A Moslem Igbo Village.
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When I first carried out field research in Afikpo village-group in Igbo country in 1951-1953, Anohia village¹ seemed much like any other village there, well within the usual range of social and cultural variation. When I returned in 1959-60 the major portion of Anohia had become Islamic, a very unusual event among the Igbo. I did not concentrate my research on this conversion, however, for at the time my interests lay elsewhere. The recent Nigerian-Biafran civil war, to a large extent a conflict between Moslem and Igbo, has caused me to reflect on this religious change even though my information is incomplete.

BACKGROUND

Anohia is one of twenty-two villages that comprise Afikpo village-group.² Afikpo is an Eastern Igbo group (Forde and Jones, 1950: 51-56) of over 35,000 persons, nestling on the west bank of the Cross River just after the place where the river turns from a southwesterly to a southerly course. The village-group has a common traditional government of its senior age grades and religious officials, a central market, and features of ritual and custom that distinguish it from its

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1. Called Anofia in Union Igbo and in some Government records. The village is also called Anohia Itim to distinguish it from another Afikpo village, Anohia Nkalo.

historically related Igbo neighbors of Unwana, Edda, Amasiri and Okpoha. These five village-groups claim affinity with the well-known village-group of Aro Chuku, about fifty miles south of Afikpo; all five have double unilineal descent and similar cultural features. Afikpo has been recognized as a political and social entity by Government since early colonial times, and this has helped to maintain its identity.

Anohia is one of the outlying Afikpo settlements, lying some five miles south of the compact group of central villages and the main market, and connected to these by a motor road. No villages lie in between, heightening Anohia's sense of isolation. About a mile south of the settlement, along this same road, sits the southernmost Afikpo village of Kpogrikpo. From here the road continues south for a few miles to the smaller village-group of Unwana, the home of Sir Francis Ibiam.

Anohia is sited at the top of the cliffs, rising several hundred feet above the Cross River. Its population, of over 2,000 persons, places it among the larger Afikpo villages; its southern neighbor, Kpogrikpo, is slightly more than half its size.

The first and main ward in Anohia, also called Anohia, consists of four related major patrilineages, each with its own living quarters or compound: Ezi Ogbe, Ezi Ewa, Ezi Okpo, and Ezi Agwe. Each lineage has its own ancestral shrine. A fifth agnatic group, the minor patrilineage of Ezi Eni, is separate from its parents, Ezi Okpo, being located across the village square, and using Ezi Okpo's ancestral shrine. Anohia ward was founded, according to traditional histories collected in 1952 (also see Waddington, 1931, par. 177), by Irem Njaka, one of a number of agnatically related men who came, or whose ancestors came, from Aro Chuku, settling first in Ohafia, then at Unwana, and finally at Afikpo. The large central Afikpo village of Mgbom is said to have been founded by a brother of Irem Njaka, and other relatives appear to have settled portions of Kpogrikpo, and also Anohia Nkalo village.

Afikpo was active in the Aro slave trade and the *Ibini Ọkpabe* oracular business (Imegwu, 1965; S. Ottenberg, 1958, 1968c; Stevenson, 1968, ch. 9), and in these matters, and in certain social, legal, and ritual activities and controls (S. Ottenberg, 1968c, 1971), the villages of Anohia, Kpogrikpo, Mgbom, Anohia Nkalo, and Amuro formed a section of Afikpo called Itim with its headquarters at Mgbom, where a major Aro shrine (*ọtọsi*) was located. Itim was the last major section of Afikpo to form, at some unknown period, probably in the

1. The population in 1927 is listed as 1,376 (Waddington, 1931, Appendix I) and as 1,757 in 1953 (Nigeria, Census Superintendent, 1953: 26).
nineteenth century. Anohia had external contacts with Aro Chuku, as did other Afikpo villages, for there were many persons of Aro descent in Afikpo.

Later, other individuals settled in Anohia from Mkpoghoro, the largest and politically most influential Afikpo village. Anohia's second ward, Amoncha, was formed of persons from Amangwu sub-village in Mkpoghoro\(^1\) who moved in about 1900. The third ward, Uhu Elem, was founded by persons from Amosu ward in Ndebe, the main settlement of Mkpoghoro, about 1910. In addition some persons from Amankwo sub-village of Mkpoghoro have settled here and there in the first ward of Anohia (Waddington, 1931, par. 179). Accounts of these movements generally stress some internal dispute within Mkpoghoro, but in fact represent part of a general pattern of expansion from that large settlement into other Afikpo areas; parts of Kpogrikpo were also settled by persons from Mkpoghoro. For some village activities, Amoncha and Uhu Elem wards joined together as against the first ward, such as in village wrestling contests. This tendency of villages to divide into two major sections is typical of Afikpo (S. Ottenberg, 1971). But the division is hardly equal as over three-quarters of the population of Anohia live in the first ward.

The three-ward structure is not unusual at Afikpo, the range being from small villages of one ward to large ones of six or more. In 1952 the village, as others in the village-group, was largely governed by its elders, as determined by age grade status internally and throughout Afikpo (S. Ottenberg, 1971). Leadership, however, tended to come from the founding ward, also the center of most village ritual activities. As in the case of other Afikpo villages, Anohia had its own men's secret society and secret bush area, and its own village shrines. Like other villages on the Cross River it had its own beach, open to all friendly rivermen and fishermen. Anohia also shared a river shrine with Kpogrikpo, and each had an annual feast in connection with its spirit, ekwetane; the shrine was said to be actually owned by Kpogrikpo. Another river shrine, ama enyum, was also shared by both villages. There was, in 1952, a small market in Anohia square, meeting on nkwe, once every four days of the Igbo week, which supplied greens, yams, and other foodstuffs for persons in both villages. Such local markets occur elsewhere in Afikpo (S. and P. Ottenberg, 1962: 160).

The men of Anohia, like those of Kpogrikpo, and the northern Afikpo villages of Ozizza, are primarily fishermen, living on the Cross River from October or November to somewhere in the April-June period; during this time the river is neither too high nor too low for

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\(^1\) Waddington (1931, par. 179) claims from Amobolobo, in Mkpoghoro, but I believe this to be an error.
good fishing. In precontact times fishermen did not move far to the south because the Akwunakwuna blocked passage, nor very far up-river, and raiding occurred back and forth with non-Igbo peoples living east of the river (Goldie, 1885: 278). Fishing parties, in the 1950’s, consisted of from ten to fifteen males, sometimes including non-Afikpo hired help, living on the sandbanks, and selling fish, fresh or dried, wherever they were. Older men, and women and the children of Anohia farm, growing the typical Afikpo crops of yams, cassava, coco yam, corn, and greens. Some fishermen farm a little as well, but they prefer to be out on the river.

In 1952 Anohia and Kpogrikpo were friendly, paired, neighboring villages (S. Ottenberg, 1971). As in the case of other dual settlements at Afikpo, they wrestled one another and took part in each other’s feasts and ceremonies; each also had a special ritual in the early part of the secret society initiation which was lacking in other Afikpo villages, and which derived from nearby Edda village-group to the west. In addition, all first sons in Kpogrikpo and Anohia took the arduous seven-year secret society initiation in which they carried out important ritual activities for some period of time each year. This was only done by some first sons in other Afikpo villages. The friendly and cooperative relations existing between the two villages in 1952 were not always present. In the 1910’s and 1920’s a land dispute broke out between them (also involving Mkpoghoro), which ultimately went to the Nigerian Supreme Court (Anon., 1922(?): 15-16), after which the disagreement gradually quieted down. Such frictions occur between other paired Afikpo villages.

