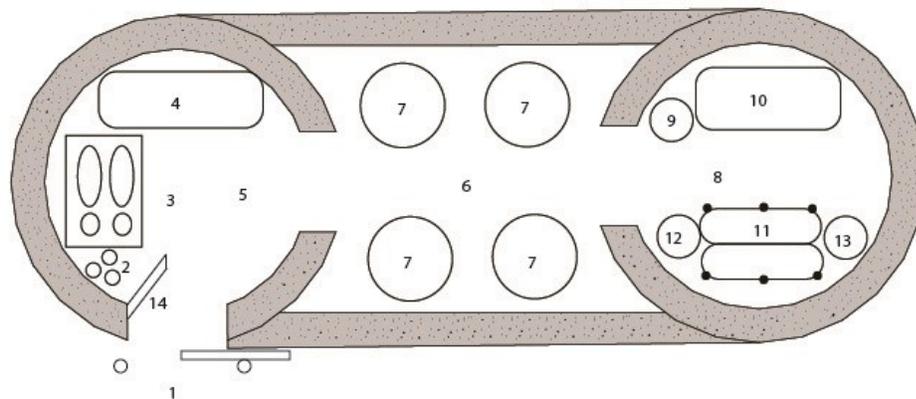
**4.3.13: Construction of Mingu Walls and Placing a Pile of Corn Stalks About 12 – 16 Feet Deep on Top of the Two opposite Walls.**

Figure 40: A Typical (Detailed) Women’s Quarter

- 1 ENTRY DOOR
- 2 LAMTI ( CLAY TRIPOD )
- 3 GRINDING STONE ( BRA )
- 4 CLAY BED
- 5 KITCHEN / LIVING
- 6 "MINGU" ( SPACE FOR STORING WATER POTS )
- 7 WATER POTS / LOCAL BREWS
- 8 WOMAN'S SLEEPING ROOM ( UMBUWA HANYI )
- 9 SMALL GRANARY
- 10 CHILDREN'S CLAY BED
- 11 TIMBUL ( WOMAN'S BED )
- 12 TALAGU ( KALABASH STORAGE )
- 13 VAL ( SMALL GRANARY )
- 14 LIWA (PARAPET WALL)

**TYPICAL MARGI WOMEN'S HUT, NIGERIA**

DRAWN BY EMMANUEL BIRDLING & JUSTIN GOMEZ



In the previous section of the construction process, I have indicated that, the kitchen/living hut that is part of the woman’s quarter is built at a distance of 8 foot to 10 foot from the sleeping hut. There are two doors on the kitchen/living room hut. One of the doors is used as the main entry from the open court yard into the kitchen/living room hut; the second door is facing the

space between the kitchen/living room hut and the sleeping room hut. The space between the two huts is bounded by two walls on both sides with the ends of the short walls attached to the kitchen/living room wall; and the other ends of the walls are attached to the sleeping hut wall. This creates a rectangular shaped space between the two huts. The whole structure which includes the two walls, the enclosed space and the top, which is covered by corn stalk, is called *mingu*. The purpose is to create shade for the water storage pots, protect people from rain, when entering the sleeping hut from the living/kitchen hut or vice versa, and provide extra space in addition to the two huts rooms. The top can be used to dry greens for dry season use, and store clean pots.

#### **4.3.14: Installing Big Water Pot under Mingu**

Drinking water pots are very important in Margi culture. It serves as the western household overhead tank. It is the women's responsibility to install two or more large water pots under her Mingu. The Margi black smith women are those that make pottery of all sizes; big, small, and including dish like types. The black smith men are the ones making hoes, knives, and weapons; as arrows, spear, dagger, and shields; in addition to the burial responsibility. On the average each Margi clan have their black smith. Within the rectangular space I described below is where two to three or four large water storage pots are installed with three quarters of their heights buried under ground to keep the stored water cool. Any of these pots can be emptied of its water contents and used for storing the content in preparing the local beer.

#### 4.3.15: Plastering Both Rooms with Red Earth

The major work left in the finishing of the woman's quarter is the plastering of the floors, walls, the mud beds, the grinding stone deck, the cooking tripod area, the '*liwa*' (the dwarf wall that shields the cooking space from direct view from the outside through the kitchen door), and the internal and external surfaces of the secondary granaries. The woman will locate and dig out a substantial amount of very fine red earth, bring it home, and pile it in the center of both the sleeping and the kitchen/living room floors. She will inform her friends if they are available to help, and then set a date for the work. The next step is to the bushes to locate a special type of shrubs called '*ndzimdzu*' and dig out the roots. After obtaining enough roots of this savanna shrub, the woman brings it home and pounds it, then places the product in a large clay pot and fills it with water to the brim and leave it overnight. The following day she feels the product of the pot with her hands to be sure the water is slippery enough for mixing the red earth. Then she will sieve the crushed roots out of the water, and use the water to mix the red earth. The red earth mixed with crushed *mdzimdzu* water is what Margi women used to plaster sleeping rooms and living spaces in the rooms for generations.

The plastering starts with the walls, followed by highest spaces above the floor, which is usually the '*kangir*' (the mud beds), followed by the grinding stone top deck without smearing the red earth on the flat stone surface, and gradually they work their way down to the floor of the hut. The first thing the woman and her friends do when starting the plastering is to smear the red earth about ½ inch thick on enough space that they can finish the smoothing out before the red earth dries out. The women use unsliced special type of gourds called '*shar*' for the smoothing of the red earth as a brick layer would use trowel for smoothing a cement floor. '*shar*' is a gourd that is round, about 4" and up 20" in diameter on one end, with a long handle on the other end.

The smaller ones in diameter are split in two halves to be used as a spoon; while those that are larger in diameter are cured in a different way and is used for carrying water, local beer and other liquids. After the plastering is completed the rooms and their contents are left to dry out for few days before occupying them.

#### **4.3.16: Spreading Sand under the Mingu and Wuduki (the Court Yard)**

As I have already explained earlier, *mingu* refers to the triangular space between the two huts, enclosed with two walls with the both walls attached to the two huts on each end. Then a pile of corn stalks is placed and leveled about 12 inch to 16 inch deep on top of the two walls. This creates a shed, and under the shed the water pots are installed. The floor of the shed is leveled and some not so coarse sand is placed and leveled about 6 inch deep. As the sand in the court yard and under the *mingu* is tramped on, gradually the surfaces become solid. The compound courtyard, called *wuduki*, is also leveled in such a way that the rain water is directed outside the compound; then sand is brought in and leveled about 2 to 3 inch deep. This helps to avoid muddy areas in the courtyard during the rainy season. The only room in the house where sand is placed is the '*umbua cham*,' which literarily means the light room, the general living room with two doors, which is located at the front of the compound and also used as the main gate, and also used as a guest room for male visitors. This is where the man of the house receives his guests and it is used by the whole family on certain occasions.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have described, from fieldwork, interviews, archives, my own biography, and the photographic record which I have been able to gather, the Margi built environment and domestic sphere prior to the coming of the missionaries, colonial officers, and cultural forces of

independent Nigeria. Inevitably, the structures and the styles for constructing them which I have described are always the results of processes that are constantly in motion. For one, the Margi, themselves moved to the places where I have located them in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and they moved around within those zones of the mountains and plains. Be that as it may, the chapter suggests the generalized state of the built environment that many would mark out as the “traditional” Margi domestic sphere. The next chapter shows how that sphere has changed in the era of “modernization.”

## **Chapter 5: Changes in the Margi Domestic Sphere Since the Coming of Colonial officers, Christianity and Islam: Field Analysis**

In this chapter, I detail the findings of my survey among Margi peoples regarding the built environment. I begin with the broader infrastructure – and specifically the road network. I then move to the material elements of the domestic sphere, including the structures, their immediate surroundings, and processes for constructing the domestic sphere. I discuss infrastructure and services as a part of this – electricity, water, and plumbing. This leads into my discussion of the impacts of the missionaries later in the chapter.

### **5.1: The Evolution of the Roads in the Margi Built Environment**

Prior to the time when the present road was constructed (in 1959) to pass through the Margi towns of Madagali, Gulak, Shuwa, Uba, Mubi and up to Yola, there was a rough dirt road from Maiduguri to Mubi and Yola. At that time, at least when passing through Gulak, the road was not at all following the route as it is today; it passed through near where Jalingo ward is now located, and near where Gulak market is located, then alongside the mountain slope, and passing through Duhu. Long before and even after the major road was constructed, all towns and villages were connected with foot-paths. There were foot-paths leading from most Margi towns to distant places like Mubi, Yola, Bama, and Maiduguri. Donkeys, horses, and even camels were used to carry loads to neighboring markets, and as a means of transportation. But as the Margi built environment evolved, things started to change. The Margi ethnic group started to use Lorries to carry their goods and as a means of transportation to places like Mubi, Bama, Yola, and Maiduguri. My informants tell me that when the current road was being constructed, it became a means of temporary employment for the local men - at least at the time when the portion within

their locality was being constructed. It was named “*lagu gu enginia*, ” meaning “The Path of the Engineers.”

Just like other ethnic groups in Africa or any other groups around the world for that matter, the Margi depend on roads in their everyday life; for the men and women to get to the farm, to work, to the health centers, to visit families, to the markets and for the children to get to schools, or playgrounds among other things. In any society, roads support the agriculture, businesses and trade which provide the jobs that lift societies like the Margi - and whole nations - out of poverty (<http://www.worldbank.org/grsf>; Swedish Road Administration 2009; Ewing, 2009). The descriptive frequency table generated from my field work data shows that the evolution of the road system in the Margi built environment has yet to evolve to the average usable potential. Paved roads - which have a lot of pot holes and unstable bridges in my observation - are only 41.2 % of the roadways. Dirt roads - the majority of which are inaccessible during rainy season (May – November) - comprise 55.7 % of the road network; roads that are impassable because there are no bridges or just totally inaccessible by motor vehicle make up the other 3.1% of roads. This is simply one way of seeing the general state of underdevelopment and of limited connectivity for the Margi cultural landscape with the rest of Nigeria.

Table 5: A Table Showing Roads Types and Condition in Margi Built Environment

Road Type	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Paved	41.2	41.7
Dirt	55.7	97.9
Not Passable	2.1	100.0

## 5.2: The Evolution of the Margi Domestic Sphere Approached from Historical, Spatial, Structural and Developmental Perspectives

As the following table indicates, in the responses of the interviewees to the question as to what type of building they currently have or live in, 38.1 % indicated that they own and live in bungalow structures. As the capitalist advertisement methods and innovation diffusion processes convinced the Margi to believe, a bungalow structure, which is a synthesis of Bangladeshi ideas of living space and the modification done to it by the British architects during the colonial period, is, in the eyes of the Margi, the very definition of a modern living space. Furthermore, 32.0% of the interviewees indicated that their compound consists of a combination of bungalow, shotgun-like and hut construction. Another 21.6 % indicated that they own and live in shotgun-like structure, while 8.2% said that they own and live in mud huts.

Table 6: A Table Showing Current Types of Structure the Margi Own

Building Type	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Bungalow	38.1	38.1
Shotgun	21.6	59.8
Hut	8.2	68.0
Combination of all	32.0	100.0

Despite the fact that 53.6% of the structures are either shotgun or a combination, when answering the question of whether the building they are living in is built with cement blocks, mud brick, stacked mud or other material, 66% reported cement block, 22.7% reported mud brick and the rest reported mud. When it comes to the roofing of Margi homes the field data shows 83.5% of the structures are roofed with corrugated metal sheets. Building with mud and roofing with grass is becoming a thing of the past. Careful observation shows that most of the

huts or rooms that are still roofed with grass belong to widows or widowers, most of whom do not have living children, and this includes the older folks living in remote villages.

Table 7: A Table Showing Compound Fencing

The compound still fenced	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	96.9	97.9
No	2.1	100.0

Table 8: A Table Showing if Kitchen is still as it was before

Detached	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	95.8	95.8
No	4.1	100.0

Table 9: A Table Showing If Goat/Sheep Pens and Chicken Coop are still inside the Compound

Inside	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	84.5	84.5
No	15.5	100.0

### 5.3: Bathrooms and Water Systems

Using the crops (corn stalks) behind the compound as bathrooms (since this is a hidden space in the rainy season), or just in the bushes during dry season are things of the past in the Margi cultural landscape. In the early 1960s, only the teachers, missionary workers, and other civil service personnel could afford to dig latrines in their compounds, hidden from public view by the thatch or the mud fence. In the late 1960s, there was not a single water cistern in the Margi domestic sphere other than those of the missionaries, the guest houses for the travelling colonial officers, and the house that the anthropologist James Vaughn built for himself and his family for use during his research activities among the Margi. The idea of water pipes to bring fresh water in and sanitary pipes to take soiled water out of the compound was an amenity with some

purposely well-defined rules of inclusion and exclusion within northern Nigerian space. Because it was out of the realm of possibility for ordinary people in the northern Nigerian periphery, such luxury had – and largely still has - bypassed their cultural landscape.

In the Margi villages, 89.7% of respondents reported owning individual latrines in their compounds. 94.8 % reported using bucket bath in their domestic space. Even in the state capitals of Adamawa and Borno, only 32% of the Margi living there reported having modern bathtubs or showers in their homes, while 68% use the usual latrine and bucket bath. During this research, my drinking water for the time I stayed in my birth compound came from the well I first drank from in during my childhood, using a bucket and a rope to pull the water out.

Figure 41: Fetching Water from Childhood Well with the New Neighbors



Source: Photo by an Individual Passing by; I asked him to use my camera

I took a bucket bath with the well water on a cement platform which is part of the latrine opening slab, protected from public view by the mud wall fence I helped my father built during my childhood. The point is that pipes lying underground carrying water to and from the Margi domestic sphere are still something in a distant future, or literally a pipe dream, for the rural Margi, despite the wealth, size, and prestige of the Nigerian nation state in Africa. When it

comes to water, the Margi domestic sphere is not more well off than it was more than 80 years ago when the missionaries first stepped foot on the Margi cultural landscape. Improvements have been made in terms of the number of wells dug and the introduction of boreholes. The most important change is the disappearance of the communally dug wells created by villagers that were easily polluted after torrential rain, and of the natural water ponds that communities and animals would share drinking from in the early 1960s. Some wells that were dug in the 1950s and 1960s are still in use, but many more were dug. Boreholes have been introduced, but few people can afford them. The usual water works taken for granted in other places are nonexistent in the Margi vernacular landscape. The water taps that are seen are those attached to boreholes. All across the Margi villages, only 31.3 % reported owning individual water well in their compounds, while 68.7% reported sharing a community well. In the state capitals of Adamawa and Borno only total of 27.8 % of the Margi reported having a water tap in their private homes, while 72.8% used a community water tap. When responding to the question of individual borehole ownership, 12.5 % of Margi reported having one, and 22.9 % reported having access to a public borehole – the lower percentages reflecting the higher costs that prevent most Margi from borehole access.

It has been about 108 years since the British started ruling northern Nigeria; it has been more than 84 years since the Margi ethnic group came in contact with the missionaries; and finally it has been more than 50 years since Nigeria became an independent nation-state with vast oil resources. Yet water pipes and “modern” water network technologies have bypassed the Margi cultural landscape, at least as of the time of this research.

