

## Spatial Distribution and Growth of Islamic Places of Worship in Sokoto Metropolis

Sa'idu M. <sup>1</sup>; Al'amin S. <sup>2</sup>; and Abubakar S. I. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1&2</sup>Department of Geography, School of Secondary Education, Art and Social Science, Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto. <sup>3</sup>Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences Education, Shehu Shagari University of Education, Sokoto.

Corresponding author: [mustaphacurere60@gmail.com](mailto:mustaphacurere60@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

This study wishes to explore the effect of religious sub-groupings on the proliferation and distribution of places of worship on the religious landscape of Sokoto metropolis. Geographical information system (GIS) environment using Geographical Positioning system for ground-truthing was employed in mapping the religious places of worship and their actual location/position on the landscape of the study area. The places identified were 32 *Hallaras* centres, 35 *Zawiyas*, 81 *Jumu'at* mosque and other relevant preaching grounds. Two (2) participants were chosen from each of the sect's orders particularly leaders and imams for interview. The research revealed that the subgroupings are the yardstick for proliferation of religious places of worship in the study area. *Hallaras*, *Hallaqas* and *zawiyas* and *Jumu'at* mosques are found to be the major places of worship in the metropolis. It was also concluded that job creation, seek for popularity, desire for leadership and misinterpretation of religious teachings are the other contributing factors for the proliferation of places of worship. Nearest neighbour analysis (NNA) of *Sufi* order sect, *JIBWIS* and *Jumu'at* places of worship have less than 1% given the z-scores of -4.506 strongly indicating the random pattern of distribution in Sokoto metropolis. The work recommends among others the need for spatial planning policies of religious places of worship in the metropolis for unity and better sustainability of the religious landscape in Sokoto metropolis.

**Keywords:** Proliferation, Spatial Analysis, Places of Worship, GIS Mapping.

### Introduction

Religion has been increasingly coming to the fore front in modern scholarship. It is equally a subject for discussion in the Media. Most Nigerians appear to be interested in religion for its immense benefits, such as teachings of good will, promoting ethics in political life, the message of forgiveness and inner strength. Nigeria is a country where different religious adherents coexist and mix freely to carry out their day-to-day religious activities. Religion is the most potent instrument of peaceful co-existence but also most abused, manipulated and subverted weapon of deceit and destruction (Mustafa, 2014). The systematic manipulation of religion is one of the most important political issues facing the people of Nigeria today (Abubakar, 2018). Religion is becoming the most silent factor that may affect the sustainability of the society or even the nation at large. Explanation of its spatial trend

as a result of human interaction is of interest to geographers especially at this time when religion becomes an issue in the globalized world (Brunn, 2010).

A sect is a subgroup of religious, political or philosophical belief system, usually an offshoot of a larger group (Nura, 2018). Although the term was originally a classification for religious separated groups. It can now refer to any organization that breaks away from a larger one to follow a different set of rules and principles. According to Mustapha (2014b), the ancient schools in Islam was classically divided into three major sects at the Beginning. These are sunny Islam, Shi'a Islam and Kharij Islam. Each of these sects continues to develop several distinct jurisprudence systems reflecting their own understanding of the Islamic law during the course of the history of Islam.

Each sect that manifests itself is said to be introduced by certain ways which in turn produce places of worship. According to (Lambu, 2014), the more sects develop, there are tendencies for more religious of worship to evolve as a result of differences in understanding and code of worship which required separate places. For example, in Sokoto metropolis, *Zawiyyas* are known among the Sufi brotherhood, preaching centres among *Izala*, *Salafiyya* and the like. The problem hinges to the fact that proliferation of the new places of worship may reflect the dynamic religious landscape in the study area influenced by historical, social and theological factors. This led to a notable increase in the number of places of worship by all the sects' groups to maintain and grow their congregations.