As in the case of other outlying Afikpo villages, Anohia’s leaders have not played a very active part in village-group politics. In 1952 the village was quite autonomous. Internal disputes were generally settled locally, rather than through the common Afikpo practice of calling in outside elders or one of the senior Afikpo grades (S. Ottenberg, 1971). The walking distance between Anohia and the central Afikpo area is sufficient to discourage a high level of contact on the part of elders (Waddington, 1931, par. 181), although Anohia has often had active representatives on the Native Authority Court and the Native Authority Council.

One of the main links of Anohia villagers with other Afikpo has been through the matrilinear clans and lineages found at Afikpo (S. Ottenberg, 1968c). Since the groupings are not residentially based and uterine land holdings are scattered about the village-group, Anohia residents control and farm land in other village areas as well as their own, and other Afikpo farm in Anohia land. Farming activities, common ritual performances, property litigation, and the activities of the matrilinear clan loan society, link the residents of Anohia with
other Afikpo. However, since many Anohia men fish for a living, where matrilineal ties are less important and where the men are away from home for months at a time, the uterine bonds are not always as strong as for other Afikpo.

**Contact**

Anohia and Kpogrikpo were the first Afikpo villages to experience regular contact with Europeans. In 1888 the Presbyterian mission, moving inland from its coastal base at Calabar, opened a station at Unwana under the Rev. J. F. Gartshore (Goldie, 1901: 335-338; McFarlan, 1946: 77-89), although it was not until some ten years later that the mission began to operate on a regular basis. At some time in the 1910's a small church was founded at Anohia by the Rev. W. A. J. Gardiner, who was living at Unwana. It has remained small in numbers, and its members normally go to Unwana for baptism and communion.

The early mission contacts with Anohia and Kpogrikpo led to primary school education for some villagers, secondary schooling for a few persons at Calabar, and for others, to work with Europeans as laborers and servants. Kpogrikpo particularly, despite its smaller size than Anohia, has produced a number of outstanding leaders: for example, a former head of the Afikpo police, a secretary of the Afikpo District Council, and also several prominent local NCNC politicians. Some of these persons were trained at the Church of Scotland Hope Waddell College in Calabar, or elsewhere in Presbyterian schools. Why fewer prominent persons came from Anohia is not clear. As a result of the influence of the mission on the Cross River area, men from Anohia and Kpogrikpo also began to trade further southward along the Cross River, finally to Calabar itself.

In 1902, as part of the general opening up of the eastern Igbo area, and in conjunction with the military activities that conquered Aro Chuku (Anon., 1902; Great Britain, 1903: 4-5; Heneker, 1907: 158-162; MacAlister, 1902; Smith, 1902), the British-led forces, under Captain Dyer, with the assistance of Rev. Gardiner, whose mission at Unwana was used as a military base (Anon., 1922(?): 17), entered and conquered Afikpo. Persons from Anohia and Kpogrikpo, perhaps because of their already friendly contacts with the missionaries, desired that the rest of Afikpo let in the British. I quote from my notes of an interview with one of the first Afikpo school teachers, Mr. S. A. Okoro, of Kpogrikpo:

"A fight occurred between Kpogrikpo-Anohia and the rest of Afikpo. The White Man had reached Unwana. The people of Kpogrikpo-Anohia wanted them to come to Afikpo, the people of Afikpo did not. Anohia-Kpogrikpo
representatives went to the Afikpo people with four legs of eke [deer], two cases of gin, and begged the Afikpo people to allow the White Man to come. They explained how the British had come to Aro Chuku, Akumakwuma, Ediba, Obubra [the latter two on the river north of Afikpo], and that the White Man now wanted to settle at Ndibe Beach [later the main Afikpo beach]. The people of Kpogrikpo-Anohia had travelled much to Calabar in their trading journeys, and had seen him there, and everything seemed to be going well there, and they would be likely to bring plenty of money, which would be good for Afikpo. The people of Afikpo would not agree and prepared to fight. In the annual feast of Mgbom village, on the third of four days, the Afikpo people came to fight the people of Kpogrikpo-Anohia. Ozizza [northern section of Afikpo], Amaseri, Okpoha [both neighboring Igbo village-groups] helped. This was on eke [market] day. They attacked and fired Anohia with considerable fighting, and took that village, but they were not able to come as far as Kpogrikpo. The next day, orie, they came and the fight continued, but they were not able to enter Kpogrikpo. The Unwana people joined Kpogrikpo in defense. The White Man's soldiers did not come at this time as they claimed that they were not ready. The fighting lasted nine days, and Kpogrikpo people managed to keep their village safe. By then English trained soldiers from Owerri, Bendel, and Calabar were able to come and reinforce the Kpogrikpo fighters and started moving into Afikpo, setting fire to some of the villages. They quartered in Kpogrikpo and were our guests."

The fighting was soon over, with all of Afikpo conquered (Heneker, 1907: 35-57, and plan 3), and the British established a government station at Afikpo, just northwest of the central Afikpo area. For some fifteen years the station served as a basis of military patrols in the region (Anon., 1927(?), part IIIb). Among the soldiers were Moslem Hausa (Partridge, 1905: 116), and northern Moslem traders and prostitutes followed the troops and were found at Afikpo. In addition, small communities of Hausa lived by hunting elephants and trading in the middle Cross River area at this time (Partridge, 1905: 116-117), and may have had contact with Anohia and other parts of Afikpo. When the soldiers left so did the prostitutes and station traders.

There seemed to be no ill feeling in 1952 toward Anohia and Kpogrikpo for their role in the military operations that led the British to Afikpo. The activities of these two villages in this conquest indicate that their sense of autonomy from the rest of Afikpo outweighed their historical ties to the Itim villages.

The ‘opening up’ of Afikpo almost totally freed the Cross River for trade, and men from Anohia, as well as other Afikpo villages, increased their contacts with Calabar, one hundred miles to the south, shipping out pots (made by Afikpo women), yams, palm oil and kernels, and bringing back dried fish, cloth, liquor, iron, guns, and gunpowder. The palm oil and kernel trade was connected with European export through

1. The term ‘Hausa’ is used in the literature on the area, and in speech, to refer to anyone from the north who appears to be Moslem, but probably not all ‘Hausa’ actually were from that group.
Calabar. The Afikpo Intelligence Book (Anon., 1922(?): 16) states that at Kpogrikpo "the number of registered strangers (Calabar, Item, Abiribas, etc.) is increasing. All are traders in local produce and their competition is having a marked effect on the Miller Brothers Factory at Ozizza," which had been established in 1909 (Anon., 1927(?), part XIII). Unwana also became a major trading center, pulling in foodstuffs and goods from the Afikpo and Edda areas. Fishing teams also moved more widely, from Calabar to the Cameroons border on the Cross River. New fishing techniques were introduced to Afikpo: for example, the use of the draw net (atangara) by one Calabar man, the cast net (ntofo) by another, and ekubi, a flat net made of fibers from the coastal Ijaw area. Persons from Anohia played important roles in some of these diffusions. Many from the village, as well as other Afikpo fishermen, learned to speak Efik.

Despite these influences the major focus of growth and change shifted to the central Afikpo area, where it remains today, and the outlying villages came to play a lesser role. The first Afikpo school, the Government Primary School, was opened in the central area in 1924 (Anon., 1927(?), part XV). The presence of the District Office, the Afikpo prison, the police headquarters, and the Native Court in the central section aroused great interest from the villages immediately nearby. The Presbyterians moved their main operation to the central area at the expense of the two southerly villages, starting their first primary school at Amachara-Ukpa in 1934. The Roman Catholic Mission opened a school at Mkpoghoro in 1918 that soon closed; a permanent one began in the central village of Ngodo in 1935.