#### 5.4: Public Water Sources: Lakes, River and Dams

It is a very common practice in Africa for the majority of the individual households or those that wash clothes for others for pay to go to public ponds, rivers or streams to wash the clothes. Also, in addition to the communally dug water wells, these public water sources used to be shared with the cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys and even wild animals. In Margi land, almost all of these public water sources are works of nature. In other words, they are not man made like the communal water wells. The following rivers in the Margi cultural landscape are the main tributaries that drain into *Yinagu* river: *yadzaram*, *dil-owal*, *biri-shishiwa*, and *tsugadi* river. The large river called *yinagu* has been and is still the main source of fish for several Margi towns and villages in both Adamawa and Borno states. Prior to Nigerian independence, and up to the late 1960s, the *ptil* (Margi chief) was responsible for setting the date for yearly communal fishing. In the mid-1970s, with the establishment of Local Government, the local government bureaucrats took over the responsibility, and converted the yearly communal fishing into a yearly fishing festival. This brings people from all over the Margi cultural landscape at least once a year. One might have assumed that the responsibility of dredging and up-keep of the lake would have been done by the local government/or state government together with its other new responsibilities. But as comparison of the old and new photos below suggests, this responsibility has not been lived up to.

Figure 42: Yinagu River in the 1960s during one of the Yearly Fishing Authorized by the Margi Chief



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland, photo 1968 to 1977

In an article in the *Journal of Animal Research International* (2006: 473–477), Michael Awi published research results from detailed interviews conducted among 200 Margi fishermen, aged 45 and over living around the river tributaries. Awi shows the demand for fish protein due to population increase in the Margi cultural landscape, an increase in farmland; bad farming practices which subsequently cause the blockage of the river tributaries, and poor irrigational practices are among the factors that caused *yinagu* river to diminish (Awi, 2006). The research was conducted in 5 years period from 1998 to 2003.

Figure 43: Yinagu River, in 2011



Source: Photo by the Author

Figure 44: Portion of Yinagu River dried-up, as of 2011, due to Lack of Care



Source: Photo by the author

Figure 45: The Yinagu River Fishing Festival Sheds in Disrepair



Source: photo by the author

There has been only one dam in Margi land; it was dug in Gulak in 1958, but this dam has long been weathered away. According to my informants, the digging was initiated by the colonial authorities in the spot where the mud used to build some of the missionary structure has been dug out, but the work was done by the men of Gulak. According to them, the dam lasted for about ten years before it weathered away because of lack of maintenance.

### **5.5: Electricity**

In the 1960s, up to the early 1970s, the only sound of a generator in Lassa or Gulak came from the missionary residence. This would only be from 7:00 pm or whenever it became dark to 10:00 pm. Even the church did not have a generator. There was no electricity in any of the Margi towns, nor was there any one in Margi land that could afford a generator. The sources of light then were bush lamps. The most sophisticated kerosene lamp, which used pressure, was used at the church supplied by the missionaries for the usual market day evening service at the church. During this research, I found the following changes. Light poles were installed by the state

government in the following Margi towns: Lassa, Shuwa, Gulak, madagali, Uba, and few others by the main roads. However, the electric current does not flow regularly. There are more individual electricity generators (called “gen” in local terminology) available than individual water boreholes. This is so because *gen* is more affordable than a borehole. During the time I spent in Gulak, the light from the national or regional grid only came on three times, and it was very weak. In response to the research question regarding electricity from the light grid, 59.4 % reported their homes were hooked to it. 44.8 % reported owning their own electricity generator, and 21.9% reported owning a lamp. Let me clarify here that, even though people’s homes are connected to the power grid, those who can afford it have a generator as a stand by. There are some people especially at the outskirts of towns who do not have electricity connected to their homes and do not have the resources to buy electric generator; 21.9% of such people reported using the bush lamps of the earlier times.

## **5.6: Cooking Fuel**

In the early 1960s up to mid-1970s, there was no Margi household within the cultural landscape which would use a kerosene stove even if it had been available, because of the kerosene cost. Almost all the households used a fire wood for cooking and keeping warm especially from early November through early February when it is fairly cold. Most of the savanna shrubs and trees have been drastically reduced to the point of complete depletion in the Margi cultural landscape, because of their use for fuel in northern Nigeria in general. Among the questions on my research questionnaire, I gave the informants four options as to what type of energy the family used for cooking: kerosene stove, gas stove, electrical cooker, or firewood. Several villagers came up to me inquiring why I was asking them if they are using electric or gas cooking appliance, because such appliances do not exist in the Margi cultural landscape. No one

that lives in Margi land acknowledged using either a gas or electric cooker. Even if unreported ones exist, they are hardly used because of the un-availability and the high cost of the cooking gas. There is no underground cooking gas line, even in the Margi imagination. Responding to using firewood for cooking fuel, 94.8% of the subjects reported using it, while some 21.9 % reported using kerosene stove and 10.4 % had gas and electric appliances. The latter respondents can be attributed to the Margi elites staying at the two state capitals, Yola and Maiduguri.

Despite all the trees planted over recent decades in the region, the Margi domestic sphere is now more of a Sahel scrub/grassland than a savanna. During the 1960s and the 1970s, the area was comparatively lush; the tall grasses used for roofing and thatch mats were readily available, the scrubs full of birds and other living things were within walking distance from each neighborhood. The water wells were not as deep as they are now. Nigerian national gas is exported to the western world while the Nigerian populace, including the Margi ethnic group, is left with no option but to cut down the trees. As the trees are cut down, nothing left to retain the moisture in the soil or the near atmosphere, and desert is setting in, with its higher temperatures and greater aridity.

### **5.7: Gardening in the Margi Domestic Sphere**

In the early 1960s, most of the men had seasonal gardens. For example, my father always grew maize and garden eggs plants at the back of his sleeping hut, and the area behind the goats and sheep pen but within the compound fence. This was in addition to the large fenced cassava farm in the front side of the family compound. In the mid-1960s, the number of gardens dropped among men, as the men started to keep the plowing oxen and a few cows in the open behind the sleeping room overnight protected by the compound fence where the gardens used to be.

Keeping oxen in the compound became possible as the Margi men started to use mud for fencing

around the mud huts instead of thatch mats that had been easily penetrated by the hyenas and made stealing animals easy. This change drastically reduced the number of animals stolen by hyenas in the night.

Almost all women grew two or more vegetables behind the sleeping and/kitchen and living huts, and within the compound fence. The most common ones were *ngabai* and 'umja'u' okra. The school children learned how to tend gardens at the missionary school and were given flower seeds to take home for planting. Planting trees, especially fruit trees such as mango and guava, was encouraged and many school children also participated in planting trees and shrubs. The planting of fruit trees, flowers and shrubs (hedges) was all part of the evolution of the Margi built environment, and I tried to find out what had become of this aspect of missionary culture passed down to Margi school children and their parents. Through the questionnaire, I found that 61.5% reported still having a seasonal garden behind the sleeping rooms. When it came to planting trees, 81.3% reported still planting or having some that they had planted; but only 21.9% plant flowers, and only 8% still plant hedges. The missionaries planted hedges to fence their modern homes and some Margi tried to imitate this, but apparently the practice has died out.

### **5.8: The Margi Helping Relatives and Neighbors with Building Compounds**

It was the custom of the Margi people to help their neighbors build at least the first two round huts when a family would relocate or when a young man would build his first compound. When I was growing up, my father moved the family two times; at least that I can remember. We had a lot of help from relatives and neighbors to move our personal belongings to the new place and during the construction of the new mud huts. The last time we moved, I had just begun elementary school. Because the school was in the neighborhood, the Headmaster Bulama Wajilda asked my classmates to come and help my family and in the evening, I recall that all my

friends and I could carry was the bunches of dried grass that I had been harvesting and collecting by the house, though some older kids were able to carry other heavier things. During my research, I tried to see if such community spirit still exists. In the research questionnaire, I asked my informers if they built their latest structure by themselves, had help from relatives and friends, or paid people to build it. Only 27.8 % of the respondents recorded having built it themselves, and 20.3% reported having had some help in addition to their own effort; while 68.4 % reported paying people to build their homes (the percentages add up to more than 100% probably because some in the second category also paid for some of the help). As a building inspector, I understand why the Margi community spirit of helping neighbors has dropped. As the Margi ethnic group started to adopt the western idea of safe and habitable shelter, they had to turn to semi-experts at the very least to build these modern structures. In today's individualistic world, which encompassed the Margi domestic sphere in some ways, the 20.3% of the people that reported getting some help from relatives or friends is arguably still a fairly large percentage.

Figure 46: One Such Example of Margi Neighbor Helping Neighbor is Corn Threshing



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland, photo taken 1968 to 1977

Figure 47: Additional Example of Margi helping one Another; Farming Party at town of Bitiku town



Sources: Mr. and Mrs. Land of the Netherlands, 1969

### 5.9: The Level of Education of Informants

The American Brethren Missionaries built the first Margi School at Lassa in 1927; this was followed by one at Gulak in 1948, and followed by many other Margi villages. By the early 1960s, some of the graduates of these missionary schools started to teach in the schools themselves. Some of them were sent out to distant Margi villages to start new schools. I am fortunate to have interviewed some of them and to have kept in contact constantly while writing this dissertation. Over the years, in addition to those who became teachers and went into other disciplines, a lot of the graduates of both the Brethren and Catholic schools went further, to obtain Master of Arts and Sciences degrees; some went on to become medical doctors, veterinarians, and PhDs in various fields. The informants' response to the questionnaires regarding their educational background is summed up in the following table.

Table 9: A Table Showing Educational Level of Informants as Representative of Educated Margi

Level of education attended	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
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None	12.3	12.3
Standard 4	4.9	17.3
Class 7	16.0	33.3
Teachers College/HS	7.4	40.7
1st Degree	25.9	66.7
NCE/Diploma	24.7	91.4
Masters and above	8.6	100.0

Here, Standard 4 means the first four years of school; in the mid-1930s at Lassa, where the first school among the Margi began, and up to the mid-1950s in Gulak and Kaya, where schools began in 1948, most of the pupils stopped after four years if they did not pass the entrance examination for the next level; but the main reason for stopping was actually the lack of enough schools to accommodate them. The new Nigerian nation-state employed most of the Standard 4 school graduates into the new civil service system. Some joined the Nigerian police or the army. Others were trained by the missionaries as carpenters, gardeners, and dispensers, mechanized farming personnel and pastors; or they went on to work for other mission establishments. This phenomenon is common to both the Roman Catholic Church and the American Brethren Church. I believe that the 12.3% of the informants who indicated “none” (meaning that they had not attended any school) are those that were over school age when the missionaries came, and perhaps younger ones whose parents did not allow them to attend school because of farming needs (Bowman, 1953).

Class 7, which represents 16% of the number of informants’, refers to the first seven years of school. This group stopped because they could not pass the common entrance examination required prior to admission into secondary school (high school). Here again in most cases there were no enough high schools to accommodate all that passed. Most of them started to work for various organizations including government ministries. As I recall a lot were trained as typists and gradually promoted to clerks as they attended staff development training centers during their

careers. The teacher college or high school group comprises 7.4% of the total population of the informants. They have had an additional 5 years of school after primary school attending teacher colleges, or secondary schools. The teacher college in Nigeria is at the same level as the secondary school. The only difference is that students at teacher colleges concentrate on instruction instead of general subjects like the secondary schools do. The teacher college students sit for the grade II Teachers' Certificate examination at the end of the 5 years of study, which qualifies them to teach in the elementary schools, while secondary school students receive general instructions in arts and sciences. They sit for the West African School Certificate examination at the end of the five years. The individual performances on these examinations determine if one may proceed into higher education or not.

The National Certificate of Education or the Ordinary Diploma both take two to three years after teacher's college or high school. It depends on an individual's teachers college or high school performance. Those who complete teachers college go to NCE to obtain grade 1 teacher's certificate and those who complete high school but do not get good grades apply for ordinary diploma training in various professions. These groups are 24.7% of the total respondent population. As the table indicates, 25.9% of the them complete college degrees over a quarter of the respondents' population, while about 8.6% of the population has a Master's Degree or above. Survey results suggest that the Margi – or roughly one-third of the ethnic community, if the survey is representative - have come a long way in terms of education since the missionaries set foot on Margi cultural landscape. Some have gone on to become army generals, governors and deputy governors.

### **5.10: Public Gathering Places**

Traditionally the Margi public place is the large area in front of the chiefs (*ptils*) palace, called '*patha*.' This is where all the traditional festivals and other gatherings take place. In due course, young people started to use the market place for dancing on market day evenings. When Christmas celebrations started to take root in the Margi cultural landscape, the celebration shifted to the school compound. For example at Gulak, it took place on an empty space between the classrooms and the chapel building. If many people would show up for the occasion, then it would be moved to the school football field. In case of a death, the gathering for the mourning would take place in front of the deceased's compound. During the dry season when the temperature is hot, the nearest big shade tree might be chosen; this would also apply during happy celebrations, such as that for the birth of twins, when all relatives would gather to celebrate after the twins are about 1 year old.

### **5.11: The Impact of the Missionaries in the Form of the Structures Built**

When it comes to the structures built by the missionaries and the colonial officers, most of the examples I use are from main Margi towns of Lassa, Gulak, Kaya, and Shuwa, with occasional references to some other areas like Madagali, Hyambula, Midlu and other villages, since these first towns are the areas where the two denominations started to build schools or churches before expanding the stations to other sections of the Margi cultural landscape. The colonial authorities' activities in terms of physical structures in Margi cultural landscape were concentrated in Gulak because of its location on the main road leading to major cities like Maiduguri, Mubi and Yola. I am telling the story chronologically using sketches and photos to clarify the physical environment. There are, however, some gray areas that cannot be explained clearly, or even some hidden factors at times. But history tell us that evolution of the Margi built

environment as of human culture in general cannot be clearly imagined in the human mind or be represented in continuous, predictable visible photos or sketch patterns.

### **5.12: Schools the Missionaries Built**

In general the missionaries started schools, because of their importance in shaping students' thinking and for facilitating their recruitment in to the Christian faith. With the exception of Uba and Madagali, almost all the schools in Margi towns and villages were owned by the missionaries. The Church of the Brethren opened their first station 4 years after their arrival in northeastern Nigeria among the Margi ethnic group of Lassa in 1927, followed by the town of Gulak in 1948. Since then the schools and the church expanded to various Margi villages. About six months later, the Catholic Church, perhaps out of fear of the domination of the Margi cultural landscape by the Church of the Brethren, started a mission station at Kaya, a Margi village three miles west of Gulak. The Catholics opened a second station in Shuwa in 1958, and then a church at Madagali, 15 miles north of Gulak. In both denominations, the schools were used as recruitment grounds into Christian faith. The pupils were recruited into the protestant or catholic versions of the faith through the schools. The children in turn would tell their parents about their new faith, especially their mothers, with whom they spent more time sitting around the evening cooking fire. In response, the Margi women started to join the churches earlier than their men. In addition to the secular subjects at the missionaries' schools, religious instruction was at the core of the mission objectives. The children were taught not to drink local Margi alcohol, eat any animal or fowl sacrificed to non-Christian gods, and abstain from all immoral behaviors.