Generally, Sokoto people as well as Sokoto caliphate scholars were adhered to *Qadiriya Sufi* order which is the Background and slogan of the city (*Qadirwan Shehu*) Sirajo, et'al (2023). In the same vein, the arrival of religious sects in Sokoto State after colonialism has come with many changes in religious culture of the state as a result of migration and globalization which produced many Islamic and Christians sects which in turn produce various religious places of worship with no proper spatial planning in the landscape of the study area. This create concern among the dwellers of the city as a challenge especially on Fridays and during some functions major roads are being block by the activities of the sects' members.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The proliferation of religious sects within urban environments significantly influences the spatial distribution of places of worship, thereby impacting urban planning and development. A conceptual framework linking these elements encompasses:

#### **Sect Proliferation and Spatial Distribution:**

The proliferation is mainly caused by Religious Diversity and spatial competition: The emergence of various religious sects leads to the establishment of distinct worship spaces, each reflecting unique architectural styles, spatial requirements, and locational preferences. As sects vie for visibility and accessibility, competition for prime urban locations intensifies, influencing land-use patterns and property values.

## **Spatial Distribution and Urban Planning:**

The uneven distribution of worship places can disrupt existing zoning regulations, necessitating revisions to accommodate religious infrastructures within residential, commercial, or mixed-use areas as zoning challenges. Clusters of worship centers can strain urban infrastructure, including transportation networks and public utilities, requiring planners to adapt services accordingly.

## **Urban Planning and Sect Proliferation:**

Urban policies that are inclusive and considerate of religious diversity can facilitate harmonious coexistence, whereas restrictive policies may lead to unauthorized constructions or social tensions which necessitate policy formulation.

Incorporating input from various religious groups during the planning process ensures that developments meet the spiritual and communal needs of the population as community engagement

## **Recent Studies Illustrating the Framework:**

Lawanson (2021) examines how the growth of Pentecostal churches in Lagos has reconfigured urban spaces, highlighting the interplay between religious expansion and urban planning.

A study by Enubong (2023) in Uyo city investigates the influences and impacts of the spatial proliferation of worship places, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities this presents for urban planners.

Research by Enoguanbhor et al. (2023) evaluates land-use demarcation and implementation in Abuja, providing insights into how urban planning can adapt to various urban functions, including religious infrastructures.

This framework underscores the necessity for adaptive urban planning that considers the dynamic nature of religious landscapes, ensuring sustainable and inclusive urban development.

## **Material and Methods**

The research adopts mix methods of data collection. Qualitative techniques cover data from interview while quantitative comprise the points of co-ordinates. Data collection began with the use of handheld Geographical Positioning System (G.P.S). for ground-truthing. The coordinates were picked from the religious places of worship. The attributes were subjected to satellite imagery for mapping out the religious places of worship in the Geographical Information System (GIS) environment. Interview were carried out with the 10 stakeholders of religious sects representing their affiliation. Interview was conducted with the religious group's members that have an in-depth understanding of the sect's evolution. Two (2) participants were chosen from the Sufi orders, two from each *Izala* sect, *Salafiya*, *Shiism*, *Mahadism* and *Quraniyoon* for interview, making the total of sixteen (16) participants. The population of this study consists of the religious sects and their places of worship in the metropolis. Religious sects identified are *Qadiriyya*, *Tijjaniyya*, *Mahadism*,

*Izala*, *Salafiya*, Shiism and *Tajdidul Islam*. Population covered under religious places of worship are thirty-two (32) *Hallaras of Qadiriyya*, thirty-five (35) *Zawiya of Tijjaniya*, thirty-six (36) places of preaching by *Izala* Kaduna, thirty-two (32) places of preaching by *Izala* Jos, twenty-three (23) places of *Salafiya* and eighty-one (81) *Jumu'at* mosque Coordinates were picked from these places for mapping the places.

## Result and Discussion

### Sufi and their Places of Worship

Sufism is divided into two (2) major branches in Sokoto *Metropolis*, these are *Qadiriyya* and *Tijjaniya* order. Each branch was segregated into various groups. The landscape of the *Sufi* order covers the places of *Halara*, *Baghdadiya*, *Mi'adi*, *Zikr Anfas*, *Maukibi*, and *Maulud* places of worship. Figure 1. map is showing the concentration of these activities in the core city of the metropolis and especially around the Sultanate Council areas, indicating the long existence and acceptance of the sect since the existing of the historical era of the old city. However, the map shows that *Qadiriyya* is more concentrated in the core city than *Tijjaniyya*, but also *Tijjaniyya* has more places of activities (35 official places with hundreds unregistered places) than *Qadiriyya* (32 with few unregistered places) in the metropolis now.