The Catholics established a number of other schools, one of them at Anohia in 1943, west of the village and across the road from it. It has been partially supported for most of its existence through the collection and sale of palm fruits from the village groves of Anohia and Kpogrikpo, each village acting separately, and also by the communal labor supplied by the two villages in the construction and repair of buildings. The majority of the students came from Anohia and Kpogrikpo, with a small number from non-Igbo groups across the river, where there are few schools. In 1960, after many of the Moslem children had withdrawn, there were 199 boys and 124 girls registered, with all six standards being offered. There were two Afikpo teachers, one from Anohia, the other from Ndibe; the remainder were Igbo from other areas, and non-Igbo from the middle Cross River and from the Efik region. The teachers lived in or near the school compound area. The school has always been strongly identified with the two villages that help to support it. Catholic services are not generally held there, but in central Afikpo, although Sunday School has been conducted there for some time.
Despite the presence of the school, the impact of conquest was to shift the center of change away from the Anohia and Kpogrikpo area. Particularly Anohia, which lacked famous and prominent sons, suffered a sense of isolation and lowered prestige, although its fishermen and traders were prospering, its farms productive.

There was also some contact with Moslems at Afikpo from the 1940's on, for they had a cattle trade route running from Abakaliki to Umuahia which passed by the village-group. In 1960 they slaughtered several cows every Afikpo market day and one two days later at the strangers' quarters near the Government station. While a few of these 'Hausa' lived at Afikpo, others were itinerant cattle traders. There was no economic competition between the Hausa and the Afikpo, the main consumers of the meat.

Conversion

In 1958 Anohia was 'progressing' much like other Afikpo villages. The men's rest house (obiogo) in the main ward, the meeting place for the Anohia elders, was about to be replaced by a fine new structure constructed beside it in cement with a tin roof, in the modern Afikpo style. A number of the major patrilineage ancestral shrine houses had been rebuilt in a similar manner. Similar changes were going on elsewhere in Afikpo. The Anohia primary school was doing well and there was no particular trouble with the fishing or farming. Persons complained of the number of deaths, in the village, of first sons dying while going through the special form of initiation, of babies from illness, and of others through sorcery—the kinds of complaints one is likely to hear in any Afikpo village.

In 1957 a son of Anohia, Ekpani Egwani, who had been abroad for many years, suddenly returned. No one had heard from him for a long time. It is said that he was thought dead and that burial services had been performed for him. He returned a Moslem, with a small following of Moslem strangers from the north, in a number of automobiles. He had changed his name to Alhaji Ibrahim.

This man, who was to become the leader of the Anohia Moslem community, was born in 1920 in the compound of Ezi Ewa, and was thus a member of one of the original patrilineages that formed the village's first ward. His parents were also Anohia born. His father was not prominent but a mother's brother had been an influential elder.

He studied at the Afikpo Government Primary School where he learned English, which he speaks well. Later, he worked in Calabar,

1. Alhaji is the form used at Afikpo, rather than the more correct al-Hajj.
and then on the island of Fernando Po, where he acquired a knowledge of Spanish. In 1944 he joined the Nigerian army and he was in the Home Guard for about a year and a half. After his discharge he stayed at Lagos where he claims to have had a dream about God which made him travel far, to Egypt, in West Africa, and to Gabon and the Congo. On his voyages he joined the Moslem sect of Tijaniyya, following the spiritual leadership of Ibrahim Nyas of Kaolak, near Dakar (Abun-Nasr, 1965: 145-150; Tringham, 1959: 99, ft. 1). He joined up after having a dream about this man, whom he then visited, and who converted him. Followers of Tijaniyya are widely located in West Africa, and the sect is popular in Northern and Western Nigeria (Abun-Nasr, 1965; Tringham, 1959: 97-101). He learned to speak and write Arabic and studied the Koran; also he claims knowledge of Portuguese and French.  

On his return, he lived for many months with his followers in a house near the Government station, in a non-traditional residential section. He visited Anohia shortly after his return. There was considerable surprise. He had come back, very much alive, with evident wealth, as a learned man, and in good health. To welcome him there was much feasting, shooting off of guns, and the performing of plays and dances in his home village.

His fellow villagers asked him to settle at Anohia. It is not clear whether he intended to at first or not, although he wished to convert all of Afikpo to Islam. He was on tour a good deal in the 1959-60 period, when I was at Afikpo, and thought of Anohia as a rather isolated place. It seems clear that he wished to establish some base at Afikpo, and that his own elders at Anohia wished him to have a home and a mosque in his village.

The village elders, including some from Amoncha, and also some senior persons from nearby Kpogrikpo, visited him at his temporary dwelling at Afikpo. As Elu, a leading elder of Anohia, phrased it to me in November 1959:

"When we went to him we explained our difficulties. A young man grows up, a friend poisons him, he will die. So we had one Agwogwo. When he started building his house he did not complete it, but he died unexpectedly. We also told him about the shrine in the square [the secret society shrine]. It kills people. If a woman has an issue and she goes out to the square when it is closed, the shrine will kill her issue. If this happens and you do not do the sacrifice early enough [for purification], it will certainly kill the child. We explained this to him. The same was true with the ibobo okoci title [a secret society title]. If you do not take the title and go out and see it you will swell up and be killed. The leader [Alhaji Ibrahim] told them that if they wanted to

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7. See Anon., 1958a, for a romantic account of his travels, differing somewhat from what he told me at Afikpo.
become well this is what they needed. Before he would come to live with them the shrines must be destroyed. That if a woman is married from Afikpo to Anohia she will not conceive, or if the baby is born it will die, and that these things are caused by the shrines in the village. The leader asked us whether we would agree with what he wanted us to do. If so, he will destroy the whole thing. The leader asked Chief Okewa whether he would agree, and he agreed, then he told him to go back and to tell his people."

These Anohia elders also complained that many first sons had died during the arduous seven-year initiation which they were required to do. The senior men, at least those from Alhaji Ibrahim’s ward, clearly wanted him back, whether matters of life and death, and of illness, were paramount or not. After this meeting they consulted with the younger Anohia men at home. Many agreed to the change, including educated ones, schooled locally or elsewhere. The villagers agreed to build a house for their leader just outside of the village, and alongside the road passing by it.

At this time, however, divisions of interests and conflicts began to develop in the village, and in Afikpo. For one thing, the priest of Anohia’s secret society and several other persons from the main Anohia ward refused to accept Islam, and opposed the contemplated destruction of the traditional shrines. For another, only one person in the other two wards of Anohia agreed to become Moslem, and the traditionalists in Anohia, although in the minority, opposed the destruction of the shrines, and the ending of traditional rituals. Alhaji Ibrahim told me that even his mother was very much surprised at this return and would have nothing to do with him at first, that she did not understand the Moslem business. Even in 1960 he claimed that she felt strange with him and was just getting used to him.

In effect, Alhaji Ibrahim converted most of those who belonged to the related group of patrilineages of which he was a member, wives who had married into these groupings, and a few other Anohia persons. Descent and kin ties thus played a key role in conversion. The village divided by its two major sections.

Alhaji Ibrahim and his followers at Anohia made serious attempts to recruit persons from other parts of the village-group. The leader went, one market day, to meet with the Afikpo elders, who traditionally gather at the market at that time. He told them that their fathers followed old customs, and that as elders they understood them well, but these were now civilized times, and they should follow the new way. As a result of this meeting, as well as other attempts at proselytization, a number of Afikpo from the central area joined up. Among these was a prominent leader from Ngodo village, Chief Isu Igwu. He was then fined by the senior Afikpo age grades, and was more or less ostracized by other leaders, although he was an influential man and
was associated with the progressive and schooled persons in the village-
group. After some time he withdrew from Islam and paid his £5 fine, 
but he never regained the stature in Afikpo he had held prior to his 
conversion, and was much ridiculed for his action. A small number of 
middle-aged men and young adults—perhaps ten—joined up from the 
central villages; one, who was well-known as a fine wrestler, lost his 
his wives as a result, for they refused to remain with him. In 1959 
and 1960 some of these converted Afikpo men used to accompany their 
leader when he went on tour in Nigeria. They continued to maintain 
their residences where they had lived previous to their conversion.