In both cases, the missionaries started the building structures modestly with the building materials within the environment. In Gulak, for example, two of my informants who were among the first pupils recruited for the school, informed me that they started school in a round mud hut.

The first school in the mud hut, as they recall, was situated on the site where Ndumari Ndijida's compound is presently located in Gulak.

Figure 48: The Second School Building in Gulak (after the Mud Hut)



Sources: Mr. and Mrs. Land of the Netherlands, 1968

The building also served as the first church and the school chapel, although the first Church services actually started under a tree in Gulak, just as they had in 1923, when the Church of the Brethren arrived in northeastern Nigeria and settled in the Bura ethnic group's domain. The school bell, which also served as the church bell, was attached to the nearest tree next to the door of this building. The structure between the two trees in front of the building was the first table tennis table in Gulak built with mud brick. Shortly after my interview with

Figure 49: The Remains of the 'izu' Tree which used to be Standing in Front of Grandmother Mimpardas' House where the First Church Service was Conducted in Gulak



Source: Photo by David Haliru on request, 2013

Bulama Wajilda, who was one of the first pupils of the Gulak Church of the Brethren Primary School, and also the first native son to assume the position of the Headmaster of the school, took a walk to the old school compound with me after I interviewed him, where he reflected on the past when he was the head of the school and I was one of his pupils. “Things have changed...” he remarked, and I had the opportunity of taking his photo while he leaned on the first table tennis table that the children of Gulak and the surround villages had ever seen and played on.

Figure 49: A photo of Bulama Wajilda Birdling, the First Gulak Native Son Headmaster of the School as he Rests His Hands on the Old Table Tennis Table Built with Mud Brick. He started at the school in 1960.



Source: Photo by the Author

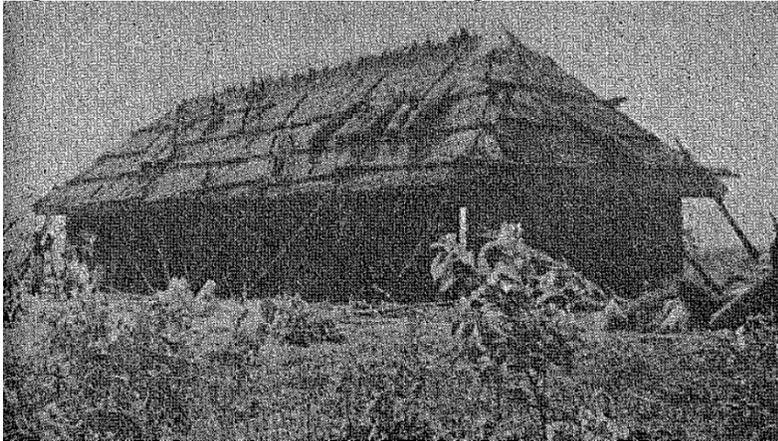
The only recognizable features of the old school compound are the trees, the table and the school bell which can be seen still hanging on the tree in the photo in figure 50.

Figure 50: The School/Church Bell still hanging on The Tree after 60 Years.



Source: Photo by the Author

Figure 51: The Third School Building in Gulak



Source: The Messenger, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1951 (The Church of the Brethren Magazine).

The photo in figure 52 shows the third school building in Gulak in the process of being built, with people on top installing the woven grass *misham* as the roof system. It contained two classrooms, built with mud brick. This is the first building where my age group started primary school.

Figure 52: The Fourth School Building Built in Gulak



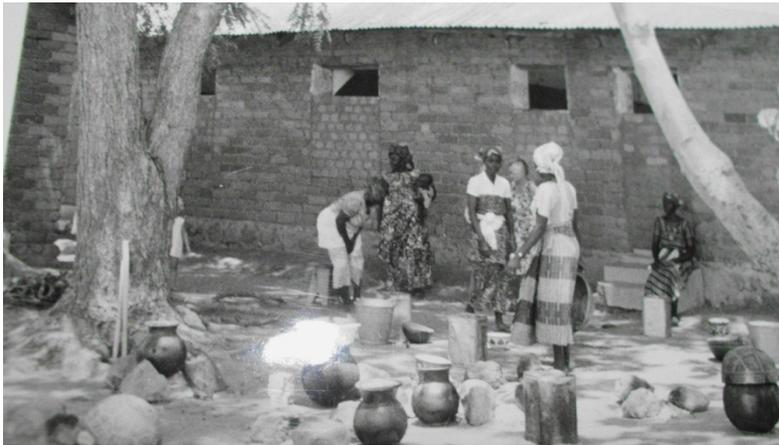
Source: Carol Bowman, from the Bowman Estate 1948

From 1948 until August 1951, the Gulak staff lived in the schoolhouse. It is large. There were two rooms, each eighteen by thirty feet; these were further divided by temporary partitions. They were comfortable....but the school was outgrowing its small temporary quarters. Therefore, many of the happenings at Gulak during the first half of 1951 had some relationship to the erection of a new permanent residence. As you have no doubt heard things sometimes move slowly in tropical Africa.” This is how James B. Bowman put it in an article entitled, “Happenings at Gulak,” which

appeared in the American Church of the Brethren Magazine, (*The Messenger*, on December 1<sup>st</sup> 1951).

This was the second building roofed with corrugated metal sheet in Gulak. The colonial officer's guest house formerly located northeast of the present Gulak market was the first structure in Gulak roofed as such. In addition to using the school building for instruction, the building was occasionally used as sleeping rooms for Christians that came out of town for church meetings.

Figure 53: Photo of Women Cooking behind the School Classroom for a Church Guest from out of Town



Source: Mr. and Mrs. Land of the Netherlands 1969

In many cases the school buildings evolved from one room circular mud huts with thatch roof, to rectangular building built with mud covered with thatch roof or corrugated metal sheet, to a rectangular building built with clay bricks with thatch roof or corrugated metal sheet.

My research survey shows the year the schools were built in the various Margi towns' ranges from 1927 to 2011. When responding to the question of whether the school building is built with cement block, 96.9% responded yes, while 3.1% reported mud brick or mud. When it comes to roofing of the school buildings, 97.9% reported corrugated metal sheet while 2.1%

reported thatch roof. All the missionary schools in the Margi cultural landscape were taken over by the state in 1976. This transfer process may have played a key role in fostering the transformation of the structures.

Figure 54: The Current Gulak Primary School, 2011. These buildings were in the same spots where the first classrooms built by the missionaries were demolished



Source: Photo by the Author

Even though it was not in the Margi domestic sphere, the American Brethren church built both a secondary school and teachers college at Waka, located in the Bura ethnic group's domain where the missionaries first settled in 1923. In addition, the American missionaries built a theological seminary at Jos, which is about 600 miles from the Margi domain. These schools admitted most of the graduates of the mission schools from the Margi and from all the surrounding ethnic groups. The Roman Catholic Church built a high school in Numan, a town currently located in Adamawa state, but predominately occupied by Bachama ethnic group, while the Catholic teachers college was built at Bazza, about 24 miles south of Gulak. Bazza is predominately occupied by Higi (Kapsiki) peoples, closely related to the Margi. In addition, the Roman Catholic Church built a theological seminary at Jemeta, Yola. Since Margi studied in all of these settings, they were also influential in re-orienting Margi ideas about the domestic sphere.



Figure 56: The Notes Written at the Right Bottom on the Plan by Mrs. Bowman

You will probably have lots of questions, but I have spent a lot of time on this as is. We think we will like corner windows here, especially after our shade trees are big & shrubs have grown. We would like to screen the front veranda if possible. The offices have built-in cupboards. The bath tub is cement. The water tank is stone & cement, & will hold app. 1150 gal. rain water drained from the galvanized roof (corrugated aluminum). The sleeping veranda is 11' x 24' and extends over east end of house. During rain beds are pushed back under the roof, in to the upstairs store room. S. veranda floor is cement. Laundry house is about 50 ft. from the house. My main criticism is there is actually no place for the children to have as their own.

Source: Cut and Enlarged from the Floor-Plan by the author

Figure 57: The Residence under Construction



Source: Carol Bowman, Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bowman

Figure 58: Missionary Residence Completed in 1953



Source: Carol Bowman from Bowman Estate

In Lassa, Gulak, and other Margi towns and villages, the evolutionary process of the built environment was very similar. As Thawur Njabbi stated in my interview with him, “since the coming of the missionaries people came and built homes closer and closer to them because of the school, the dispensary, the church, the orchard, and the desire to be with each other until the mission neighborhood developed.” Just as Njabdi said, the first native teachers started to build their homes in the Margi cultural landscape in a similar manner to the way that the missionaries built. They might not have had enough money to build with concrete block or install factory-made modern building hardware (doors and windows), but the local carpenters (mostly trained by the missionaries) managed to create similar hardware with wood. Take for example the first rectangular building in Gulak, built by Bulama Wjilda, the first native headmaster of Gulak primary school in 1963, a decade after the completion of the missionary residence in Gulak. He built three rooms; all attached, and roofed it with corrugated metal sheet. Other teachers followed suit, and the building transformations began within this general area. This is the first rectangular building roofed with corrugated metal sheet that I ever stepped in as a child. In addition, this is the first such individually owned structure in Gulak.

Figure 60: The first Gulak Native Headmaster Bulama Wjilda built his first Rectangular Structure in 1963, ten years after the completion of the Missionary Residence



Source: Photo by David Haliru on request, 2013

In his effort to modernize his domestic sphere, Bulama Wajilda built another two rooms, as a kitchen and a storage room.

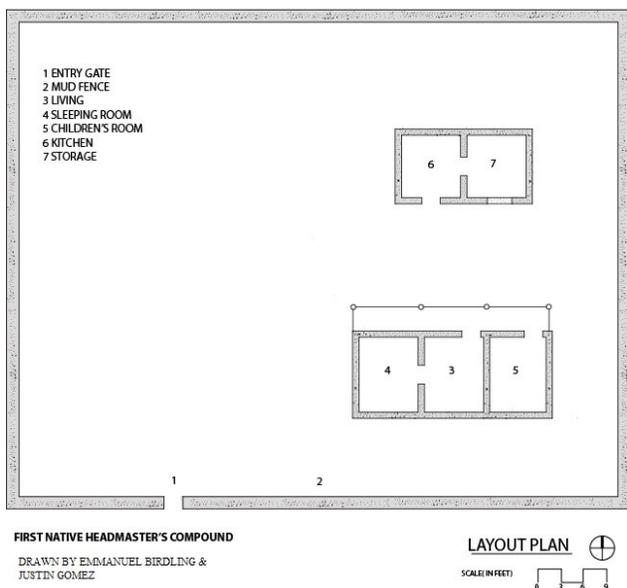
Figure 59: A Two Room Kitchen and Storage Area in Bulama Wajilda's Compound built in 1963



Source: Photo by David Haliru, on request

During my research, when I interviewed Bulama Wajilda, he was staying in a modern bungalow that he built in 1982. The building looked like any typical three bedrooms one can imagine in a western suburb.

Figure 60: A sketch of Bulama Wajilda's Compound, in 1963



Another individual example that tells part of the story of the evolution of the Margi built environment is that of Adamu Chagwa, a younger generation than Bulama Wajilda and living in

a different town. He was a civil servant who later became a businessman and a politician. I had the opportunity to interview him and spend time with him in his house at Hyambula (six miles north of Gulak), a Margi town that Barth mentioned in his book when he passed through in 1851 (Barth, 1857: 106). According to Adamu Chagwa, he built his first house, a round mud hut, and roofed it with thatch, in 1976, at age 22. Then in 1980, he built his second structure in the compound; this time it was a shotgun-like structure, a three-room rectangular building that has the main entry door to all three rooms from a middle room rather than from the narrow end. It is apparent here that, in addition to being rectangular in shape, he used corrugated metal sheet for the roofing. He also used cement for the flooring of the internal, and the external walls as shown in the photo in figure 61. It took him four years to save enough money to make this change from a round hut to a rectangular structure. Note that the round mud hut was not demolished; instead it was converted into a kitchen.

Figure 61: Adamu Chagwa's Second Structure following Mud Hut in Hyambula, built in 1980



Source: Photo by the Author

It took Adamu Chagwa another 12 years to start on another building, completed in 1993. This time he built a European-type structure with all the modern facilities, which ranged from

internal bathroom with tubs, shower, toilet, and sink to a modern internal kitchen. The structure is also hooked-up to a septic tank and soak-away; it has modern hardware, electrical wiring, and most of the items that constitute a modern structure. Adamu Chagwa also talked of a bigger modern building that he built in Abuja, the Nigerian Federal Capital territory. As I have mentioned before, most Margi men and women will first of all build a home in their place of birth prior to building anywhere else. The story of Adamu Chagwa is representative of most Margi professionals who had the opportunity to attend school and gain employment.

In its totality, this is how Margi built environment evolved, with individuals like Bulama Wajilda, Adamu Chagwa and many others playing their part. Their actions for the most part are driven by the desire to be part of the modern world, as embedded in capitalist advertisement and inculcated into them by the proponents and preachers of modernism.

Figure 62: Adamu Chagwas' 3rd Residence, built in the Same Compound at Hyambula in 1993



Source: photo by the author

The development of the new neighborhoods in the Margi cultural landscape was not limited to mission neighborhoods only. After the creation of the Nigerian nation-state, most of the graduates of the missionary schools found jobs in various arms of the civil services, joined law

enforcement services, military and business. In a few years these Margi professionals and business people started to come back to build homes in the Margi cultural landscape. As the photo in figure 63 shows, one can see a round hut on the extreme left, with what looks like rectangular mud building in front, then a shotgun-like rectangular structure in the middle, followed by a modern two story building on the right at the slopes of the Mandara Mountains. This is a microcosm of the evolution of the Margi domestic sphere in many of the towns and villages.

Figure 63: A View of a Section of Jalingo, formerly known as Kirngu



Source: the author.

In the towns of Lassa, Dille, Musa and other Margi towns and villages the story of the evolution of the built environment is similar. As with the example given of the photo taken at Jalingo neighborhood in Gulak figure 63, the following photo in figure 64, shows a building structure in Madagali (a Margi town about 15 miles north of Gulak). This shows another example of how the domestic sphere evolved from mud hut, to rectangular, and then to a bungalow in an individual compound.

Figure 64: A Typical the Evolution of the Margi Domestic Spare in another village of Madagali



Source: Dr. Emmanuel Mdurvwa, taken at Madagali, November, 2011

#### **5.14: The Christian Churches**

The main reason for the coming of the American and the Roman Catholic Church was to preach the Christian Gospel (Hickey, 1984). It follows that the second building the missionaries built after their residences is the Church. But in most cases, they start in a very simple way. For example when the American Brethren Church first came to northeastern Nigeria and started a station among the Bura ethnic group in Garkida, the first church meeting took place under a tamarind tree on March 17, 1923 ( Thomasson, 1983). In Gulak, 21 years later, the Reverend Bowman also conducted the first church meeting under a tree (*Messenger*, Nov 5<sup>th</sup> 1949), before building a mud hut that served as a classroom and a church at the same time. This is followed by a rectangular building that also serves as a classroom and a church. This is the first place my elder sister and I attended church, when I was about five years old.