Interview conducted revealed that the number of sub-groups under *Qadiriyyah* brotherhood includes *Kadiriyyah Ahl baiti*, *Kuntiyah*, *Shinqitiyyah*, *Usumaniyyah*, *Sammaniyah*, *Shaziliyyah* and *Jabbariyah*. The landscape of Sokoto city is more occupied with *Qadiriyyah* sects than any other sects in the metropolis. Similarly, *Tijjaniyyah* brotherhood were sub-divided into other five (5) groups, which are *munazimatul fityanul islam*, *Hilakul Zikr*, *Almajilis Alsufi Altijjani*, *Shababul faidah Al-Insiah* and *Mahafal Ahl- Darikatul Tijjaniyyah*. The nearest neighbour analysis of sufi brotherhood places of worship is indicating the random clustered pattern of distribution by given the z score as -4.506 (Figure 5).

### Jibwis and Salafiya places of Worship

The map of Figure 2. shows the distribution of religious places of worship under the landscape of *Jama'atul Izalatul bidi'a wa Iqamatul Sunna* (JIBWIS) and *Salafiya* sects. The map clearly distinguishes itself from that of Sufism. The distribution is scattered outside the core city. *Salafiya* has more places and recognition in the core city than the two forms of *Izala*. The places are mainly for functions and activities of the sects which are *Tafsir* (interpretation of the Qur'an), reading of *hadith* and *Tauhid* books, lectures, and the like. This activity is taking place mostly in the evening and at the night. The process is that a scholar is reading on a chair and followers were listening while sitting on the ground or chairs. *Izala* and *Salafiya* Scholars are more engaged in teaching new modern methods (Curriculum) of the *Islamiyya* schools' way of learning and are found to be responsible for the establishment of all *Islamiyyah* schools in Sokoto city. Most of these scholars travel to Arab countries for educational tourism. *Izala* sects' subgroups itself into three (3) major sub groups which are *Izala* Kaduna, *Izala* Jos and *Salafiya*.

Mapping of the JIBWIS places of worship was subjected to geographical information system environment for the analysis of the pattern of distribution using NNA. The result shoes the score of less than 5% likelihood that the pattern is random in nature (figure 6).