Alhaji Ibrahim had clearly been unsuccessful in recruiting Afikpo to 
his beliefs. There followed, in 1957 and 1958, a series of court cases, 
largely instituted by the non-Moslem elders of Afikpo and non-
converts from Anohia, to prevent the burning of the shrines and other 
contemplated changes in the village. The issues included a number of 
questions: 1) should the Anohia ward men's rest house be turned into 
a mosque or should other land be used to construct one? 2) what land 
should remain sacred in the village secret society bush? and 3) should 
Moslem women respect traditional shrines and ceremonies? The last 
involved certain taboos, for example against walking in the secret 
society bush and entering the village square at night when certain 
rituals were in progress. Many Afikpo also opposed the destruction of 
any shrines.

There were charges and countercharges; some minor scuffling 
occurred and the police were brought in a number of times to stop 
conflict or to maintain the peace. Several cases were brought to the 
Afikpo Native Authority Court over these matters. The assistant 
district officer at Afikpo division at that time, an Igbo from the Orlu 
area of central Igboland, who evaluated the court cases on review, 
tried to get the involved parties to reach a reasonable compromise so 
that both Moslem and non-Moslem could live together. However, he 
was surprised that any Igbo would wish to convert to Islam, and he did 
not feel that those who wanted to really understood the implications of 
what they were doing. While the issues were being debated, the 
converted began to wear long gowns and caps to pray in the Moslem 
fashion, to carry prayer beads, and in other ways to emulate Moslem 
custom.

Eventually, through the court, and the intervention of the assistant 
district officer and the police, arrangements were made for the formal 
conversion of the major part of the village. Previous to this, some 
Anohia persons seem to have initiated their sons into the village secret 
society in the short form of the ritual to ensure that this would be 
possible before the village changed its religious style. The evidence 
indicates that this was true of some of the converting families as well.
On Sunday, October 28, 1958, in the presence of the assistant officer and a number of police, Northerners who were followers of the Alhaji destroyed the shrines by taking them to the secret society bush and burning them. The Anohia converts had not wished to do so themselves. The shrine pots and other items were taken from their rock resting places, their sheds, their ancestral houses, or wherever they were, and every shrine in the first ward of Anohia was burned. All but a part of the secret society bush was cut down and cleared; its shrine was also burned. The shrine in front of the men’s rest house of the main ward was also destroyed, as well as the secret society masks and other paraphernalia stored inside of the house. Nothing was touched in the two other sections of Anohia—Amoncha and Uhu Elem. The Moslem and non-Moslem sections more or less agreed to respect each other’s rituals and not to interfere with one another. A mat fence was eventually erected to separate the two parts of the village from each other. The two river shrines of Anohia and Kpogrikpo, ekwetane and ama enyum, were not disturbed, apparently, because of the involvement of another village, and because they were considered to be general shrines for all of Afikpo. Also, they were at some distance from the village. The heart of the secret society shrine was later recovered by its priest and reestablished in the traditional section of the village, where the usual Afikpo practices still continue. The men’s rest house and the newly completed rest house beside it became the mosque. Earlier there had been an attempt to reach an agreement whereby the new structure would become the mosque, the old remain as the traditional men’s rest house, but this had not come off. The converted section of the village changed its name to Medina Village at the suggestion of its leader. The following day he moved in to live in the house that his converts had built for him. Every year the Moslems celebrated the day of conversion with a special feast and ceremony.

CONTINUED CONFLICT

I visited Anohia in November 1959, at the beginning of my second period of field research at Afikpo. I experienced culture shock, areal sense of loss, at the disappearance of the many group and individual shrines that one sees about the living quarters in any Afikpo village. The mosque—the old rest house—was bare. Anohia men were sitting in it, in long white cloth, fingering their beads. The secret society bush was gone; the Cross River beyond could clearly be seen. An Anohia Moslem family was living in one of the ancestral rest houses. My friend, Tom, from Mgbom village, said: “It is like a dream. I cannot believe it. I never expected such a thing in my life.” I could only add
that neither had I. The change defied much of my understanding of Afikpo tradition—that such a thing could come about and so rapidly. Christianity had made serious inroads into older patterns, but without such a total and visual impact.

The troubles between the Afikpo and the Moslems continued, much on the same grounds as before conversion day. Afikpo saw the Moslems as a threat to traditional custom, since they refused to abide by it. Many Afikpo were inclined to leave the Moslems alone if they would the Afikpo, but the two orders held contradictory customary principles. The Moslems believed that they were being harassed and insulted by the Afikpo. Alhaji Ibrahim told me that everywhere else he went in Nigeria he was acclaimed for what he was doing, but that the Afikpo, his own people, were ‘killing’ him. Many of the Moslems felt that they were not breaking any rules, that they were peaceful persons, merely trying to go their own way. Their strategy was to continue to develop their religious activities around their group and, whenever interfered with by Afikpo, to protest directly to the Afikpo district officer, or the assistant district officer, or to try to place a court case in the Magistrate’s Court, which followed Nigerian legal procedures and rules. They were aware that the village-group Native Authority Court, composed of traditionalists, would hardly favor them. The Anohia Moslems saw the external Moslem communities of Nigeria as a source of financial, but not of political support.

The policy of the Afikpo elders was to contain the Moslems and to pressure them through the Native Court, the District Office and administrative offices in Enugu, not to interfere with native law and custom. Several events that occurred in 1959-60 illustrate the continuing conflict.

1) At the end of October 1959, the major and most powerful senior Afikpo age grade, ekpe uke esa (S. Ottenberg, 1971), called the elders from the neighboring and related Igbo village-groups of Amaseri, Edda, Unwana, and Okpoha, to a meeting at one of the Afikpo elders’ traditional meeting centers (Amamgballa village square, near the market). These five village-groups not only share a common history and cultural identity, but all have similar forms of secret society initiation and ritual, in contrast to other Igbo. The meeting, called toward the beginning of the secret society season, was a response to the Moslem threat to the secret society at Anohia. This was interpreted at the meeting as an attack on the secret society in all of the village-groups. Arrangements were made to collect 10 from each village-group to take the matter to court and to petition colonial

1. The secret society in each village is essentially autonomous from those in neighboring settlements. There is no pan-secret society organization.
officers and influential persons in Enugu, the Eastern Region capital by 1959 petition-sending had become a traditional activity at Afikpo. Because representatives from Unwana did not appear, the collection of funds was delayed. The calling together of the five village-groups is rare; it is normally carried out only when there is serious trouble between two of them or internally within a village-group in either case when the matter remains unresolved. The five groups act as conciliators, but without final authority. In the present case their aim was clearly to control and contain Moslem authority. They did not ask the Moslems to come and to present their side of the matter.

2) In January 1960, just previous to the annual first fishing day at the Afikpo pond, Ehoma, the Moslems went to the Government police claiming that everyone was insulting them, shouting ‘Mallam’ at them, and that they were afraid of trouble at this public event if they went there. They did not want to be denied the opportunity to fish. The Administration pressured the traditional Afikpo ‘police,’ the ekpe uke afo, or junior elders, to pass a law that no one should molest them there on payment of a fine. Government policemen were stationed at the pond and there was no trouble.