As of the time of this research, the church has grown, and the buildings have become more sophisticated. For example, in Gulak, the church following the one in a single rectangular room was built in 1968 (figure 65 below). The improvements here are that it is built with cement mud

brick, roofed with corrugated iron sheet, and there are doors and windows hardware pieces that can close.

Figure 65: The Second Gulak Church completed in 1968



Source: Mr. and Mrs. Land of the Netherlands 1970

Since 1927, church buildings have been built in numerous Margi towns and villages; at first, this was mostly in the form of a round hut or single rectangular buildings with thatch roofs; for example, for Hyambula, about 6 miles from Gulak, and Midlu, 9 miles away from Gulak. In the early 1960s, there was no individual church member who had their own transportation to travel to Gulak every Sunday for church attendance. The convenient thing to do was to build a small church in these villages to accommodate the new converts. The photo in figure 66 shows a round mud hut church being built at Hyambula in 1968, as an extension of the Gulak Church of the Brethren, and figure 67 shows it in finished form.

Figure 66: Church with Structural Roof Frame under construction at Hyambula in 1968



Source: Mr. and Mrs. Land of the Netherlands 1968

Figure 67: The Finished Hyambula Church in 1968



Source: Mr. and Mrs. Land of the Netherlands 1968

The next photo in figure 68 shows a rectangular mud building at Midlu (the first church at Midlu) as an extension of the Gulak Church of the Brethren. Midlu is about 9 miles northeast of Gulak.

Figure 68: The First Midlu Church



Source: Mr. and Mrs. Land of the Netherlands 1969

Figure 69: The 2nd Church built at Midlu built in 1986 with mud bricks



Sources: Peter Awidau on request 2013

Currently, the churches that are built with modern materials, according to my survey, make up 93.7% of the total number of churches in Margi domestic sphere. Only 6.3 % are built with mud bricks or stacked mud. The survey shows that 94.7 % of the churches are roofed with corrugated metal sheets, and only 5.3% are thatch roof. In the early 1960's, almost all the teachers sent to the villages to open new elementary schools also served as the village pastors in addition to their teaching responsibility. The Catholic Church follows similar pattern as that of the American Brethren church.

Figure 70: The 3rd and the latest Church in Gulak built in 2009, the mother Church of the Gulak District and its Environs; picture is from the inside with some of the faithful worshipping



Source: Photo by the Author

### **5.15: The Missionary Dispensary, Evolved to Hospital**

Some of our strangest experiences come by way of our ‘dressing station.’ The people of this area are renowned for their much drinking. Under the influence of the local brew they produce frequent cases for our treatment. Some of them are caused by pure and simple fights, with stabbings, beatings and ‘cracked heads.’ Others are testing, such as the two men who came the same day from opposite directions. Each had been involved in a friendly argument over the efficiency of his charms to ward off injuries, specifically to ‘turn the blade of a knife.’ Needless to say, each had inflicted upon himself a rather serious wound” (James B. Bowman, Happenings at Gulak, (*The Messenger*, December 1, 1951: 23).

One of the first needs the missionaries consistently tried to meet was an outpatient dispensary for disbursement of medicine for minor ailments. As the photo below shows everyone was welcomed, including the Muslims, the Animists and the new Christian converts

Figure 71: The first Dispensary in Gulak built in 1948



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland 1971

Dispensary comes hand in hand with the church and schools wherever the missionaries establish new stations in the Margi cultural landscape. The first dispensary started in Lassa in 1927 with the founding of the mission. For a long time the Margi of Gulak and other towns and villages went to Lassa for the treatment of major ailments. The missionaries built the first hospital in Lassa in 1956, which served the people of Gulak and the surrounding villages for a long time.

Figure 72: The First Hospital in the Margi Cultural Landscape built at Lassa in 1956, by the Missionaries



Source: Dr. Pitcher of Alabama United States (Retired), the first Missionary Medical Director of the Hospital 1956

The missionaries trained the staff themselves and it has served the purpose very well. Even though there was a Government Hospital in the nearby town of Mubi, (built by the colonial authorities) the Margi ethnic group for some reason preferred going to Lassa Mission Hospital. My father repeatedly told a story about how he had to carry his 16 year-old sister on his back for 24 miles to Lassa Hospital in 1957, after she was bitten by a snake in the night. Because of the distance and the time spent walking, my father sister died on the way. There are many stories like this before the Gulak Dispensary was upgraded by the missionaries as the photo in figure 73 below shows.

Figure 73: A New Three Room Expansion was made later to the Gulak Dispensary on the left of the First Round Hut Dispensary in the early 1960s.



Source: Sister Hanni Schlapbach of Switzerland 1968

Figure 74: Photo of Relatives Carrying a Patient on a locally made Stretcher to Seek Treatment



Source: Dr. Pitcher of Alabama (Retired) 1956

There were about eight to ten other round huts that served as wards for patients that come from distant villages. As I recall, the relatives would stay with the patients. Because my father's compound was just about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile away, every now and then, I heard loud crying from the direction of the dispensary ward, and that was often an indication that one of the patients had died. At the time of my research, the mud hut dispensary had evolved to the mid-size hospital shown in figure 75.

Figure 75: Gulak Hospital as of 2011. The structure far left with five columns is the second dispensary



Source: Photo by Author

Figure 76: The Lassa Church of Brethren Mission Hospital built in 1956, as it is in 2011



Source: Sources: Photo by Emmanuel Mdurvwa, November 2011

As of 2011, figure 76 shows what the Lassa Hospital looked like; at least a portion of it. Since the state government took over, I am not sure that the quality of the services has been kept as it was when the missionaries were in charge. My informants tell of how the quality of care has dwindled to the point that patients buy the medicine prescribed from the hospitals in private drug stores, an aspect of a capitalist system of medical services which became very convenient for those in power.

### **5.16: The Impact of Colonialism: The District Headquarters in Gulak**

Margi cultural landscape was taken over by the British, after the Germans lost World War I (Schnee, 2007: 85,151, Vaughan, 1995). The territory was ruled from Lagos as British Cameroons; with the Margi area re-classified as Madagali District by the British. After World War II, British northern Cameroon came under the United Nations Trustee Council, but the British still administered it from Lagos.

In 1923, the British authorities arrested the District Head of Madagali, a Fulani man by the name of Hamman Yaji, who had previously been installed as a leading figure of the area by the Germans after the German authorities assassinated his father. After the arrest, Hamman Yaji was sent into exile in Sokoto. Soon after, under the direction of the colonial authorities, Madibbo Adama, the head of the Adamawa Emirate (of which Madagali District was an administrative unit), appointed another Fulani man from Yola to administer the district. But because of the circumstances surrounding the arrest of Hamman Yaji, the new district head moved to the town of Gulak, 15 miles south of Madagali. In Gulak, the District Head settled temporarily in an area already occupied by a few cattle Fulani who were already living in Gulak. My informants tell me that there had been a few cattle Fulani staying in Gulak for a long time. After this, Gulak became the District headquarters for Madagali District. In view of the change of the District Headquarters of Madagali District from Madagali town to the town of Gulak, the colonial authorities felt the need to build a new District Headquarters. The construction of the new District Headquarters included a new compound for the District head, District administrative offices which included a law court, native police station, a well for water operated by a wind mill, and a prison.

Wednesday, Nov. 12 [1952] was a day that those of Gulak and Lassa will remember for a long time. The United Nations mission came to Gulak. The group was composed of Chairman Peachley of Australia, Mr. Quiros of San Salvador, Mr. Yang of China and a member from Belgium. The lady secretary was from Canada. The United Nations mission was to tour in the area which is now under the United Nations trusteeship. The Yedseram River, near Lassa used to be the border, but when the Cameroons were taken from Germany after the 1914-1918 war, part of the area was given to France and a couple of smaller areas to Britain. Gulak is in this territory... the resident of Adamawa Province and Mr. Peachley went with me to meet the teachers and to greet the school children” (Bowman, “United Nations Commission Visits Gulak,” *Gospel Messenger*, January 3, 1953, p.23).

Figure 77: The first District Office built in Gulak by the Colonial Officer as the District Headquarters in 1956



Source: Photo by Peter Awidau on request

The new site chosen was about two miles south of the temporary site. Around it grew a new neighborhood called '*bri*' or '*giwa plasar*,' which literally means 'Fulani neighborhood' in Margi. This neighborhood, in the minds of most of the Margi, has ever since been synonymous with the Islamic religion.

Figure 78: The Current Prison of Gulak, built in 1956



Sources: Photo by David Haliru on request, 2013.

Figure 79: A Photo of a Section of the Fulani Neighborhood (*bri*) in 1968



Source: Mr. and Mrs. Land of the Netherlands, 1968

The first borehole installed on the Margi cultural landscape (powered by a windmill) was on this site, the new District Headquarters of Madagali District in Gulak. Most of the people I talked to said it was a fascinating site then to the Margi ethnic group, in the late 1950s, and especially to those coming from the villages. By the early 1960s, the wind mill was still there, though not in operable condition. The photo in figure 80 shows the mark of the old well filled in with cement mortar. On the right is a tap attached to a new bore hole with several plastic water containers, kept in a line by the residents waiting for their turn to fetch water.

Figure 80: A Photo of the First Windmill Well in Gulak, and now replaced with a New Bore Hole with a Tap



Source: Photo by Peter Awidau, on my request

Figure 81: The Remnant of the Old Water Tank Attached to the Wind Mill Constructed by the Colonial Officers built in 1956



Source: Photo by Peter Awidau, on request

The colonial authorities, also built what they called the native police barracks, which was comprised of mud huts with thatch roofs. The structures were constructed with cement floors.

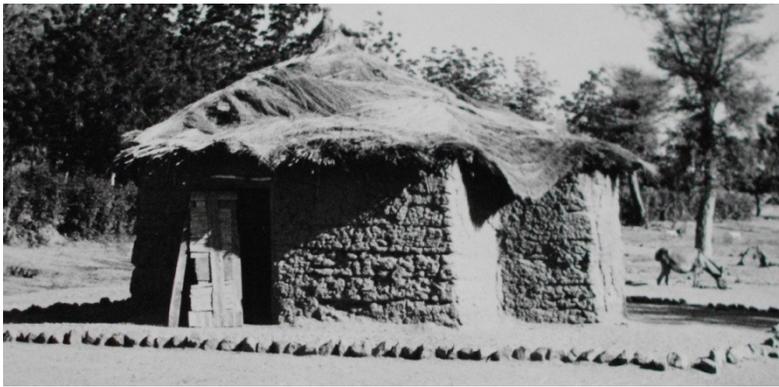
### **5.17: Mosques**

The making of a formal Fulani neighborhood in Gulak because of the transfer of the District Headquarters from Madagali to Gulak also came with an increase in the number of mosques in the mid-1950s. But historically, mosques had come to Margi cultural landscape along with the cattle-owning Fulani ethnic group. In the early 1950's, there were no standard mosques built in Margi villages. In most cases, the Fulani selected a spot in the middle of their neighborhood, leveled it, spread a fine sandy soil on the spot, surrounded it with pieces of stone, and designated it as a mosque. Soon after, in the early 1960s, the mud-built mosques started to appear. The temporary location where the Madagali District Head settled in Gulak when he left Madagali town in 1953 was reassigned to the chief of Margi with his Medugu Kirngu clan. As earlier indicated the clan had been staying in the Mandara Mountains literally on top of one of the ranges. The colonial authorities negotiated with the Chief to relocate his people to occupy the

abandoned buildings when the District Head and his entourage left when he was re- located to the newly built district headquarters. In 1964, the Margi chief and his entourage that were staying with him became Muslims. This change of faith on part of the Margi chief also meant that an increased number of mosques were built in the Gulak area.

The following photos demonstrate the changes of a mosque site from a demarcated spot to a mud rectangular structure roofed with thatch roof, to a cement block rectangular structure with some utility rooms, to a structure with borrowed Islamic architectural style (with a dome).

Figure 82: One of the First Mosques of the early 1960s in Gulak



Source: Mr. and Mrs. Land of the Netherlands, 1968

Figure 83: The 2nd Mosque built in Gulak



Source: Photo by David Haliru on request

Figure 84: 3rd Mosque Unfinished, in Gulak Adopting Islamic Architecture



Source: Photo by David Haliru on request 2013

My research survey shows that mosques started to appear in the Margi cultural landscape beginning from at least 1944, and the latest one begun in 2009. When responding to the section concerning the type of materials used to build the mosques, 86.4% reported cement block and 13.6% reported mud brick or mud. Concerning the roofing material for mosques, 91.4% of the respondents reported corrugated metal sheet and 8.6% reported thatch roof. The members of the Margi ethnic group that converted to Islam are not restricted to those in the Kirngu ward. There are those who went to *dandi* (meaning big cities) such as Maiduguri, Yola, Kaduna, Kano and other northern Nigerian cities to work and subsequently converted to Islam. Some of them came back home and settled, and are still practicing their new religion, often in new structures that have styles and forms quite distinct from Margi vernacular architecture.

## 5.18: Stores, Markets, Bars, Convenient Stores, and Restaurants

In the early 1960s, there were no stores in the Margi built environment. At best there were vendors who set up tables in the day time and extending into the early evenings in the Fulani neighborhood, at the Motor Park, and or just in front of the owners' houses, and sold provisions like soaps, sugar, cigarettes and a few other things. During the market days in all Margi towns and villages, vendors came from far away towns to the open market and set up their items on tables, plastic sheets or mats on the ground, to sell local alcohol, farming products, meats, fish, used clothes, women's wrappers and many other things. The open markets were organized in sections based on the product the vendor sold. There were no fixed prices. It was all based on bargaining; which means the seller would say a price and the buyer would say what he or she is willing to pay. The bargaining went back and forth until a price was agreed on. Trade by barter still existed in the early 1960s. Good examples are: Margi trading guinea corn for Fulani cow's milk, a he goat traded for she goat, Fulani trading a cow for a bicycle, and the like. The Margi market place has evolved along with their compounds over the years. One does not have to wait for market day to get certain items these days.

Table 10: A Table Showing Store Purposes

Purpose	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Market places	45.7	45.7
Bar/Food Restaurants	5.2	50.9
Provision Stores	49.1	100.0

In 1960, James Vaughn had taken a photo of Margi women busy buying and selling at Gulak Market. I became aware of the photo on his webpage, "The Mandara Margi: A Society Living on the Verge," when I was writing my MA thesis. I have exchanged e-mails with Vaughn, and I obtained permission to use any of the photos for academic purposes. During my field research, I

thought I would take another photo of Margi women at the same market buying and selling in 2011. This is over 50 years since Dr. Vaughn took his photo. As I have mentioned earlier, the Margi built environment evolved parallel with the social evolution of the Margi people. That evolution can be seen in these photographs in myriad ways.