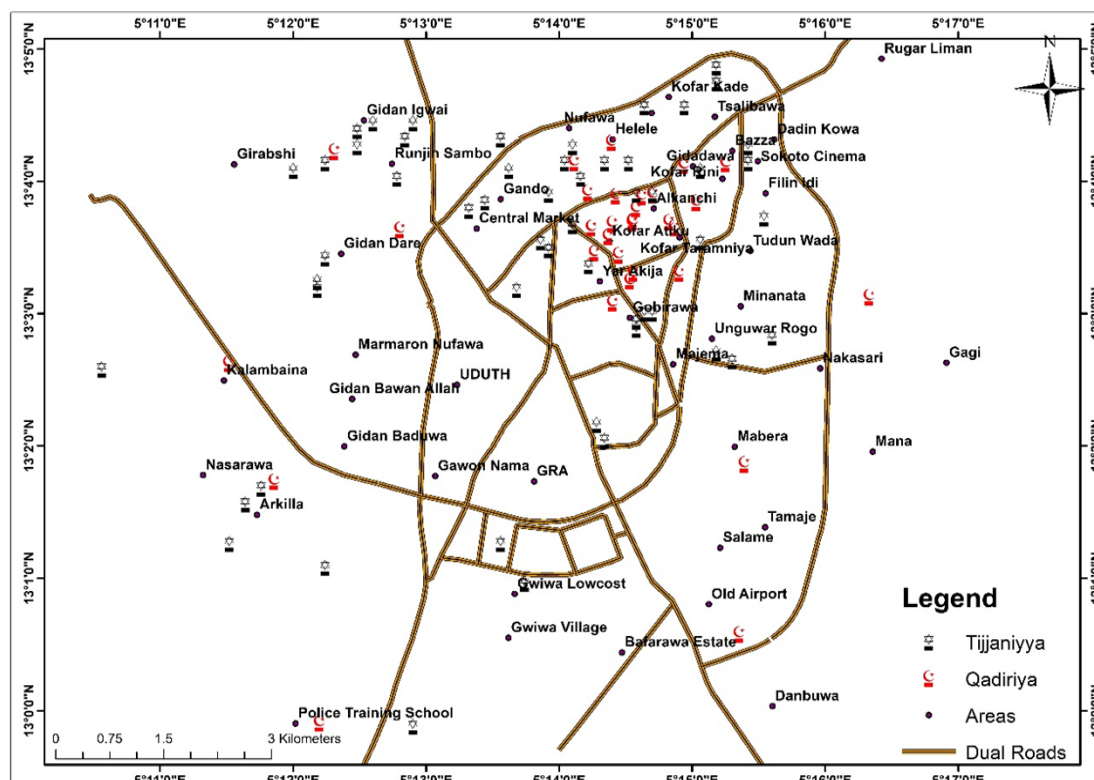


Figure 1: Sufism Places of Worship

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

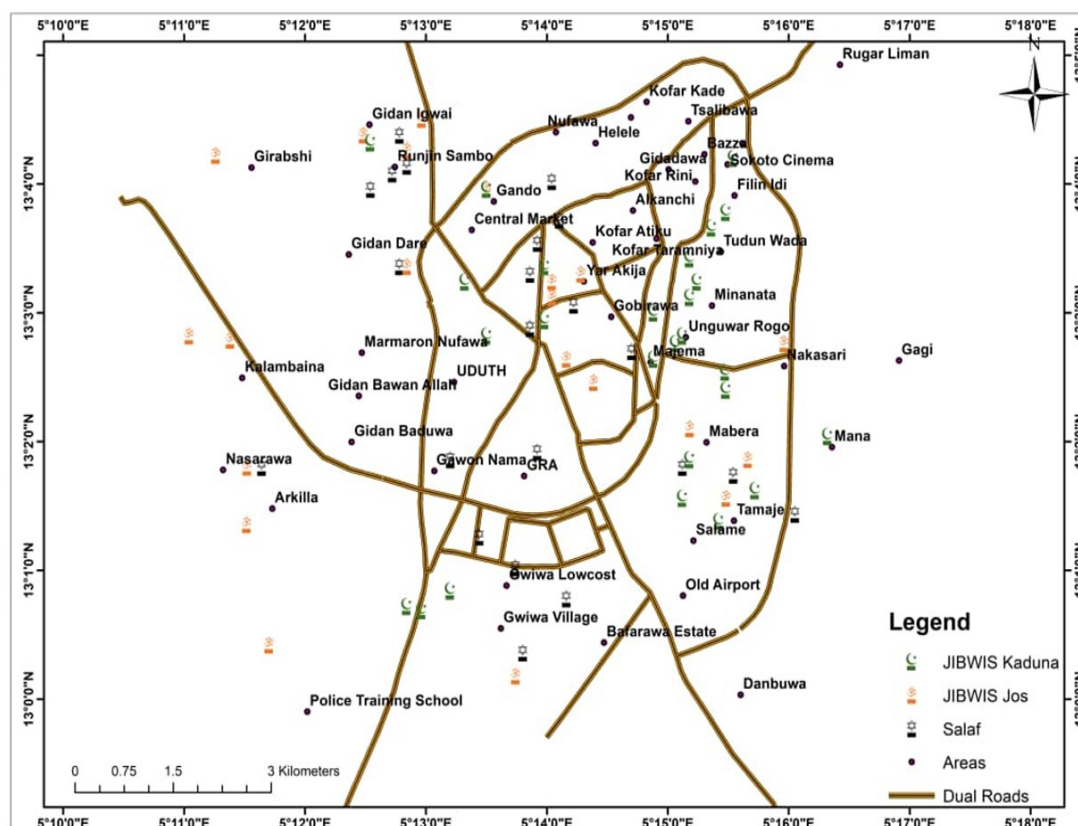


Figure 2: JIBWIS and *Salafiya* Places of Worship

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

### Jumu'at Mosque

Due to the evolution and segregation of various sects in the city, many *Jumu'at* mosques were manifested from core sects. It was observed from the research that adherent belonging to each sect were found to be a major occupant of the mosque during Friday prayers. Figure 3. shows the distribution of such *Jumu'at* mosques and their sects' affiliation. A total number of 66 *Jumu'at* mosque were identified and map out in the religious landscape of Sokoto metropolis.