3) In July 1960, the Moslems reported to the district officer that Afikpo were driving their women away from the main Afikpo market. Anohia Moslem females had been growing corn and other vegetables in the old village secret society bush, and they were selling their products at the village-group market, a clear violation of traditional taboos. The Afikpo female elders’ group, nde icie, had previously forbidden Moslem women to sell at the market, and Afikpo from buying from them. This does not appear to have been a position taken because of economic competition, but through belief in custom, for the relatively small sales of the produce of Anohia women at the market posed no serious financial threat.

On receiving the complaint, the district officer went to the market and discussed the matter with a Native Authority councillor, who happened to be there, and with some of the Afikpo elders, seniors who had previously banned the Moslem Anohia elders from taking their usual places in the elders’ sheds at the market, and at their other meetings. The district officer indicated that if anyone disturbed the Anohia women at the market they would be imprisoned, that they had the right to sell there, but that if persons did not like it they did not have to buy from them. Later, the village-group Native Authority Council took a stand on the issue, supporting the district officer’s attitude. The councillors then discussed the matter with the Afikpo elders, and convinced the elders to pass a ruling, which was announced at the market, that anyone molesting the Moslems would be fined £1 10s. and a goat by Afikpo as a whole. The councillors were young,
as a rule, partially schooled and generally ‘progressively’ oriented, somewhat hostile to the Afikpo elders, and critical of maintaining custom for its own sake. The Anohia representative, a Moslem, carried little weight in the council; he was not a leader.

At the commencement of the 1960 secret society season, about the middle of September, eight men from Anohia who had not converted to Islam, went to the district officer claiming that the Moslems were not allowing them to build their traditional dressing shed (ajaba), used in the secret society activities, in the Anohia village square, which was now in the Moslem part of the village. The district officer told them to file a case in the Native Authority Court if they were prevented from doing what they wished. Instead, claiming lack of funds to do so, they went to the Afikpo elders, who again called a meeting of Afikpo senior men and those from the four related village-groups. At this meeting the right of persons to carry out their traditional rituals was upheld, as one might expect. The argument was made, which I heard a number of times at Afikpo, that the Christians—the missionaries—had never destroyed traditional practices in all the years that they had been at Afikpo, and why should the Moslems? Also, of course, they argued that the traditional practices had existed first—a claim of priority is always an important political argument at Afikpo (S. Ottenberg, 1968c, ch. 4).

The Afikpo elders then sued the Moslems in the Native Court with a £2 10s. summons fee, asking that the Moslems remove their mosque from the men’s rest house to a place outside of the village square, away from the area traditionally used for secret society rituals. The Moslems refused to come to court, arguing that the matter should go to the higher Magistrate’s Court, good strategy for any Afikpo who feel that they cannot win a case in the Native Court. The Afikpo elders reported this refusal to the district officer, who insisted that the Native Court be used. In court the Moslem refused to remove their mosque. After an adjournment, so that the court members could see the land involved for themselves, the matter was decided against the Moslems, who refused to accept the verdict. In addition, one of the Moslems was fined for failing to remove his hat in court. The district officer upheld both decisions.

On the 1oth of November the case brought by the elders of the five village-groups for ‘spoiling the ground’ of the secret society was tried in the same court, and the Moslems fined £50, a heavy penalty. They refused to pay, but the district officer warned them that they had to and that they should remove their possessions from the mosque. Eventually they did both, taking their things to the leader’s house, part of which became a mosque until a new one was built several years later along the road.
Certain patterns of operation appear here. Each group claims a natural right to its custom, and that it is not interfering with the other, but that the other is with it. The district officer, or in some cases the assistant district officer, becomes the pivotal person to influence, but he tries to develop a situation where both groups can exist side by side with a minimum of friction. The elders are weak when pressured by him; they pass laws that he wishes. They display initiative when he does not disagree with them. They use the traditional patterns, as do other Afikpo, of ostracism and fining, and they make effective use of the Native Authority Court. While the Moslems might eventually get a better hearing in the Magistrate’s Court, this is costly, takes time, and the results are unpredictable at best. The district officer is clearly the key man here. He holds ultimate power, and the Government and Native Authority police are under his control. To gain his support is virtually to ensure success.

The position of the Afikpo ‘progressives’ is interesting. The Native Authority Council members are, as a rule, among the more conservative of the progressives, younger and less schooled than others in this group. For many years the Council has been critical of restrictive rulings passed by the Afikpo elders, and this is reflected in their actions described above. But they did not identify with the Moslems.

The more typical progressives, as represented in the leadership of the Afikpo improvement union (Afikpo Town Welfare Association), and the village improvement associations (S. Ottenberg, 1955, 1968a), as well as in the leadership of the only major political party at Afikpo at that time, the NCNC, were interested but passive. They disliked the Afikpo elders for their conservatism and admired the rapidity with which Alhaji Ibrahim had introduced changes, yet they were suspicious of him and his followers as being restrictive and as having different goals from theirs. They took little part in the Moslem affair. The Afikpo Town Welfare Association took no position on the continuing disputes and did not even discuss it formally at its meetings.

The progressives were involved in other matters that they considered to be more important. There was a federal election in December 1959, for which two ‘sons’ of the village-group were contesting for the NCNC nomination, tantamount to election. This divided the progressives until the matter was resolved when a great deal of their energies went into the campaign itself, despite the lack of genuine opposition. In the 1959-60 period the progressives were also involved in trying to convince villages at Afikpo to collect their share of a special tax, against the wishes of the Afikpo elders, to finance a Government-sponsored piped-water scheme in the central area. The progressives were also trying to promote the appointment of someone from Afikpo
village-group as a second-class chief for the Eastern Region against the 
opposition of candidates in other neighboring village-groups in Afikpo 
Division, and this despite an inability to agree among themselves until 
the very last moment as to their own candidate. They were also 
calling for a commission of enquiry into the affairs of the Afikpo 
District Council, the local government council representing fifteen of 
the sixteen village-groups in the Division, then dominated by Igbo 
from the Ahozera area northwest of Afikpo village-group. These 
matters held priority and the progressives let the Moslem-Afikpo 
matter go pretty much its own way. They apparently did not 
perceive Islam as furthering the advancement of Afikpo village-group 
vis-à-vis modern political and social developments. But neither did 
they see it as a threat to these.

Only in the village of Kpogrikpo, where several progressives lived 
and were influential in village affairs, was there any more direct action, 
and this was probably because of the deteriorating relationships 
between the neighboring villages, both isolated from the rest of Afikpo. 
Problems arose over the school and the local market. The withdrawal 
of the Moslem Anohia children from the local Catholic primary school 
forced a greater share of the financial support onto Kpogrikpo, which 
was reluctant to carry the extra burden, even though many of their 
children went there. In 1960 there was considerable discussion of this 
problem among the Kpogrikpo progressives, without any real resolu-
tion. These leaders were also trying to establish a market, on nkwo 
day, to replace the one at Anohia; the latter had become defunct after 
the Moslem conversion, as non-Moslems stopped buying in the Anohia 
village square, now ‘defiled’ according to traditionalists. Both villages 
have fine vegetable growing areas on the river bank to support a local 
market. The Moslem women of Anohia had developed a daily evening 
market along the roadside border of their village (at which some non-
Moslem females also sold), and a mild economic competition had sprung 
up between the two villages.