Figure 85: Gulak Market in 1960; Most of the Structures on the Market were Sheds Constructed with Thatch Mats



Source: Dr. James Vaughn, 1959

Figure 86: Gulak Market in 2011 Most of the Structures are now Constructed with Cement Block and Roofed with Corrugated Iron Sheet. The Way the Margi Appear has also Changed Over the Past 61 years



Source: Photo by the Author

During this research, I saw many stores that sprang up over the years. The year the stores were built, based on the informants, ranges from 1900 to 2010. This means that there were open markets in the Margi cultural landscape starting in 1900, but the growth of commercial structures in more recent years is substantial. The subjects' responses regarding the type of material used to build the markets, bars, convenient stores and restaurants are as follows:

76.3 % are built with modern material (cement block), while 23.7 % are mud brick, stacked mud or thatch sheds. When it comes to roofing, 87.2 % are roofed with corrugated metal sheet, and 12.8 % are still thatch roof. As the table shows, 45.7 % of the Markets places in Margi domestic sphere are still open market. The growth of the provision stores – nearly half of all the commercial structures surveyed - is all in the post-independence era. It is interesting that bars and restaurants represent only 5.3 % of the commercial establishments in the Margi domestic sphere. Perhaps the missionary influence, backed by the presence of the Islamic faith, stalled the growth of the bars or any place where alcohol is sold.

Figure 87: The Latest among Convenient Stores, Restaurants and Other Establishment in Gulak



Source: Photo by the Author

### 5.19: The Margi Grave Sites

Grave sites are part of the human activities and are an important part of the local cultural landscape. Since their dispersion from near Lake Chad, the Margi who went to the mountains started to entomb their dead in close proximity to the part of the mountainous enclave where they resided. For example, the Medugu Kirngu clan has their burial site close to their neighborhood. The Birdling clan has their burial site very close to their neighborhood as well. Each burial site is named after the clan: “*hur medugu*” and “*hur birthing*,” where *hu* means grave, and the - r - added indicates ownership. The same applies to other clans who reside in separate enclaves as well. Each clan has their own Black Smith attached to them. The Black Smith men, in addition to their normal work of smelting or making all iron implements from sickles, hoes to knives, are also responsible for digging the grave, preparing the body, carrying it to the burial ground, and the actual entombing. The Black Smith women are responsible for all pottery making in the Margi culture.

Using Gulak as an example, even though some people started coming out of the mountainous enclaves in the early 1930s, the dead were still carried back to the mountain to be buried. This continued until 1968, when the church decided to bury their members on the church chosen grave site; in other words, to separate the burial grounds of Christians from non-Christians. This is how the current burial ground in Gulak was founded.

Figure 88: A Photo of typical Margi Grave Sites in the Mountains



Source: Photo by the Author (2011)

As this photo shows, the graves in the mountains were built up with pieces of stones, about 4 feet above the ground. This is another example of how humans utilize the material available in the immediate vicinity to construct or alter their cultural landscape, in this case the graves.

Figure 89: The new Grave Sites on the Church Ground Started in 1968



Source: Photo by the Author

## **5.20 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the substance of the dissertation, I have surveyed the extensive, tangible transformation of the Margi built environment in contemporary times. In my survey results and photographic evidence, we see that Margi came to build their domestic sphere and reshape their cultural landscapes in a manner that evolved out of the influences of missionaries, colonial officers, and influential converts to the new religions or the new power structures over the last 50 years or so. Much of the evidence for this change came either in observations, archives, or interviews with older, influential Margi. The first generation of the Margi to have extensive influences from westernization and modernization seem to have led the changes. In the next chapter, I examine the generation that has followed them, to speculate, through interviews with them, where the youth may take the Margi domestic sphere from here.

## **Chapter 6: What Will Become of the Margi Built Environment in the Future?**

### **6.1: The future of Margi Built Environment through the Eyes of the Margi Youth**

The person is connected to place and is shaped by it. The person gives the place its meaning, but in return receives the place's meaning... The place's character is defined according to the human beings, who impose their views, attitudes, beliefs, symbols, and myths on the places (Shamai, 1991: 355).

This particular research question tries to find out the future of the Margi built environment in the 21st century. To answer this question, I designed a section in the questionnaire targeting Margi youth between the ages seventeen and twenty five; hoping that they might reveal the views of the Margi who will predominate in the 21st century, and in addition to find out what “safe and habitable shelter” means to them. This group has not seen the total process of change that has occurred to this point in the Margi built environment as the older generations, whom I relied on much more in chapters 4 and 5, have. The variables in this particular research include the following questions: What was your birth compound like when you were younger or what did your parents tell you about it? How old were you when your birth compound was modified, and what type of structure was it modified to? Where will you build your dream home - in a city or in your birth place? What type of material will you use to build your dream home - with the traditional or the contemporary European materials? In your opinion, what is the current problem with the Margi built environment? Is living in a city good or bad? Is working in a city good or bad? Is raising a family in a city good or bad? If all the answers are; ‘good,’ ... then why...? And what does a city mean to you? The sample cities I gave are Yola, Maiduguri and Kaduna. Yola and Maiduguri are the current capitals of Adamawa and Borno states. Kaduna is the former capital of the northern region during the colonial administration, and where most northern ethnic groups including the Margi flocked to, seeking new opportunities.

By virtue of Margi youths' belonging in the Margi cultural groups, the schools, the neighborhoods, religious institutions and above all the Margi households, the Margi youth both shape and are shaped by the Margi society and the built environment the society creates. As such they are the ideal group who can reflect and speculate on what the Margi built environment would look like in the near future. As the older generations of Margi society ages, the dynamics between the Margi youth as the torch-bearer and the Margi societies becomes even more profound as it has implications for the future evolution of the Margi built environment.

The UN Habitat World Report from 2005, on the involvement of youth in cultures around the globe (World Youth Chapter Report, 2005), informs our understanding that ageing of society is occurring much more rapidly in the global south than it is in the global north. As of 2005, six of every ten older persons live in the global south, and according to this report, by 2050; the proportion is expected to rise to eighteen. Life expectancy will increase from sixty five to seventy four as well (UN Habitat, 2005; James and James, 2004; James, 2012). In response, the objective of this section of the research is to explain the opinions of the Margi youth toward the future of the Margi built environment, and to reveal their intended participation in terms of what type of building and where will they will build in the future. Their answers will determine the extent to which a distinctive Margi built environment will continue to evolve in the 21st century. Environments are not static; they always are in the process of change. Their decisions will have an impact on future living conditions of the older Margi group. This may be especially significant because, traditionally, aging Margi parents have always depended on their children for support, especially older women who move to stay close to where their eldest male children build homes.

## 6.2: Birth Compound Description

The Margi youth responses to the survey question that asked “what was your birth compound like when you were younger” are tabulated in the following descriptive statistics. As the table indicates, 67.4 % reported that their birth home was of a traditional type, or they were told so by their parents. The traditional type means a mud huts surrounded by thatch mats tied to a wooden stake. Only 9.5% reported their birth home to be what could be considered a modern structure. What this suggests is that, as recently as 1986 - that is, when the Margi youth were at least 5 years old - approximately 67.4% of the Margi domestic sphere were still considered to be traditional type, and 23.1% were mixed

.Table 11: A Table Showing Birth Compound Description

Type	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Modern	9.5	9.5
Traditional	67.4	76.9
Mixed	23.1	100.0

In response to the question “How old were you when your birth compound was modified or changed, and what type of structure was your birth compound changed to?” the ages reported on the survey range from five to twenty four years old. What the range of ages means is that they can remember what they saw or what they were told by their parents. Surprisingly almost all those who reported their birth home as a traditional type reported changes to their homes to a modern type of structure built with modern material. As the following table of field data and statistics created from the field data shows, the birth compound description flipped, so to speak. The changes from traditional to modern registered 70.7 %, leaving the traditional type at 7.3 % and mixed structure at 22.0 %. Since the oldest respondent is 24, this means that these changes

occurred within the past 25 years, with the highest change of 23.1% made in the year 1996, 12.8 % made in 1994, and 10.3 made in 2006.

Table 10: A Table Showing Birth Compound Changes

Changed to:	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Modern	70.7	70.7
Traditional	7.3	78.0
Mixed	22.0	100.0

### 6.3: Description/or Characterization of the current Margi built environment

The interviewees were asked, “How would you describe/characterize the current Margi built environment? Is it lack of planning, unemployment, lack of modern facility, poverty or something else?” The responses are as diverse as the questions asked. As the following table shows, the highest percentages of Margi youth 46.2% are concerned with lack of planning of the Margi built environment; while 33.3 % are concerned with lack of modern facilities. Another 12.8 % of them felt that there were no employment opportunities. But most surprisingly only 7.7% reported poverty; apparently, despite the hopelessness that is clearly visible in the cultural landscape, most of the Margi youth did not feel that they are poor. In addition to some notes made by the respondents on the questionnaires as to... what is the lack of planning and lack of modern facilities means to them, I made several follow-up phone calls to my research area and spoke to some of the youth that I knew to have participated in this survey, and to others randomly within the same age group, inquiring from them further on what the lack of planning and lack of modern facilities meant to them. Almost all reaffirmed that lack of planning to them meant: lack of general planning whereby the area is not divided into equal plots, there are no named streets, house numbers, or parks, no clear demarcation between business and no proper residential subdivision. At the same time, a lack of modern facilities meant to them: a lack of

sewer system, Pipe water connection, public toilets, cooking gas, movie theaters, steady electricity, etc. As five of the respondents summed it up, the availability of all these modern facilities in a home is what constitutes safe and habitable shelter.

Table 11: A Table Showing Description/or Characterization of the Margi Built Environment

Problem	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Unemployment	12.8	12.8
Lack of Modern Facilities	33.4	46.2
Poverty	7.0	53.2
Unplanned	46.8	100.0

“If a person resides in a place for many years, particularly if that person is raised there, then he or she often develops a sense of place, feeling at home and secure there, with feelings of belonging for the place being one anchor for his or her identity” (Hay, 1998: 6).

#### **6.4: Dream Home Location**

Despite all the concerns the Margi youth allude to regarding the Margi built environment, and the favorable response of 90.7 % who favor living in a city, the 88.4 % favor working in the city, and another 88.4 % favor raising a family in the city, the undercurrent of their views of the Margi built environment is reflected in following responses as to where they intend to build their dream homes. In other words, their hearts, and their views of a sense of place are rooted in this place called home. Only 2. 3% of the interviewee desired to build his or her future home in the city. An overwhelming 97.7 % want to build a contemporary bungalow close to their father’s homes in their birth place using modern materials.

Table 12: A Table Showing Dream Home Location

Location	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Stay In Birth Place	97.7	97.7
Different Location	2.3	100.0

This response is interesting given that the majorities of the respondents are fairly educated, with 40.6 % holding Nigerian national certificates of education or ordinary diplomas, and are teachers in high school; and another 31 % of them have a college degree and are professionals in various government ministries and quasi-government organization. Only 14.3 % of them have standard seven educations, the equivalent of seven years of school.

Table 13: A Table Showing Level of Education of Respondents

Level of education	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Standard or Class 7	14.3	14.3
Secondary School /5 year Teachers College	14.2	28.5
NCE/Diploma	40.6	69.1
1st Degree	31.0	100.0

The Margi traditional domestic sphere is evolving as modernization, under the umbrella of globalization, has found a foothold in Margi cultural landscape. Just as the way the younger Margi generation belongs to the Margi built environment that is rooted in the past and at the same time also involved in the future, so has the modern era rooted itself in Margi land and in the heart of Margi people and their descendants.

## Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

### 7.1: How Unnecessary Wars and Oppression of the ‘Others’ in the Margi Cultural Landscape Stalled the Margi Ethnic Groups’ Development

For the discussion, first I review an attempt made by other groups in order to control, modernize or change the Margi ethnic group’s ways of life. These attempts to change or modernize the Margi way of life, like the earlier period when Margi were raided for slaves, starts with the way the clans kept on moving constantly from one location to the other or chose certain strategic locations in order to avoid their enemies. These activities are the reason why the Margi ethnic group was restricted to nearly impenetrable environs, which also prevented contact between the Margi clans for quite sometimes. The cosmic meanings embedded in the names of Margi towns, villages, clan names, and other physical structures in the Margi built environment are sometimes suggestive of this bundle of struggles with both isolation and evasion. For example, the Margi village about 7 miles north of Gulak is called ‘*wuro ngayandi*’ in the Fulani language; which means ‘the stubborn town.’ One wonders, given the Fulani’s turbulent relationship with the Margi, if this is a stubborn town because it was difficult to control? Another Margi town about 10 miles northwest of Gulak was known for a long time as ‘*wuro dole*’ in Fulani, which means ‘forceful town.’ Even though the Margi changed it back to the original name of Kirchinga in due course, the Fulani name is again suggestive of the challenging relations between the Margi and their neighbors. The literal meaning of the town of “Lassa,” where the Brethren Missionaries first established a station in 1927, is “gone and got lost.” Could this be due to the unplanned separation that occurred in haste during the dispersion from Gazargamu? This is, after all, where the Gadzama clan came from before Idris Alauma took it by force and made it his headquarters. The meaning of “Gulak,” which was originally called “*Gulagu*,” the second

Margi town where the Brethren Missionaries planted a station, is “looking for a path” - a path to where has never been explained. The clan I belong to is originally called ‘*birthing*,’ meaning the movement of an ant called “*thing*,” that is known to move in circles in order to avoid its enemies. Even if the missionaries Anglicized the name to ‘Birdling,’ the original name begs the question of why a group of people would move around in a circle like an evasive ant, or name themselves after that movement. I argue that these cosmic meanings imbued in Margi names can also tie the Margi ethnic group into the universal truth of human existence in relation to the earth, to geography. Whichever part of this space humankind carved out and converted into a living place, especially as a group, in some way the place is imbued with a cosmic meaning, at least for the group and their associates. Furthermore, revealing even a few of such meanings in the Margi cosmic evolution will help others to capture those elements of Margi life that cannot be captured by observing the physical structure and layout of any of the Margi towns and villages (Simone, 2009: x). There is a constructive quality to Margi names, tied to processes of place making and meaning (Myers 1996).

For the rest of the analysis in this section, I rely on works by earlier Africanist scholars like M. G. Smith, James Vaughn, Derrick Lange, Anthony Kirk-Greene, M. S. Kiwanuka, and C. E. Faw, to mention but a few. I also concentrate on the works of James Ferguson, Pierre Bourdieu, Samir Amin, and Abdoumalig Simone. Many of these scholars have helped us to explore how colonization, globalization or what we call modernity today reached into the territories and built environments of African peoples like the Margi. One caveat to their very varied works, though, it is the limited degree to which there is an acknowledgment that the processes of subjugation started on African soil. Each successive group of the perpetrators of external oppression started by feeling they were superior, and they consequently developed the desire to take over the

cultural landscape of the “others” under the pretense of civilizing, helping, or to change their victims’ ways of life. From ancient Rome through medieval Mali, and Songhai we can find examples of such external and internal perpetrators who serve as patterns for different forms of colonialism (Kiwanuka, 1973). In due course, such actions were renamed conquest or subjugation. In each case of these conquests, be it by internal or external forces there has been continued presence of the subjugators, so that ownership of the territory could be legitimized in the form of occupation.