Islamically there must be at least one *Jumu'at* mosque in any given locality with the condition of validity of a certain number of people for the congregation of such *Jumu'at* prayer in Maliki jurisprudence. and this is aimed at minimizing the space and planning the town. Al-sawy (2006) asserted that there should not be more than one *Jumu'ah* mosque in a particular town. On the other hand, Hambali scholars like Ibn Qudama are of the view that there is no harm for the proliferation of the *Jumu'ah* Mosque if there is a need for it and people can maintain decorum (Bn Muhammad, 2014). Ibn Qudama particularly maintains that if the distance is below *farskh* ( 3 Km) and people are below (40) in number in their village, they should go to the nearby town for *Jumu'ah* prayer. However, Zarbazo (1994) added that in a large city or area where it is quite difficult for everyone to attend one JM, the establishment of a new mosque is allowed, as there is no authentic evidence explicitly



showing that only one *Jumu'ah* mosque must be held in each locality. Despite these challenges, the Sultanate Council maintained the Maliki jurisprudence culture of *Jumu'at* mosque distribution. It was found out from the research that most of the newly established JM in the city do not receive permission from the Sultanate Council.

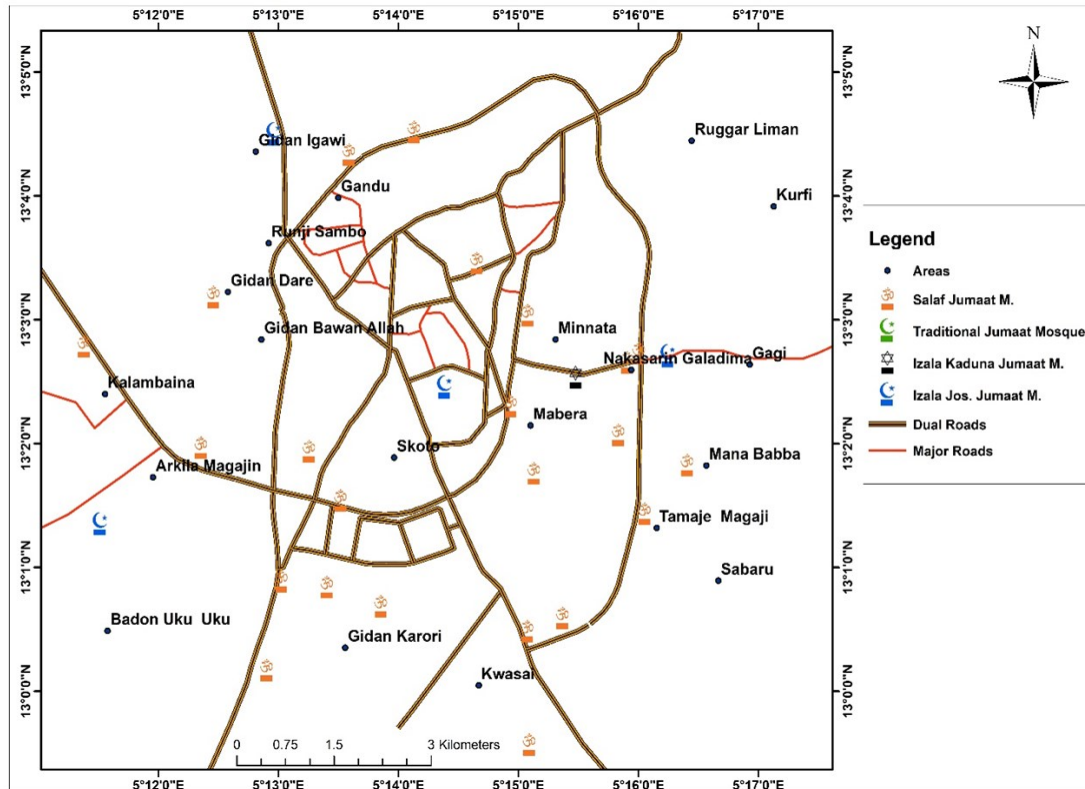


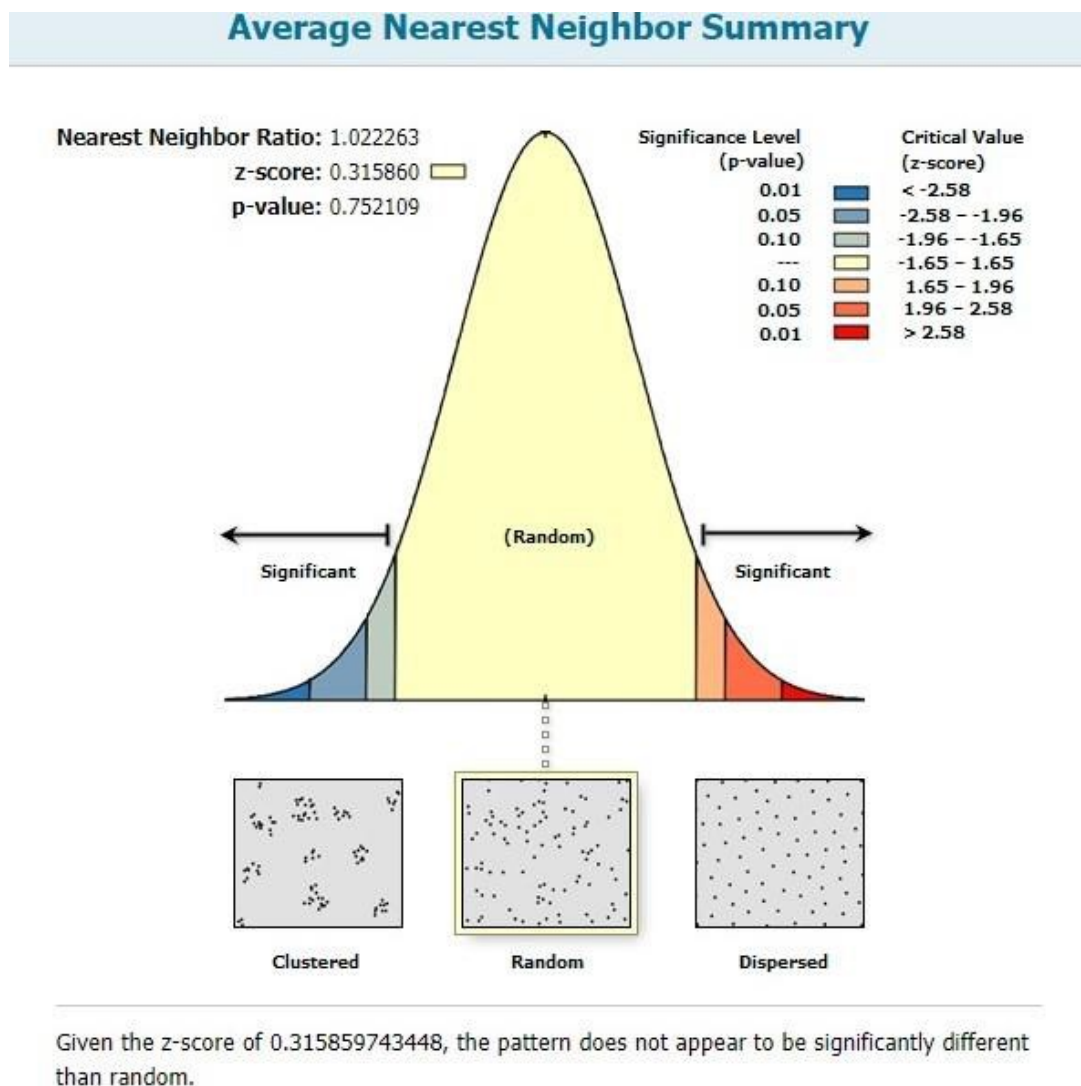
Figure 3: *Jumu'ah* Mosques and their Sects affiliation