All of these conflicts can be seen against the fact that the general 
attitude of many Afikpo of all ages toward the Moslems, once the 
latter had established themselves, changed from surprise to hostility. 
There was great fear that the Moslem women were learning the private 
matters of the secret society since some of them refused to remain 
away while secret rituals were in progress and this was believed to 
‘spoil’ the society. Afikpo would shout in hostility at the Moslems on 
meeting them, that they were ‘Mallams, Mallams.’ Afikpo women and 
children imitated and ridiculed the songs and dances of the Anohia 
Moslem women. At one traditional dance (ojogwe), when a young 
Moslem boy, a stranger to Afikpo living at Anohia, stopped to watch 
in passing by, members of the audience shouted at him: “Why are you
looking; this isn’t your ceremony!” and the like. At the satirical village *skumkpa* plays, which consist of a series of skits and topical songs, Chief Isu Egwu was several times exposed for having become a Moslem. One skit explained that he had expected to gain money from it, but found that there was none, and that is why he left the Moslems. Another skit suggested that the Moslem leader was collecting money to build a mosque but that he was really using it for himself. Such skits, and the accompanying songs, had become popular in Afikpo in 1960. In these plays similar comments on greediness and duplicity are often made concerning traditional leaders.

By the end of 1960, when research was terminated, a regular pattern of Moslem-Afikpo hostility had evolved, and each side had developed strategies of political action. The Moslems could not use external political sources. They had no powerful friends who could help them in Enugu, no NCNC party contacts of note, even though they apparently supported the NCNC at Afikpo in the 1959 federal election. The Moslem cattle traders and butchers at Afikpo were too small a group, with too specialized interests, to support the Anohia Moslems. They did not seem interested in them. Perhaps the relative low status of the Hausa butchers precluded any cooperation.

Neither did the traditionalists have strong external support, despite a long tradition of petition presentation to Government. The backing of the four related village-groups offered the Afikpo elders—their main source of external aid—was more symbolic than politically influential. Since the district officer and the assistant district officer took a compromising position, and the progressives, who had external NCNC contacts, as well as other links, were essentially passive, the matter remained primarily a local affair. This is so despite the fact that much of the Moslems’ economic support, to fight the court cases and to pay the fines, came from external sources, from other Moslem communities visited by Alhaji Ibrahim and his followers while on tour.

**Custom and Organization**

Among Anohia Moslems the wearing of a cap and a long gown—often white—and the use of prayer beads, all became standard, as did the daily round of prayers. Persons no longer stood up when urinating, women no longer wore the traditional belt underneath their cloth or clothing. Men bowed and then touched their right hand to their chest in greeting. Palm wine and other strong drink, such as a native gin, was forbidden, although the rule was not always kept. While beer continued to be consumed, the favorite liquids were two very sweet Nigeria-produced soft drinks, Krola and Koline.
The Moslems acted, in 1959-60, pretty much as an independent community that still followed some traditional patterns. While Moslem feasts and feast-days replaced the traditional yam feast, the dry season feast and others, the new holidays were celebrated with much the same verve as the old ones. The traditional age structures and age-set system of the village were retained in Anohia ward, except with regard to Alhaji Ibrahim, with its emphasis on deference to seniority and the sharing of food, drink, and funds by age. This age structure also remained the basis of communal labor. The Moslem elders still continued to meet at the home of their most prominent member, Chief Okewa, to decide matters in which Alhaji Ibrahim was not interested, and in his absence.

The patrilineal organization of the compound (S. Ottenberg, 1968c, ch. 2) was retained, but without the rituals connected with the ancestors and with other shrines associated with these agnatic groupings. Here also the traditional structure of authority seemed to have survived, except for the role of the shrine priests. In the case of the non-residential matrilineal groupings (S. Ottenberg, 1968c, ch. 3), the situation could not be quite the same, since persons from other villages were also involved. No shrine of a matrilineal clan happened to be located at Anohia at the time of conversion, so that any troublesome problem arising from its disposal was avoided. Men still took part in land matters and the legal affairs of their uterine groups, and young men in the clan loan societies. Moslem males avoided matrilineal clan rituals, of course, but generally were well-treated by their uterine mates.

In the case of the Moslem women, however, whose matrilineal activities are largely ritual in nature, and directed to ensure good health and fertility there seems to have been some hostility between them and non-Moslem females, and some exclusionary practices occurred. Also, some Moslem women lost interest in clan matters and stopped attending meetings of clan women. However, it appears that the rules of matrilineal clan exogamy were retained.

Alhaji Ibrahim, in 1960, was living in a mud-brick thatch-roofed house across the road from the village, a home built for him by the communal labor of his followers. The visiting room inside was elegant, with thick North African carpets, fine mats, a luxurious bed, a comfortable metal-frame chair, a radio, a clock, and a samovar and kettle. There were several Northern servants about, who obeyed his commands quickly and efficiently. Alhaji Ibrahim dressed simply, but with style, usually in white. He considered himself to be a traveller, and was surprised at how few parts of Africa I had visited. He was hoping to visit Mecca and East Africa. He was skeptical, as one might expect, of traditional beliefs and rituals. Diviners were ineffective, and belief in reincarnation—strongly held at Afikpo—symbolized the male and
the female contribution of blood to a person, but there were no reincarnated ancestors. "It is through your blood that you recognize your parents and are like them," he said. He was inclined to be gentle in speech about traditional rituals, and to see them as attempts, although incorrect, to arrive at understandings much better achieved through Islam.

There was a series of myths surrounding him, known in Afikpo far beyond Anohia. He himself seemed to relish them. He claimed that he was born on the Afikpo market day, _ekẹ_, which fell on a Sunday, in October 1920. A Sunday _ekẹ_ is generally a good feasting and meeting day at Afikpo; it is not a work day either for Christians or for traditionalists. His mother was walking home from market carrying two pots of palm oil on her head. A friend came along and helped her put them down. It was an easy birth. No other male child was born on Afikpo on that day, which he considered, as did others, an unusual occurrence. He told me that these facts about his birth came to him by revelation while he was in Egypt. Upon his return he told them to his mother, who was astonished that he should know them. Other things were revealed to him which he also explained to his _matir_ on his return, and which she did not know that he knew and which she had not discussed with him. When he was about one year of age he was lying down at night in the usual fashion, placed between his mother and the wall so that he could not fall from the bed. A snake came up lengthwise along the bed. The mother reached out below her and felt its smooth skin and then she reached out above her head and felt its skin again. It was very long, longer than the bed. She screamed and got up with the child, and the snake disappeared. Again, when he was about two years of age his mother gave birth to a baby girl. He took up a long knife and stood by the door and said that he would not let anyone harm his sister. When his mother came with his sister he would not let them pass. All of these things, he told me, showed the will of God.¹

Not only myths, but the presence of stranger followers added to his aura. It is to be remembered that he returned to Afikpo with a group of these persons, and that Hausa strangers destroyed the Anohia shrines. Although most of his stranger followers did not remain with him, there were always some non-Afikpo at Anohia, even when he was away on tour. While I was at Afikpo there was a young Hausa man, and another young man born of an Nsukka Igbo mother and a Nupe father. A dwarf Mallam from the north came to visit Alhaji Ibrahim for a while. There was also an Egyptian who spoke little English, and

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¹ Myths of unusual behavior at Afikpo are commonly held concerning famous ancestors, the founder of a village or a patrilineal descent group, but not usually about the living.
less Hausa or Igbo, who visited Anohia. He claimed to be a native doctor who was travelling in West Africa, and while at Onitsha he had heard of Anohia and Alhaji Ibrahim and wished to visit the place. Such persons added an air of interest to Anohia, that it previously lacked, and villagers enjoyed meeting and talking to them.

During the short periods of 1959-60 that Alhaji Ibrahim was not away on tour, raising money for his mosque, he provided some Arabic and Koranic training to a few of the men, and when he was gone, some of his stranger followers did this for him. But most of the adult males were away fishing a good part of the year. It does not appear as if much in the way of regular instruction was carried out.