As I have indicated in the previous chapters, the Margi lived as a thriving civilization around Lake Chad. As a part of its own imperial quest for subjugation, another ethnic group the Saifawa dynasty showed up in the Margi cultural landscape. The dynasty felt they were stronger and better armed and decided to attempt the first wave of colonization and modernization of the Margi ethnic group in the form of forceful conversion to Islam and the Kanem Bornu empire under the leadership of Idris Alauma in 1564 (Lange, 1987). The Arabic word 'Islam' simply means 'submission'. In a religious context it means complete submission to the will of ‘Allah’ an Arabic name for God, which is used by Arab, African Muslims, and Christians alike (<http://www.quran.com>). The forceful expeditionary activities took place between 1564 – 1576; but the Margi did not want any part of it, as such the Margi left the general area and dispersed in different directions under autonomous family patriarchs and settled in various locations, albeit within the same general vicinity (Lange, 1987; Kirk-Greene, 1958: 18; Birdling, 2009). This is an example of what Samir Amin meant when he wrote in *Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa-Origins and Contemporary Forms* (1972) that;

[t]here were wars and anarchy almost everywhere on the continent, and the flight of peoples towards regions of shelter which were difficult to reach and also very often poor - such as those of the paleo-negritic peoples in the over-populated mountains of West

Africa. It all ended with an alarming decrease in the population. The processes of integration were stopped, as well as the construction of large communities, in the pre-mercantilist period. Instead there was an incredible fragmentation, isolation, and entanglement of peoples, and this, as we know, is the root cause of one of the most serious handicaps of contemporary Africa (Amin, 1972: 513).

Amin was writing about the displacement set in motion by the trans-Atlantic slave trade, but his description is right on target for the Margi experiences of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Almost half of the Margi along with many other ethnic groups like them headed to the Mandara mountains for refuge in order to get away from Idris Alauma. The other half of the Margi and other ethnic groups dispersed to the plains and isolated rocky areas.

The second wave of colonization and modernization of the Margi ethnic group started almost 230 years later when the Margi and other ethnic group like them found themselves in the Sokoto Caliphate. This later development came in the form of the jihad organized by Shehu Othman Dan Fodio in 1804 for the defense and expansion of Islam. But this time it included a larger territory with larger number of ethnic groups including old Hausa (Habe) chiefdoms. Though initially directed only to the Hausa states, the incentives that came with conquest carried the Fulani further to Adamawa in the Northern Cameroons, where the Margi ethnic group had sought and found refuge away from Idris Alauma (Smith, 1964: 165).

The third wave of colonization, globalization, and modernization of the Margi ethnic group started in the year 1884, with the Germans, and then in 1903 with the British (Lugard, 1959). After the development of the mercantile system in the 17th century, England, France, Holland, Portugal, Spain, and Denmark all acquired colonies overseas (Amin, 1972; Kiwanuka, 1973). Through the Berlin Conference and the ensuing scramble for Africa, Great Britain acquired northern Nigeria, in addition to the coastal territory around Lagos they already held. The Sokoto caliphate had existed for 98 years, but the British confiscated the land and created the British

colonial territory called the Northern Protectorate in 1903. When Lugard made his intentions clear to the Sultan that he wishes to establish British rule in Northern Nigeria, the Sultan Attahiru replied that, “between the Muslims and infidels there could be nothing but war.” (Smith, 1964:184). By the end of 1903, Lugards’ forces had overrun the caliphate and its forthcoming administrative arrangement had been established. The Protectorate was governed through the Provinces, each under a resident responsible to Lugard, and the provinces were subdivided into Divisions under officers responsible to the residents (Blackwell, 1927; 1969; Smith, 1964). Time had come for the emirs, who were literarily former owners of the ‘West African form of plantations’ in the Sokoto Caliphate, to bow down to the British musket. Their bowing down meant the beginning of physical freedom of the Margi and other ethnic groups like them in the former Caliphate and an end to their isolation (Vaughn 1964; Kirk-Greene, 1958; Vaughan and Kirk-Greene 1995).

Figure 93: Four of Sokoto Caliphate Rulers bow down to British Officers while their *Dogaris*, Body Guards watching on the right in Northern Nigeria



Source: Colonial Records, Rhodes Library Oxford, U. K.

## **7.2: The Trickle Down of the Neoliberal Economic Activities in the Margi Cultural Landscape**

The changes the Margi ethnic group and others like them went through starting with Idris Alauma through the Sokoto Caliphate to the British colony foreshadows my discussion about the neoliberal economic order, which has replaced colonization. James Ferguson in *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* claims that globalization “hops” in Africa, rather than “flows.” He further distinguishes between “useful” and “useless” Africa for neoliberal globalization: “Capital does not ‘flow’ from New York to Angola’s oil fields, or from London to Ghana’s gold mines; it hops, neatly skipping over most of what lies in between. Second, where capital has been coming to Africa at all, it has largely been concentrated in spatially segregated, socially ‘thin’ mineral-extraction enclaves” (Ferguson, 2006: 54). I would like to add to the discourse of capital Ferguson started. Beginning in the mid-1970s, but pertinently in the 1980s, a new wave of what the capitalist west called development aid was introduced, but with strings attached to tilt development towards the invading transnational corporations’ interest. This precisely describes the neoliberal wave of globalization and modernity that trickled down to the Margi and others like them across Africa, and subsequently affected the built environments of the ‘others’ in the places in between the hops.

Globalization and modernity hopped over the Margi domain, because there was nothing there in terms of minerals to benefit the British Government or the independent nation-state of Nigeria. Secondly, this mountainous region was too rugged even for profitable farming. Just as Ferguson gave the example on how capital leaps over other places and people, modernity leapt over the Mandara mountains enclaves; similarly French globalization and modernity hopped over the Kabyle peasants in French Algeria (Ferguson, 2006; Bourdieu, 1960). But at the same

time Kabyle peasants and the Mandara mountains inhabitants existed within the colonial governments' bureaucracies' variously defined objectives, including taxing the inhabitants. On the one hand, the deliberate objectives of the colonial order was to create and maintain a future labor force; on the other hand, (in case of the Margi) the missionaries showed up and tapped into this existing framework already organized by the British, and started churches and schools in this general area. In 1927, American missionaries started such a school and church among the Margi, followed by the Catholic missionaries in 1948. When the colonial tax system stopped with the coming of independence, the missionary school fees took over the income from the Margi peanut farm, and that of other groups like them that attend the missionary schools.

The colonial authorities were perhaps more than glad that the missionaries took upon themselves the burden of “civilizing” the Margi as a potential work force for the future. This certainly made their job easier, especially when they knew that the Christian faith is mostly about peace, and had the potential to unify warring clans. One of the early missionary-educated Bura man, Bitrus Sawa, who belonged to the first ethnic group that the American Church of the Brethren had contact with in 1923, put it this way: “One of the great results was the fact that the new faith brought together people from all walks of life and from diverse tribal and clan backgrounds into new brotherhood; reconciliations began to take place across all lines of hostility, a new equality of all men before God produced its transformation in individual and communal life” (Faw, 1973: 84). In view of this development, the colonial authorities figured that the best way to rule was to convince the clan leaders that were still residing in the mountainous enclaves to bring their people out of the mountains to the slope, to have enough space to grow the peanuts and the cotton that British industries needed, as Christian subjects.

One good example of such action by the colonial authorities came to light in 1973 when James Vaughan interviewed the Margi king (Vaughan, 1975). The king narrated how, in 1956, the colonial authorities convinced him to move his entire village of three hundred or more people who were living on top of the Mandara mountains to migrate to the mountain slopes. Each head of the household was given two pounds as an incentive. But we know that, on their arrival, within a few months, the neighborhood was given western clothes especially the women in exchange for their goat and ram skin attire. In a few more months, their children were recruited to attend the newly built schools. In about 10 years, the educated children moved to big towns to work and came home with money to build triangular or shotgun-like homes.

Ferguson further informed our understanding of neoliberal activities by pointing out that “Usable Africa gets secure enclaves—noncontiguous “useful” bits that are secured, policed, and, in a minimal sense, governed through private or semiprivate means. These enclaves are increasingly linked up, not in a national grid, but in transnational networks that connect economically valued spaces dispersed around the world in a point-to-point fashion” (Ferguson, 2006: 56). The “useless” African places like Margi land was left fragmented and therefore could no longer have the collective power to bargain or trade. The Kabyle peasants of Algeria and their urban sub-peasants, that is the lower working class, could not constitute a revolutionary force as well (Bourdieu, 1960: 134). Their precarious economic situation, just as that of the Margi, did not allow them to make the rational calculations of the characteristic of the French or the British imported capitalist economy, much less achieve class consciousness. These two examples of ethnic groups are surely models for disenchantment from the world, two examples of groups stripped of the right to a good life by the activities of a more powerful world that eventually guaranteed the activities of the neoliberal economic order. On one hand, the traditional order of

Kabyle peasants and the Margi as they had once been can be viewed through such narratives (Bourdieu, 1960: 141). On the other hand, the economic dispositions of the two groups in the 1960s can speak of what colonialism is about. Even though colonialism lost its legitimacy, institutions like the World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF) took over, as the continuation of the colonial enterprise. And this leads to how the totality of globalization, and modernization affected the built environment of the Margi ethnic group and others like them across Africa. Just as it is for the Margi, for the Kabyle “the *domestic sphere* is an empire within an empire, but one which always remains subordinate because, even when it exhibits all the properties and all the relations which define the archetypal world, it remains an inverted reflection, a world in reverse” (Bourdieu, 1960 : 153). And so are the built environments of many marginalized African ethnic groups like the Margi of northeastern Nigeria.

Yet it is important to recognize that, even if the Margi were placed in a subordinate, marginalized, “useless” zone of the colonial world, and thus in a similarly “othered” edge of the age of neoliberalism, they are not stripped of all agency in the transformation of their domestic sphere. This agency is evident in the claims of my next section below.

### **7.3: Who Has the Right to Say They Invented the High Style Residential Structures Anyway?**

In this section I review writing of a few urban theorists to make the case that the invention or ownership of today’s modern high style residential structure does not exclusively belong to one group. In other words, I am asking, ‘which civilization has the right to say they invented the current high style residential structures?’ In my opinion no single civilization came up with today’s modern type of residential structure, such as those that now predominate in Margi land, be they shotgun-like or bungalow, or other house styles

found among many former subjects of British colonial territories. In her book, *Ordinary Cities*, Jennifer Robinson (2006) argues that “one of the strongest effects of Western urban theory’s ongoing association with a restricted conceptualization of urban modernity is that it postulates a privileged link between modernity and certain kinds of societies.” In so doing, the theory has “portrayed rural and non-western societies as static and closed; the anti-thesis of urban modernity.” I am following in Robinson’s footsteps, in saying that the western claim to architectural modernity is not exclusive, and I am refusing their claim of the ownership of high style residential structures (Robinson, 2006: xi). There is a need to unravel and retell how various cultures around the globe contributed to the evolution of what we call the shotgun, bungalow, and subsequently the high style residential structures of today, instead of aligning their development with specific kinds of societies (Robinson, 2006: 14). Western architectural historians typically ally the emergence of high style to the west only. But after a critical examination of the evolution of what became the shotgun, bungalow or high style, one finds that it is a global hybrid (King 1984). Robinson’s argument in relation to cities can be a basis for my argument about the Margi domestic sphere. The west got away with this claim to ownership of modernity as far back to the age of Enlightenment. At that time, Newtonian science was exerting its greatest influence on European cultural expression and sought to find in human affairs natural laws similar to those that have been discovered in the physical universe. For people like Kant in those days, the Enlightenment which birthed modernity was a God-sent liberating tool from authorities, and human reason would be capable of answering all questions (Gilman, 2003). But contrary to Kant’s conception of modernity as a liberating tool from authorities, the colonial authorities adopted the reverse; in fact, for them modernity became the tool of coercion. Just as Robinson used the notions of *Ordinary Cities* to interrogate the geo-

politics of urban theory and development, we can see how the African vernacular architectural ideas went with African ethnic groups, through slavery, across non-African space to places like North America, South America, and the Caribbean, suggesting the greater need to interrogate the ownership of architectural forms. Over the slavery years, the African vernacular architectural ideas were interpreted in these cultures around the globe; and finally the hybrid form that resulted from these transformations went back with African freed slaves to various West African coastal regions of Dahomey, Lagos, and Freetown.

In his work, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, David Lowenthal (1985: 69; *emphasis mine*) opined that “Tradition shouldn’t be the enemy of change” and that “we cannot function without familiar environments... *which we link...* with the recognizable past, but we are paralyzed unless we transform or replace inherited relics.” Similarly, Anthony King, in his article, “Internationalism, Imperialism, Post-colonialism, Globalization: Frameworks for Vernacular Architecture” (in which he drew extensively from Dell Upton’s *Ordinary Buildings*), suggested that, the word ‘ordinary building’ has the power to transport individuals back in time and space...to their roots, a place of birth and early memories, be it a castle or a mud hut. Therefore King resented the wording ‘international’ used by two prominent authors, Hitchcock and Johnson, who wrote the book “*Styles: Architecture since 1922*,” to accompany an exhibition at New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 1932. I agree with King that the word “national” should have been used, as it is best understood in relation to the territorial nation-state where the building exists (King, 2004: 1). Moreover it was not collectively produced by all countries. At that point in time much of the world’s spaces were colonized; therefore, it was not a world of nation-states, “but a world of empires and colonies; not an international but more an inter-colonial or inter-imperial world, most of which had not gone through the experience of

industrialization” (King, 2004: 2). It was rather the architectural style of international industrial capitalism, as it was developed in Euro-America, which had its origins in this particular system of economic, political, and social organization and mode of production.

King concluded with a brief history of the origin and the development of a particular vernacular building, the bungalow. It was identified in what is today’s modern Bangladesh in 1659 by British colonial officers and introduced to Britain. In early 1880, the idea of a bungalow moved to the United States, and grew in maturity in California and subsequently became a vernacular house type found in the suburban United States. This Anglo-Indian bungalow had a significant influence on the design thinking of Britain’s leading twentieth century architects, like C. E. A. Voysey (King, 2004: 3-7). The bungalow architectural style followed imperial Britain to colonial northern Nigeria; the bungalow is now thoroughly a part of Margi architecture, just as the shotgun style was adapted into Margi styles in the form of “Chiki da Palo” in the early 1960s. Now, the question I am asking is how this movement of ideas across transnational space can be reinterpreted in a way that connects all of the “agencies involved for the interpretation of the social meaning of vernacular buildings” (King, 2004: 5).

The elements needed for reinterpretation of the transnational space have always been there. The Yoruba from West Africa were taken to Haiti and Brazil as slaves. When some of them freed themselves in 1803, they took with them a new form of African architecture (watered down or modified by French and Greek architecture) to New Orleans and Lagos. The only thing that needs to be done is to understand and interpret it, as King suggested, in ways that make sense. One of these ways could be simply to give credit to all who were involved: the African slaves, the French, Bangladeshi people and the colonial officers for the evolution of the shotgun and the bungalow. In other words all of the building types we have today in Margi land, as in many

places, are hybrid styles owned by all involved, Africa, Bangladesh, Britain and America. The current architectural form has clearly become a set of overlapping circles of knowledge, as Upton had proposed, refined and re-defined by being located in cross-cultural global frameworks. In view of this, King suggested that, in fact, globalization, which is another name for modernity, tends to suggest a singular process as its derivative globe. I suggest instead interconnectedness, where all the cultures around the world and the agencies that keep it running.