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

According to majority of respondents Muslim communities (60%) believed that the common factor that leads to the proliferation of JM in Sokoto city is the expansion of the town and the population density. This is in line with the findings of Wada & Kabiru (2015) which opined that demographic change, rapid urbanization, and the emergence of new settlements necessitated the building of new JM in the case of different locations in Kano city. The Muslim migrants from the southern part to Sokoto especially Yoruba mainly reside away from the old city gates. They usually establish their mosques where they are living such as Bello way, Hajiya Halima, and Offa Road. Secondly, other Imams opined that the formation of *Izala* in 1978 had contributed to the proliferation of mosques in Northern Nigeria in general and Sokoto in particular. Before the arrival of the *Izala* movement, Sufi groups dominated the city. However, the only two JM namely (Shehu and Bello Mosque) were in existence to the extent that it is difficult for any new sect to survive in the landscape. The only way *Izala* could get followership was through the building of their separate mosques and schools in the Sufi-dominated areas because the potential members were followers of the Sufi brotherhood who were the majority in the area. This movement found

it very difficult at the early stage to have ground and building permission from the Sultanate Council, they have to jettison the customary power of traditional authority for them to have a ground. More over the split of the *Izala* sect into two factions, (Jos and Kaduna branches) also lead to the rapid increase in the *Jumu'ah* mosque as well as the cropping of the *Salafiya* sect in the city. Thirdly, educational tourism by people especially in Saudi Arabia contributes a lot to the formation of the *Salafiya* group and the establishment of more mosques in this landscape. Recently *Salafiya* mosques are trying to overshadow the *Izala* mosque in the metropolis, majority of the newly established mosque in the area especially from 2015 belongs to *Salafiya* group (Figure 3). Moreover, the Chief imam of *Yar-marina Jumu'at* Mosque opined that financial gain plays an important role in the proliferation of these *Jumu'at* mosques in the metropolis. He suggested the need for going back to the old tradition where all imams were appointed by the Sultanate Council in the city. The other possible factors found from the research for this proliferation include physical distance, language barrier, increase in population and density, secularization, sectarian differences as well as individual followership. Figure 8 shows the trend of establishment based on years using class intervals of twenty (20) years. It indicates that from 1809 – 1830 only two (2) mosques were established since then no other JM was established until the 1970s when four JM were established mainly by Yoruba people and another two by indigenes. The proliferation began between 1978- 1999 were fifteen (15) mosques were also established. During the political era of the fourth republic (1999-2020) more than forty (40) JM were added to the Sokoto metropolis. From 2020-2025 another 11 JM were added in the landscape. The figure 5 below shows that the pattern of the map distribution is 0.315 as z. score signifying the random distribution pattern of *Jumu'at* mosques in Sokoto metropolis.





**Figure 4. NNA of Jumu'at places of worship**

**Source: OSGOP GIS environment**

The interview conducted with some Imams revealed that conflicts and misunderstandings among the leaders of many mosques led to the formation of many mosques in the study area. For example, Sheikh Musa Ayuba Lukuwa JM established in 2007 was a faction of Sheikh Abubakar Gummi JM established in 1997 as a result of leadership crises and the proximity is too close. Likewise, *Ansaruddien* society JM established in 1972 which is the first Yoruba JM in the metropolis was split into three (2) *Anwarul-Islam* 1975 and *TawakaltuAlallahi* 2002 JMs which are all located in the same area of less than 1km distance of *Shagon Goro* area. The Imam of Hajiya Halima 1 Mosque of Yoruba established in 1982 blames politics and the language barrier for the establishment of Hajiya Halima 2 mosque established in 1997 nearest to the first one. The proximity of these two mosques is too close and the misunderstanding is worst.

The findings of this research coincide with that of Lambu (2014) which revealed that fragmentation of both religious into sects and denominations resulted in the sporadic establishment of mosques and churches based on sects' affiliation. It also found that, Islamic religious places of worship were randomly distributed while those of Christians were clustered in nature.