Some of the most enthusiastic of the Anohia Moslems were young men who knew English, generally through their schooling at the local Catholic school, but little or no Arabic. They used literature written in English on the Moslem world and its institutions, mainly published in Pakistan. For example, one popular book in Anohia (Anon., 1958b) of some 140 pages, contained about 60 pages by non-Moslems, such as H. G. Wells, discussing Islam. There were some 20 pages on polygamy and the status of women in Islam, again by non-Moslems, and also some writings on Mohammed, including some of his sayings. Other items were from the Koran. Other publications circulated at Anohia included maps showing the distribution of the Islamic population of the world, sometimes misleading in their overestimation of the number of members of this religion, sometimes not. But the young men were clearly accepting of this literature and quite excited about it. They were using these English writings as a means of proselytization, and for discussion with non-literate in the village, including their elders. These youth considered that they were the true converts, and that there were limits to what their elders could learn.

These young men played a very important role in the conversion of Anohia to Islam. It will be remembered that their approval of the changeover was first obtained by the elders. In addition, the elders, with a few exceptions, did not oppose the change, although they had never been directly exposed to the schooling of the young. What is striking here is the almost total acceptance of Islam among the males of the major Anohia ward, regardless of age; whereas, in regard to Christianity and many other social changes, from bridge-building to piped water, there have almost always been major differences in the reactions of the elders and the young men of Afikpo (S. Ottenberg, 1955, 1968a).

What is of further interest is that Alhaji Ibrahim, himself middle-aged, was able to exert complete command, at least in Islamic matters, over his male seniors, while within traditional Afikpo society he would scarcely have had a voice, by his age, in the elders' meetings; he would
still be considered a young man. Communal decision-making among the elders and village priests would be more greatly stressed, the discussion being led by influential seniors, such as Chief Okewa. Further, the presence of stranger followers seems to be an incipient form of clientage (LeVine, 1966; Smith, 1960), usually considered a more typical feature in Northern Nigeria than among the Igbo. Also the manner in which followers from other parts of Afikpo, as well as one or two from the leader's own village, went with him on tour and supported him at home, suggests clientage of a simple sort. Clearly Alhaji Ibrahim's leadership role differed from that of others in Afikpo.

In addition, there was a great deal of adoration of the leader by the Anohia Moslem women, some of it public, and some of it seemingly sexual in tone. This is not a typical Afikpo pattern where biting satire is more often the rule. Many of the women's songs, sung at Moslem feasts, while working on the farms, while travelling by canoe to and from markets on the Cross River, praised their leader most highly, as well as Allah, Chief Okewa, and Moslems in general. Their vocal adoration was sometimes directed toward visiting Moslems as well. These Anohia Moslem women, both married and unmarried, seemed quite happy over their conversion, and I would guess were an important force behind the change. They no longer had to worry about maintaining the taboos and restrictions associated with the village men's secret society, and with various shrines. The form of Islam at Anohia did not restrain them to remain in their homes during the day, and they carried on farming and marketing with their usual high interest and fervor (P. Ottenberg, 1959). It is true that when Anohia converted, some of the wives born in other villages refused to accept the change and left their husbands to remarry or to resettle elsewhere, but the locally born women in the main Anohia ward seemed to accept conversion.

The change did not destroy the interest of young unmarried Moslem girls, and of the Moslem women in general, in song and dance. There were plenty of opportunities for females to dress themselves up in fine cloth and to perform in the village and outside of their leader's home. They wore the Afikpo women's costume of head tie, brassiere cloth, wrap-around cloth, shoes or sneakers, perhaps with a necklace or some added jewelry that they would not have worn before. They sang in Afikpo Igbo, Onitsha Igbo and in Hausa. One song went as follows:

"NCNCers follow the Moslem people,  
NCNCers follow Alhaji Ibrahim,  
NCNCers follow Chief Okewa"

This is a clear attempt to reverse the actual order of events.

1. Onitsha songs and dances are popular with Afikpo women.
At one feast, ending Ramadan, Alhaji Ibrahim gave the women dancers a fine female sheep, and the Egyptian doctor presented them with 3s. Here the dance movements were either Afikpo or Onitsha style, or some mixture. Among songs that they sang in Afikpo Igbo on that day were a number of single-line ones that went as follows:

"Islam girls have won from the rest in singing."
"Michael get up. The day has broken, the cock has crowed."
"Dinah Ugo, it will be good for you. A stick in your hand [something nice in your hand]. She who has money will not become a prostitute."
"I go out to a big town, very nice town. She who is annoyed will not come among us."
"When he is proud you cannot be afraid of his proudness."
"Put your hand in your pocket and give me 6d."
"You should try to change up your manner, the Moslem people are coming."
"Anybody should not allow his Lord to let him be poor [ikpa, also meaning unmarried]."
"People of dancing have come."
"Let us go and see how they are dancing."
"Emmanuel, Emmanuel, the Moslem girls have come. Ima sees [that the girls have come]."

Some of these songs represent traditional Afikpo words and comments, but others clearly mark the new Moslem movement. Men also danced about and sang at this feast, shooting off guns in traditional Afikpo style, and praising Allah. But the men’s body movements were Hausa, I was told, and were not in the Afikpo style.

The Anohia Moslem dances and feasts, unlike some other village festivals, were not well attended by other Afikpo. But there was, among Anohia Moslems, both male and female, a keen sense of group activity and enjoyment on these religious holidays, on easy replacement for earlier forms of festivities.

**Comments**

If we ask why it was that the conversion occurred at all, I think that the most important factor was that a son of the village had returned a success. He was seen as having influence, with important connections outside of Afikpo, as a person of wealth, one who was literate in English and Arabic, and a learned and travelled man. He had religious knowledge. These features gave him a special stature. Alhaji Ibrahim had returned bearing the marks of greatness.

Many of these status features—education, external contacts, travel, wealth—are associated with success at Afikpo for Western-educated persons, and in these aspects Alhaji Ibrahim fits into a normal pattern.
But in other ways he differed. He also held tremendous religious power in the eyes of his followers. Further, he had made connections with a different set of external political and social groups than was usual, groups largely unknown and untried at Afikpo. These special features added to his luster.

There are other contributing factors. Anohia had committed itself, from its first European contacts, to favoring change. In the earlier period this was probably mainly to gain trading advantages on the Cross River. The village (and Kpogrikpo) cooperated with the Presbyterian missionaries and fought against Afikpo to allow the British military into the village-group. The commitment to a view of change gained the Anohia villagers less and less in time, as the area of development in the village-group moved to the central villages, and as Kpogrikpo continued to produce important leaders while Anohia did not. Conversion, I believe, was a largely unconscious attempt to increase status, something which any village in Afikpo is constantly seeking to do. Symbolically, as Alhaji Ibrahim returned from the dead—the forgotten—so would Anohia.

The change did not involve a complete abandonment of traditional beliefs, as Alhaji Ibrahim seemed to think. The conversion argument of the villagers stated that the spiritual forces influencing Anohia were acting heavily on the negative side, killing persons and making others ill. The conversion was seen as an attempt to remove these forces, not a denial that they existed. The acceptance of Islam did not mean the ending of belief in ancestors and other spirits, as much as it did putting them aside by the symbolic act of destroying their shrines. The conversion was an expression of an underlying feeling of low status in contrast to other Afikpo villages, for I am not convinced that there was actually greater illness and death in the village at the time of the change, only that the villagers perceived this to be so. Afikpo often express anxiety and depression in terms of health.