To further show how modern architecture is not owned solely by any nation-state, let me turn to John Michael Vlach. In his article, “The Brazilian House in Nigeria: The Emergence of a 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Vernacular House Type, Vlach argues that “despite the plainness of this building [the Brazilian house], its history is complex and convoluted. Vast global interactions are shielded behind its modest façade.” Vlach, argues that “during the 20th century the balance between tradition and change in West Africa has tipped decidedly in the direction of change,” and that domestic housing is one of the crucial areas that have been affected. He analyzes how the Yoruba’s traditional society changed their houses in a way that made the imported design their own. The imported design Vlach is referring to was brought to Lagos by freed slaves from Brazil at the stage of Britain’s colonial conquest of Nigeria. These freed slaves claimed Yoruba origin, though they had been taken against their will as slaves to Brazil (Vlach, 1984: 6). Vlach also noted that as early as 1836, many of these Afro-Brazilians made their way back to Dahomey, a neighboring country to Nigeria, but most of those that returned to Lagos were native Yoruba or Yoruba descendants. By the 1880s, there were 3,321 Brazilian ex-slaves in Lagos; this number constituted 9% of the population of Lagos at that time. They brought with them building skills, and built places like the Shi’ite Bye Mosque, Central Mosque, and Holy Cross Cathedral, in addition to various models of residences. Their skill and hard work encouraged the British

colonial governor, then Sir Henry McAlum, to send the first batch of Nigerians to England for vocational training in 1897 (Vlach, 1984: 8).

The arc of Vlach's narrative fits the case of Margi architectural evolution. There is a verifiable beginning, in the form of round huts and stacked stone fences in the Mandara mountains enclave and the plains of northeastern Nigeria. When those in the mountains moved to the slopes of the mountains, no one ordered them to modify the house style by using all mud for the huts and thatch mats for the fences. Then in due course the thatch fence was replaced with a mud fence, and so on. This clearly shows how cultures invent their own modernity, being inventive rather than imitative of a superior, mythic West (Robinson 2006). To drive the point Vlach made about the imported Brazilian architecture home, Vlach also cited Reis Filho (1973) and Olinto (1980), both of whom verified that the Brazilian house styles found in Lagos represented a direct restatement of the architecture found in such Brazilian cities as Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Recife. Also they added new information that, in fact, prior to the Yoruba slave descendants' repatriation, it had been the high point of the Greek revival embellishment in Brazilian architecture (Vlach, 1984: 9). Greek architecture influenced Brazilian architecture and the ideas that the slaves brought, and then the hybrid product found its way to Lagos and influenced that of the Yoruba. The Yoruba who now modified and claimed the new Brazilian architecture as their own took it with them to the northern part of Nigeria, a fact confirmed by John E. Flagg (1952: 113), as cited by Vlach: "today in Nigerian cities far to the north of Yoruba territories as Kano and Jos one will see a few of the Brazilian houses; they are signs of Yoruba presence" (Vlach 1984: 19).

This architectural global interaction that begins to engulf West Africa has also been attributed to the Creoles from Sierra Leone; the Creoles are freed slaves repatriated to the West

African coast from the United States. Some of these Creoles settled on the West African coast (in the area now named Sierra Leone), but some of them returned to Lagos as early as 1839 (Vlach, 1984: 9). Kopytoff (1965: 44) also suggested that this group of ex-slaves stood in the middle-ground between the elite European administrators and the indigenous populace. They arrived from Freetown with Christianity and a new fabricated house type believed to have spread inland, information that is seconded by Mabogunje (1961: 136), even though Mabogunje believed that the Anglo- Creole architecture did not have an impact on the local building practices as the Afro-Brazilians architecture did. In addition, Vlach also concedes that when all this was going on, there were European merchants and missionaries present in Lagos at that time, and that no one can avoid their influence in this drama. Missionaries in particular played their role in this architectural evolution of the Yoruba. They preached against polygamy, they demanded one man, one woman marriage - which translated into new residential patterns, since the newly sanctioned nuclear family had no need for a large old fashioned compound (Ojo 1966: 156).

As with the Yoruba, so with the Margi: with the coming of the American Brethren Missionary, they changed their religion to Christianity; then the Margi adopted a smaller family structure just like the newly Christian Yoruba. To some degree, the Margi *chose* western economic structures and politics, and subsequently declared war on their inherited cultural values. They started imitating and believing everything the white missionaries did to be in the realm of modernity (Birdling, 2009). With the creation of the Nigerian nation-state, the Margi missionary-educated elites went to the cities and lived with the Yoruba, as they worked as police constables, soldiers and clerks. They came home and built the type of structure they saw, while those who remained in Margi domain work as the primary school teachers, gardeners or dispensers, and built what they saw the missionaries were building. In this way, the Margi

remain busy trying to stay in the realm of hybrid modernity. Vlach's final opinion, which I second, is that these elements of culture acquired from the so-called developed high societies do not have to be used in the way their originator intended. In fact, the Margi architecture evolved to a middle ground, in which both tradition and change are joined together, where the past cannot be declared lost, and the present is not totally ignored. It is a new tradition, but one that is not totally new. I prefer the notion of hybrid tradition that is owned by both the past and the present, but independent and capable of surviving on its own as the new global modernity.

#### **7.4: Discussion of Statistical Analysis**

Here I present a re-analysis of my field data using a different, more quantitative method, statistical analysis, to see if the outcome is consistent. I then use this to contemplate whether or not the data continue to support my dissertation statement on how the Margi built environment has been following the pattern of the global evolution. I used analysis of variance (Anova) using a Section of the data from 1921 to 2000. I also used the same data for graphical analysis to see if both identifies whether or not there has been consistency in the development or evolution of the Margi built environment.

I used analysis of variance to test the positive and negative changes of the total rates of infrastructure constructed in the Margi built environment over time. I have indicated earlier that I am most interested in the change that occurred beginning in the year 1960, and that is the period the test began. The test shows a statistically significant increase in the infrastructure built across the board that includes houses, schools, churches, mosques, and stores (the term stores is used to account for restaurants, bars open markets, and provision stores). The increase between 1960 (M=820 SD=420.71) and 1970 (M=1720 SD=389.97) is statistically significant  $F(1, 4) = 11.57$ ,  $p=.027$ , (see table 14).

Table 14: A Table Showing the Statistical Analysis of Number of Infrastructure Built From 1960 – 1970 in the (MBE)

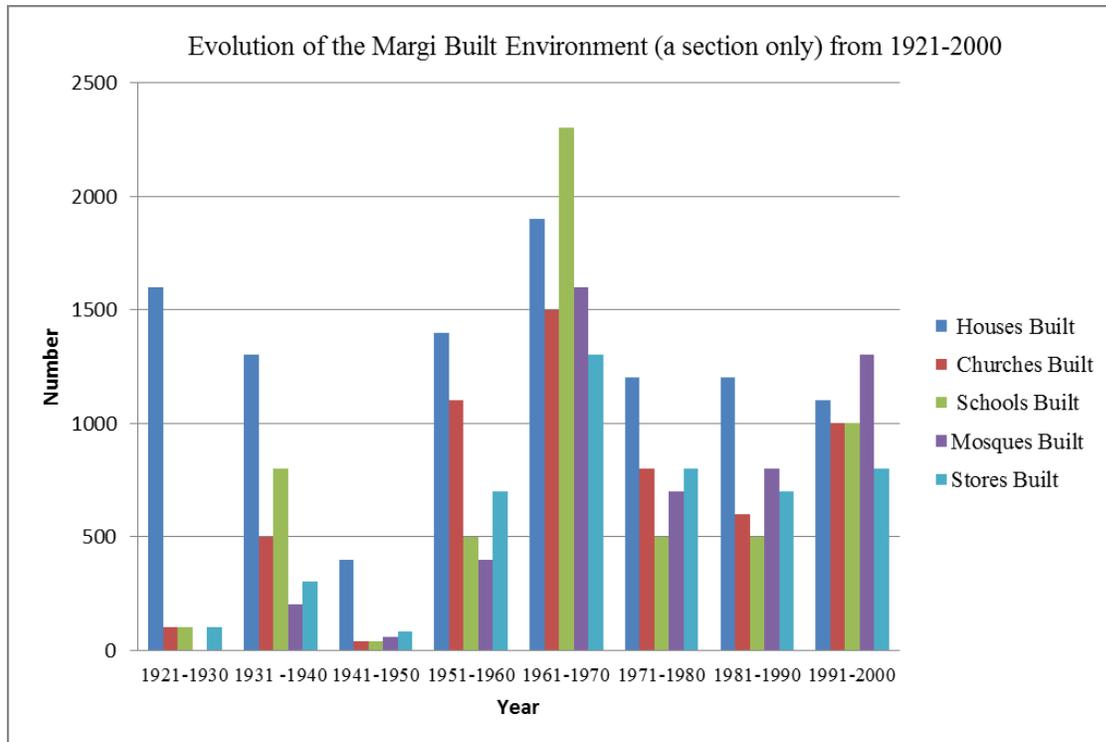
Year	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Year_1960	820.00	420.71	5
Year_1970	1720.00	389.87	5

Inversely, there was also a statistically significant decrease in building across all building types between 1970 (M=1720 SD=389.97) and 1980 (M=800.00 SD=254.95),  $F(1, 4) = 16.15$ ,  $p=.016$ .

Table 15: A Table Showing the Statistical Analysis of Number of Infrastructure Built From 1970 – 1980 in the (MBE)

Year	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Year_1970	1720.00	389.87	5
Year_1980	800.00	254.95098	5

Figure 90: The Graph of the Evolution of the Margi Built Environment from 1921–2000; (a section) showing the Number of Houses, Churches, Schools, Mosques, and Stores built every 10 years



### 7.5: What the Graph is showing

When the presence of the colonial officers started to be felt in the Margi cultural landscape, coupled with the coming of the American Church of the Brethren, and the Catholic Church, there was a general change. The Margi ethnic group who went to the mountainous enclaves to hide from Idris Alaumas’ expedition and the slave raiding by the Sokoto Caliphate started to come out of the mountainous enclaves and settle on the plains, this brought about massive construction of new hamlets in the Margi cultural landscape starting from 1927, and reached its peak in 1935, then dropped to its lowest in 1945, Most of the Margi settled around the missionary schools, churches, dispensary and other amenities provided, and the built environment expanded dramatically after 1950 in direct relation to this. For example, below is an extended portion of

notes taken during one of the Church of the Brethren planning meetings. It reveals an expansion plan to various Margi and non-Margi towns and villages:

[N]umber of New Stations planned 7. Names of Towns- villages or districts in which these are to be: (1) Mubi (2) Gulak (3) Gwoza (4) Shafa (5) West Margi (6) Babur, and (7) Higi. There is a twofold strategy in planning for these seven new stations. In the first place there is an area in the northeastern part of Nigeria which has been regarded by our fellow mission societies as being the area for which we, as the Church of the Brethren, are responsible. Mohammedanism, which has the prestige of being the religion of most of the ruling groups and is thus strongly entrenched in government circles, will use every advantage it has to win these hundreds of thousands and make them a part of its religio-political set up. The Roman Catholics with their well-planned strategy are now actively trying to get a foothold in this area. We have decided that God helping us we will not fail and so have planned a certain number of these new stations as outposts or pioneer stations in the area which has not up until now been occupied. The proposed stations at Mubi, Gwoza, and West Margi and to a lesser extent Higi and Babur will be in the nature of such outposts or frontier lines. Gulak is about 16 or 18 miles northeast of Lassa and is in the most thickly populated area of the Margi who speak the dialect which is used at Lassa. The Village Head of Gulak has about 6,000 people under him. Gulak itself is about two miles from Duhu where some years ago Risku had charge of an out station and lived at Duhu about 2 years. The old village of Gulak is in the Gulak Mountain – but now, with the exception of the Chief and a dozen or so other families who still live on the old village site, all the people have scattered out over the plains and live in scattered hamlets.

The American Church of Brethren five year plan clearly supports the graph showing, an increase in the houses, churches, schools, and stores at that time. There was also, around the same time, church planting in two Margi towns by the Catholic Church. Note that the mosques were far fewer in the Margi domain, because, based on their experiences with Idris Alauma and the Sokoto Caliphate, Islam was less attractive to the Margi ethnic group at that point in their history.

## **7.6: The Effect of Global Financial Activities in the Margi Built Environment**

One may ask why the construction dropped to its nadir in 1945. The answer is that after the euphoria over the arrival of missionaries to Margi land subsided, there were not any significant

income earners among the Margi, other than the seasonal travelling by the Margi men to the towns of Yalo, Maiduguri, Mubi or Bama. In most cases that lasted for about two months, at most three during the dry season when there was no farming activity. As this graph seems to suggest, there was statistically significant growth, beginning especially in the early 1960s. This can be attributed to the first missionary school graduates who completed the first four, seven, or ten years of school and obtained jobs from the missionaries as carpenters, gardeners, cook, and even as elementary school teachers. The next thing is that there was euphoria over Nigerian independence. That euphoria cannot be seen outside of the creation of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The latter two were established at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944. The initial purpose of the World Bank, originally named the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, was to help rebuild Europe after World War II. Its first loan was for post-war reconstruction in France in 1947 (Mason and Asher, 1973). Other developing nations including African countries were not among the bank's priorities at the time. In 1957, the majority of the loans made by the World Bank (approximately 52.7%) went to industrialized countries ([www.cadtm.org](http://www.cadtm.org); 2 November, 2006). It was not until 1960, that the Bank came up with a specific instrument for granting low-interest loans to developing countries. It did so, some scholars argue, for the sole purpose of stopping the spread of communism (The U.S. Perspective on Globalization; CIAO DATE: 9/99).

Therefore I suggest that the reason the Margi built environment started to evolve from 1960 as the analysis of variance and the graph shows, and reached its apex in new construction in 1970 must include a combination of: the decision by the British to grant independence in 1960; the decision by the World Bank to start granting development loans to developing countries; the creation of new and better jobs that came with the creation of independent Nigeria; and the

competition to win friendship with newly independent states including Nigeria by both the Soviet block and the west, which brought capital to the new states (and Nigeria's share trickled down to the Margi cultural landscape). Above all, the products of the missionary schools were now taking their place in the Nigerian public service and private companies all over the newly independent state of Nigeria. But why did the construction rate drop from 1970 to 1980 and remain level from 1980 to 1990; the clue can be found in the next section.

### **7.7: Structural Adjustment**

Western capitalist countries crafted a program called 'Structural Adjustment' in collaboration with 'individual vulture capitalists,' and sold it to the leaders of developing countries under the credible pretense to paraphrase,: "this is what saved us...it will save you too." From then on, Structural Adjustment was exported to already vulnerable places and people around the world, including Africa. In a way, this single action on the part of the western countries meant that the Keynesian economics of the 1960s, which were loaded with idealism and its dualist conceptions of development, were defunct. The powerful spatial metaphor frequently articulated in the discourse on Structural Adjustment was globalization, and it failed. To be fair, when it comes to the failure of Structural Adjustment Programs, at least in Africa but pertinently in Nigeria, there were both global and local dimensions. The global dimension was that, on one hand, all activities that made a profit should be controlled by private investors, which were mostly foreign nationals (<http://www.cadtm.org> 2 November, 2006; Collier, 1991: 339-356).