An important secondary factor is that the male elders of Anohia, also the young men, and the females, all saw advantages to the change. We have seen how unusual such a broadly accepted attitude toward new things is at Afikpo. No serious generational or sex conflict arose in the first ward of Anohia over the conversion. For the women it meant freeing themselves from traditional taboos and restraints, without the apparent imposition of new ones. The elders’ willingness to give up their authority to someone junior to them was matched by gains in prestige, and perhaps wealth, through association with their returned son. For the young men, for whom Catholicism and primary grade schooling did not seem to lead anywhere if they remained in the village, the change gave them the chance to play an active leadership role in the reconstitution of the community.
The change-over posed no economic threat to the community. The fishing, farming, and trading continued without restrictions, except for the economic boycott of Anohia women at the Afikpo market, not anticipated at the time of conversion. Yet even if this boycott had been successful I doubt whether it would have considerable effect, since Anohia women actively traded at the Edda and Unwana village-group markets, and at several Cross River markets as well. The Islamic view encouraged trade and work.

The lack of a high degree of centralization of government at Afikpo prohibited any strong action on the part of the village-group. The fact is that since the entrance of the British, the Afikpo leaders have never been able to exert strong authority in the face of opposition from a residential grouping within the village-group. This is even more striking in the case of outlying villages, such as Anohia. There have been other instances of villages which went their own way in certain matters and where fines and ostracism were ineffective (S. Ottenberg, 1971). There has been a dispute going on over control of the yam priest’s position and the yam rituals for over thirty years; the Afikpo elders have been unable to resolve it. It is likely that in pre-British times, when force was used and warfare and fighting occurred—although usually directed toward non-Afikpo—and when there was greater centralization of authority, that the Aro in the village-group, or the Afikpo elders, or both, would have organized fighting units that would have raided Anohia and ended the matter.

The questions may be raised why, if Alhaji Ibrahim was an Anohia man, and an Afikpo, did not all of Anohia follow him, or all of Afikpo? Why were not his achievements recognized by the members of Amoncha and Uhu Elem wards, and by the Afikpo as a whole? With regard to the rest of Anohia, it is clear that the conversion followed patrilineal lines in the village, the later-settled Anohia groupings not joining in. Clearly many shrines and religious activities at Afikpo are based on patrilineal ties, and certain agnatic groupings possess special shrines and carry out rituals uncommon to other descent lines, so that religious change by one agnatic group that is not followed by others occurs. Also, the two later wards to form at Anohia still had ties with their home community of Mkpoghorro, links which probably pulled them away from any attachment to Islam.

As for the rest of Afikpo it simply did not identify with the strange goings-on in a peripheral village, of a native son returned, but not well-known throughout the village-group. Also, of course, the movement threatened the political position of the Afikpo elders, which most of them were not interested in giving up, although a few thought they saw some personal opportunities in Islam. The progressives, as well as church-oriented persons, saw little to gain in the conversion.
Some were already in status positions as school teachers, school administrators, and so on, unlike the Anohia Catholic lads. Further, some Afikpo had worked or lived in the North and felt little kinship with Islam or its adherents.

The conversion thus remained essentially that of members of a group of closely related patrilineages to the views of a native son who had returned with honor and prestige.

The rather radical change in the authority structure of the converted Moslem ward, which we have outlined, raises interesting questions. Have tendencies toward the centralization of authority, and toward clientage, existed in Igbo country in the past and been overlooked by field researchers, or are these new features? The general view has been to see Igbo society as democratic and egalitarian, with decision-making based on broad consensus under the leadership of influential elders, priests, and title holders (S. Ottenberg, 1959; Green, 1947). As a result of working through my Afikpo notes covering the pre-British period, when the Aro played an important centralizing role (S. Ottenberg, 1971), I believe that there was considerably greater concentrated authority at Afikpo in earlier times. Stevenson’s (1968) recent reevaluation of the Aro influences in Igbo country, although a distortion of fact, points in this direction as well. Groups such as the Onitsha were traditionally centralized. The ability of Igbo to organize themselves under a central authority in the recent Nigerian-Biafran war is impressive.

It seems likely that in pre-British times there was considerably greater centralization in Igbo country, but the colonial administration, either consciously or not, destroyed it and captured it, and that it reappears under certain conditions. These conditions need analysis. Clearly one is external stress. At Anohia a lack of feeling of self-worth, relative to others, was involved. We need to think of Igbo society in terms of a bi-polar typology, ranging from a highly egalitarian, consensus-based, political system on the one hand, to a society with a degree of centralization, on the other, under certain conditions backed up by the use of force (Leach, 1954). In this context we can analyze the specific conditions under which certain political conditions exist. In this view also, we can see the great admiration that Afikpo have for the ‘chief,’ the ‘big palaver man,’ and yet the considerable distrust, suspicion, and fear of him that they exhibit.

I would also suggest that the data presented here indicate that the question of clientage in Igbo society be further studied. The common view, with which I agree in general principle, is that clientage is not a way of getting ahead in Igbo life (LeVine, 1966). Yet the Moslem experience at Anohia suggests an easy slip into a loose form of clientage on the part of local followers. Also the evident tendency of young
Igbo men to attach themselves to prominent chiefs, leaders, and wealthy individuals, in the expectation of advancement, both in the traditional and the modern social sectors, suggests that there are forms of clientage in Igbo society, although apparently differing from those in the North, and within different kinds of authority structures. These matters need further analysis.

I would also like to suggest that this particular religious movement at Anohia can be viewed as a form of prophetic movement. There has been a tendency among scholars in West Africa either to concentrate on Christian sects, nativistic churches, and the like, or on the Islamic orders, such as Tijaniyya and Ahmadiyya, but there has been little effort to see both as part of a similar pattern. This distinction, of course, grows out of the considerable differences in the scholarly background of researchers in the two fields. My own very limited Afikpo data suggest that some cross-comparison may be desirable. Alhaji Ibrahim clearly had charismatic qualities. The myths about his childhood and the revelations play an important role in the ideology. He was sometimes viewed as a supernaturally gifted person. He led his villagers to purify themselves against the evil of the old spirits by destroying their shrines and adopting a new faith. The emphasis on health and curing through faith and on purification through the new rituals is important (Baëta, 1962). While data are insufficient for a full comparison, they are suggestive.

It is interesting in this light to ask why, if the native son of Anohia was to convert, did he choose the particular Moslem order, Tijaniyya, that he did? Too many matters are involved here for an adequate answer, but I raise the question because this order seems to allow for modernization as well as responding to traditional West African values. According to Cohen (1968), who studied the Hausa Tijaniyya in Ibadan, the order emphasizes the leadership and guidance of specific religion heads, and group prayer and ritual rather than purely independent ritual. It is not as heavily ascetic as other orders and stresses trading and economic activities as useful goals more than other sects do. It develops a high level of local social interaction. Features such as these would seem to make it a highly desirable order for the non-ascetic, group-ritual oriented, trading and entrepreneurial Afikpo.

The conflict between the Anohia Moslems and the rest of Afikpo seems to differ from the recent Biafran-Nigerian conflict in many ways. In the Anohia case the major litigants have been Igbo, the conflict localized and not involving major economic competition among males or among persons of different levels of skill and training. Further, in Afikpo the Western-educated Igbo have played a passive role. In these aspects the conflict did not serve as a portent of things to come. Yet Islam was seen as a basic threat to the Igbo way of life.
by the elders, who responded by harassing and containing tactics. The Moslems viewed traditionalism and Westernization as lacking in spiritual purity and greatness, both well deserving replacement. They introduced a new feature into Afikpo life—a much more direct and non-negotiable attack upon tradition than had ever been present under missionary and Western influences. From each side the other seemed essentially restrictive and dogmatic. The dispute was contained because there were physical forces at the disposal of the district officer, and the assistant district officer, which they used, and because they were willing to act in the role of mediator and adjustor.

I have no information on what became of the Moslem community following the outbreak of the Nigerian-Biafran civil war.

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