On the other hand, providing the infrastructure to sustain the privately owned money-making industries fell on the public sector, and the costs needed to be met by indigenous society in order to attract private investors, who would create jobs, or so they said. In other words, the World Bank recommended privatization of profit making combined with the socialization of the cost of

anything that was not directly profitable. There was as much internal failure as there was external though, because an historical geography of capitalism informs our understanding that the two have never operated in grand isolation from each other. In Africa, and perhaps especially in Nigeria, there were massive concentrations of economic and political power in the hands of a few, which led to rampant corruption.

The standard economic terminology really belies the condition of the continent in 1981. The 1970s saw a spectacular increase in black-market activity, and in a number of countries - Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Uganda, for example - the 'underground' economy came to dwarf the official economy. In many others - Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Zaire, and Zambia among them - elaborate networks of formally illegal transactions and trade interpenetrated the higher levels of government. (Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 26, No. 1. 1988: 113-137; Collier, 1995)

The politically powerful few helped facilitate structural adjustment and reorganized production through the deregulation of markets, devaluation of currencies, internal and external trade liberalization, and of course devised methods to siphon the sum of loan obtained and transport it back to the western countries, but this time around to private accounts.

In the Margi cultural landscape, the presence of that “politically powerful few” in the 1970s and 1980s was virtually nonexistent. The decrease in new structures in the built environment is a corollary of that marginalization.

### **7.8: The Silent Cultural Clashes between the Three Groups in the Margi Cultural Landscape: What the Margi Did or Did Not Do**

In summary, the groups referred to in this heading, in other words the essentials that make up the puzzle responsible for starting the transformation of the Margi built environment, are: the presence of the British Government on Margi land, from Lugard on. Lugard was responsible for initiating the links of the Margi cultural landscape as well as aspects of the social and political society, to the colonizer’s world, via ties between the district officers, the emirs, the Margi *ptil*

(chief), and the neighborhood heads (the *bulama*). The unspoken power of the colonial spatial system was in part exercised through the provision of things, such as wells or vaccinations for humans and cattle, among other things; but also through taking things away, such as via tax monies, peanuts, cotton and extremely cheap labor from the inhabitants.

The key actors mentioned above are responsible for organizing, stabilizing and holding together the relationships between environments, bodies, materials, and institutions that must be constantly refined and readjusted for the benefit of the colonial government (Simone, 2009: 13). This was followed by the presence of missionaries, represented by two denominations of western Christian churches; the America Brethren Church and the Catholic Church. The missionaries were incapable of accepting the reality of Margi culture as they found it then, so they created places in the form of both non-material and material culture (the church, the schools, and the dispensaries within the Margi cultural landscape) to change the Margi culture according to their ideas of what they thought ought to be (Sack, 2001: 117). The Margi ethnic group willingly participated in the new activity that embodied a new lifestyle. It gradually encroached into their cultural landscape through the colonial officers with their bigger guest houses, or the missionaries with their new school, new medicine and new religion. The Margi choose to start modernizing their domestic sphere to conform to the new western norms; and they found themselves striving to buy the western material to construct semi-western homes. The new norms clearly led many other ethnic groups in Africa that came in contact with missionaries, colonial authorities, or other European settlers to adapt to the newly imported construction styles by their new neighbors.

### **7.9: Resistance to Loss of the Core Values of the Margi in the Forms of Compound Fencing; Detached Kitchen Space; Animal Pens, Guinea Corn Granaries; and young Margi generations intent to build their future homes in Margi cultural landscape.**

Although cultural imperialism, that is, the spread of ideas and values, norms, and knowledge from the former colonial powers, has taken the place of formal colonialism, I argue that such structures as Margi fencing show a counter-narrative. The materials used to construct the fencing of the compound have evolved from stacked stones, to thatch mats, to mud, and finally to western cement blocks, but the meaning as a core value in Margi culture has stood the test of time. In other words, its meaning and use is still the same. The Margi thatch-roof mud hut kitchen, which used to be attached to women's sleeping huts, is now transformed into a detached rectangular structure with cement block walls and corrugated roof; the animal pens that used to be attached to the mans' sleeping room are now detached and built with cement block; while guinea corn granaries are mostly still constructed in traditional ways. In terms of cultural value, rather than materials or shapes for structures, each has stood the test of time. The material may have changed, but the use, location and relationship to other spaces are still the same. Above all as the result of the survey shows in chapter six, the Margi core value of younger men building their homes very close to their fathers are still the same.

Margi cultural peripheries are changing rapidly along with their built environment. Are these changes equal to the outward sign of the Margi inward transformation? If not, what are the Margi core cultures that are not changing rapidly, and are still embedded in the western architecture currently being adopted?. My field research seems to suggest that, there has been a paternalist notion that westerners came to help the Margi. Therefore the western modernist preachers replaced formal colonialism with cultural imperialism; and one can argue that they were also

seeds-planters for capitalist wealth acquisition. But there was a considerable amount of Margi core values resistance to every seed planted, though. This is not to say that the capitalist seed was totally rejected by the Margi. What the research is suggesting is that there was across the board resistance in form of alternative mixtures of ideas, that is, taking the old and the newly introduced and creating hybrid, a third space.

Therefore I argue that the Margi ethnic group of northern Nigeria has fought the modernist preachers back and preserved their core values which are still embedded in the totality of the evolution of their domestic sphere: the compound fencing; detached kitchen rooms; animal pens and guinea corn granaries, among other things. As such the Margi have created their own modernity in form of such structures as the Margi fencing, where the meaning as a core value in Margi culture has stood in time.

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century western explorers, mapmakers, architects, engineers, planners, builders, and the missionaries have been, since in contacts with Africans, instituting the western notion of safe and habitable structures onto African landscapes. These supposedly modern patterns were in fact part of a strategy to incorporate, categorize, discipline and ultimately control the production of space of the inhabitants around the colonies as sites of production. Somehow the Margi, which I chose as the representative of other African ethnic groups who were impacted by colonization and Christianization, have saved as much as they threw away, remembered as much as they forgot, and recreated the new as often as they discarded the old. In other words, the attractiveness of the contemporary architecture that came with the West is at odds with the tugging restraint of the Margi vernacular mud huts. In the case of the Margi, the balance between these two influences is shifting towards the modernized Western style more

than the mud huts of earlier times, because there are many examples of the phenomenon scattered in unplanned fashion across Margi built environment.

A Table Showing Summary of Approximate Time Period and the Corresponding Activities/Changes	
Time Period	Activities/Changes
1564 – 1576	Dispersion from Lake Chad in groups. Some Clans went to the Mandara Mountain, and some went and settled on the Plain.
1576 – 1927	The compound layout for both locations (The Mountain, and the Plain) stayed very similar, but each group used the material available in the immediate vicinity to construct their homes. In other words, stones were used in the mountainous enclaves, while more mud was used on the plains.
1927 – 37	This is the period when the presence of the colonial officers and the American Church of the Brethren started to be felt. The Margi living the mountainous enclaves to hide from Idris Alauma’s expedition and the slave raiding by the Sokoto Caliphate started to come out to settle on the plains. Most of the Margi settled around the missionary schools, churches, dispensary and other amenities provided, and the built environment expanded dramatically.
1937 – 1959	The first educated Margi of the missionary schools started to receive salaries as teachers, police constables, clerks and soldiers, etc. This educated class was the first among the Margi ethnic group to start altering and incorporating non-Margi vernacular architecture. The most common styles then were, “Gidan Soro,” a single square room, or ‘Chiki-da-Parlor,’ two attached square rooms with one main entry via one of the rooms, which served as a living room.
1960 – 1970	This is the period the Margi built environment started to evolve and reached its highest volume of new construction in 1970. Some of the reasons are: the decision by the British to grant independence in 1960; the decision by the World Bank to start granting development loans to developing countries; the creation of new and better jobs that came with the creation of independent Nigeria; and the competition to win friendship with newly independent states including Nigeria by both the Soviet block and the west, which brought capital to the new states; and some of the capital trickled down to Margi domain.
1971 – 2011	The construction dropped from 1971 to 1980 and remained leveled from 1980 to 1990; in part due to the following reasons: The Structural Adjustment of 1980s when a lot of Margi lost their jobs due to the privatizations of Government, and quasi government companies. Also internal corruptions aided by external corrupted Elites depleted resources that may have trickled down to the Margi domain. The change has never reached the level in 1970.

## 7.10: Summary of the Margi Journey and a Few Disturbing Developments

I need to reiterate here that, in the late 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s, the Margi compounds were still about 90% built in the traditional manner. In fact, only some of the schools, churches, a very few native school teachers' houses and the missionary residences were constructed in rectangular shapes, with most of the roofing still done with grass. The rest of the Margi ethnic group were living in traditional round huts with grass roofing and in a compound of thatch mats tied to wooden stakes that served as a protective fence.

The first educated Margi of the missionary schools started to receive salaries as teachers, police constables, clerks and soldiers, etc. in the late 1950s, and pertinently the early 1960s. This educated class was the first among the Margi ethnic group to alter traditional housing and incorporate non-Margi vernacular architecture (Bello-Pur, 2004). The most common styles then were, "Gidan Soro," a single rectangular room, or 'Chiki-da-Parlor,' two attached rectangular rooms with one main entry via one of the rooms, which served as a living room. As Bello Pur told me,

When I was very young and still leaving at the old neighborhood on the top of the mountain, two 20 year olds from the neighborhood went to Jos, worked and earned money, came back and each built a rectangular rooms in their parents' compound. This became the talk of the neighborhood, in fact it was a prestigious thing, and they were able to marry the most beautiful girls around

As time went by, the shotgun-like style became the common style of building that the Margi salary earners preferred, in most cases incorporating it into their existing traditional compounds. In many cases, the round huts still continued and were used for kitchens, animal pens, and storage; even for sleeping for visiting relatives and youths. In due course, the educated Margi moved-up in their various employment opportunities around the country; the Margi traders in various Nigerian cities began to make more money as the Nigerian oil industry boom,

Unfortunately, the Nigerian civil war began in 1967, barely seven years into being independent state.

“Joining the war civilized us...especially we the unschooled” (Andrew Ijabani, a Margi Veterans of the Nigerian Civil War of the mid-1960s). In essence, although the Nigerian civil war was devastating, according to Andrew Ijabani, the war became an opportunity for many Margi youths, including those that had not gone to school, to get steady employment by joining the military. Military service took them to various Nigerian cities where they lived in non-Margi compounds. The majority of these servicemen came back home during and after their service and began to build non Margi building structures which were mostly rectangular on their family lands in the Margi built environment.

This was part and parcel of the transformation process of the Margi domestic sphere and served as a link between the Colonial District Officers residences located in colonial district headquarters, the big missionary residences in Margi villages, the rectangular missionary school buildings, the rectangular Christian Churches, the new (District Headquarters) referred to as Fulani settlements, and the traditional Margi round huts fenced by thatch mats. Therefore, in view of the embedded ideologies that came with the non-Margi structures to Margi cultural landscape, any discussion of the transformation of the Margi cultural landscape initiated by the missionaries and the Colonial Officers during or post-decolonization, that includes the architecture of the missionaries, the colonized, and the colonizers, ‘required’ to include a discussion pertaining the modernizing effects of these new structures. And in essence served as an instrument that dismantled the unfamiliar culture of the ‘others’ and how the power relations played out (Willis, 2005; Myers, 2003).

### **7.11: The Disturbing Development in the Journey**

“The ruin of a nation begins in the *hearts and* homes of its people” (Ghanaian Proverb, emphasis is mine)

The participation of Margi elites in the modern Nigerian political culture has not been free from greed, corruption and the neglect of the Margi populace that elected them into office, and looked up to them to improve living conditions in the Margi cultural landscape. I give one or two examples that I believe exemplify the Margi towns and villages across the board. The Margi society as expected has also experienced change; but a particularly disturbing change has to do with the respect for the elders. For example, respect for elders has been shifted to younger people that have succeeded in bulldozing their access to public funds. Respect for elders has been core Margi value that I did not expect to be changed. Individualism has replaced the usual collective family cooperation and desire to help each other out. The capitalist advertisement methods have succeeded in entrenching excessive consumerism lifestyle that has birthed greed in Margi towns and villages.

Since the area of my interest is infrastructure development, I took my camera to a few public buildings. The following photo in figure 91 is a dining room for an all-girls secondary school in one of the Margi towns. As the picture shows, and from what I have seen in my experience as a city inspector for both Nigeria and the United States, the ceiling might fall down at any moment while students are eating. Any lay person knows that if water damages a ceiling, then definitely the roof is leaking.

Figure 91: Girls School Dining Room in one of Margi Town



Sources: Photo by the Author

The next photo in figure 92 is also from the same school that I visited. It shows the students' dormitory windows boarded with corrugated metal sheet. Since it is an all-girls school and I would not be permitted to go into their dormitory, I asked what it looks like inside, and one of the girls said she'd rather sleep on the straw bed in her mother's round mud hut than sleep there. There is not enough water, she said, and the food is terrible.

Figure 92: Students Dormitory at the Same School



Sources: Photo by the Author

These school buildings are the opposite of the gated home of the local politician, just a mile from the school.

Figure 93: A Gated Resident of a local Politician One mile From the School



Sources: The by the Author

The example of how Margi politicians failed their populace in a single state is not limited to only state government politicians; the Margi politicians at the federal level who are partly responsible for making sure, or at least for raising the issue, when the federal infrastructure in their domain is in dilapidated condition, are not keeping up to their responsibility to the opulaces either. The photo in Figure 94: shows a police station in another Margi town 20 miles away.

Figure 94: Police Station in another Margi Town



Source: Photo by the Author

When I was at this police station, I conversed at length with the person in charge for that day. He told me that as long as I kept his name anonymous, he would tell me outright that the conditions of the station are just a tip of the iceberg. “You see my uniform is just a rag,” he said;

when I looked closer, I also saw a police officer in flip-flops. When it comes to the differences between the Margi elites and the people they are representing in terms of domestic sphere, it is unimaginable. I will show one example of a house belonging to an average voter and one from the Adamawa elite.

Figure 95: A Residential House of a Margi Voter



Photo by the Author

Figure 96: A Residential House of Adamawa Elite



Sources: Photo by the Author

Figure 97: A Margi Child Sleeping on Rock Covered with Dirt



Photo by the author

#### **Directions for Future Research:**

Since Margi people came-up with their own hybrid architecture, I suggest that the roofing with grass instead of the current corrugated iron sheets be investigated further. The main walls can be constructed with either cement blocks or burned brick blocks. Modern plywood can be used for rafters; but thatch Matts that was used for fencing before can be investigated as possible replacement for ceiling. The clue that can be used for incentive for the investigation is that the missionaries built a two room classroom with burned brick and roofed with grass that lasted from 1948 to 1990s at Gulak before it was destroyed in favor of cement block building, roofed with corrugated metal sheeting. Who knows how long that building could have lasted had it not been destroyed?

Beyond the particular details of Margi architecture and built environment, though, future research ought to use a comparative lens. I have suggested that the Margi experience may be representative of many rural ethnic groups in Africa who experienced both colonialism and Christianization. Judging the extent to which this is true would require much more comparison

across the continent. There is a world of future research investigating the vernacular and hybrid architecture of the distinctive and enduring smaller culture groups of Africa. Cultural geography and architecture could gain considerably from careful analysis of the changing domestic spheres and built environments of groups like the Margi.

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