The work of Ibrahim (2013) on the rise and proliferation of new religious movements in Nigeria indicate that the convergent reason for the proliferation range from international, national and individual factors such as globalization secularisms, educational tourisms, urbanization and human mobility.

### Conclusion

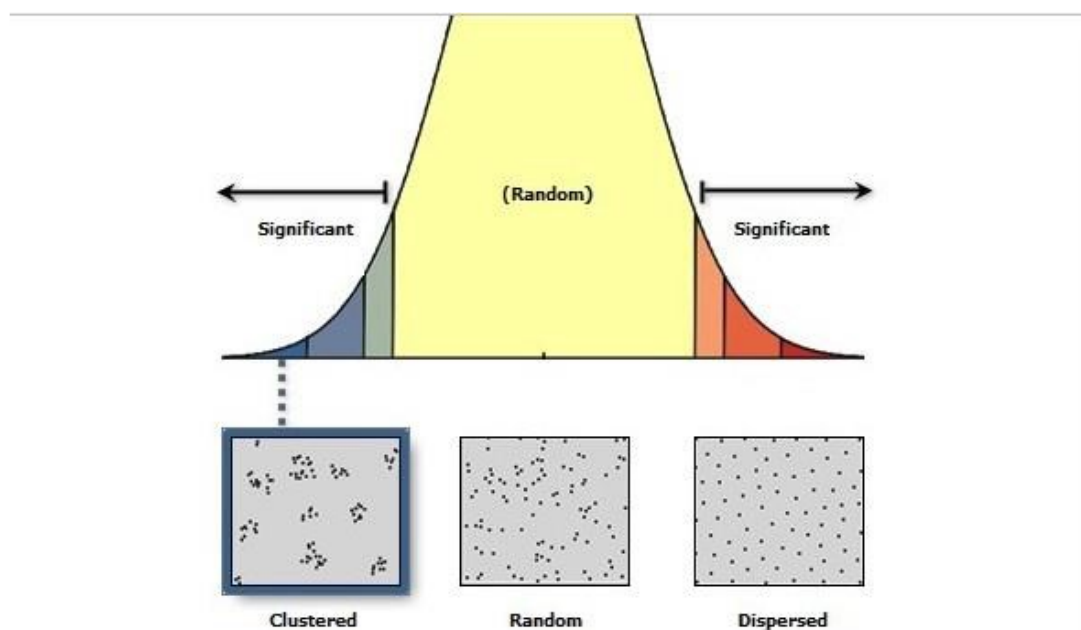
The study was carried out to examine the Islamic sects' places of worship in relation to their sub-groupings as manifestation to the religious landscape of Sokoto metropolis. Sufi order sects were found to be the first group to arrive in Sokoto metropolis before the establishment of the Sokoto. Sufism is divided into two (2) major branches in Sokoto metropolis, these are *Qadiriya* and *Tijjaniya* order. each group was found to be split into other sub-groups. The number of sub-groups under *Qadiriya* brotherhood includes *Kadiriya Ahl baiti*, *Kuntiyah*, *Shinqitiyah*, *Usumaniyah*, *Sammaniyah*, *Shaziliyah* and *Jabbariyah*. The landscape of Sokoto city is more occupied with *Qadiriya* sects in the core city than any other sects.

Similarly, *Tijjaniya* brotherhood were sub-divided into other five (5) groups. These groups were found to established more places of worship occupying the places outside the old city showing the indication of second arrival in the area as buffer zones. *Izala* sects' subgroups itself into three (3) groups occupying the outskirts of the metropolis. It was concluded that 32 major *Hallaras*, 35 *zawiyas* and 81 *Jumuat* mosque with other places were identified and mapped out under the landscape of Sokoto city. The segregation of these sect was regarded as the key factor for the proliferation of many places of worship in the area. One of the imams opined that, other contributing factors includes job creation, seeking for popularity, desire of leadership and misinterpretation of religious teachings. Nearest neighbour analysis (NNA) of *Sufi* order sect and JIBWIS places of worship have less than 1% - 5% likelihood that the clustered pattern is the result of random chance. The interview observe that many people are on aware of the implication of improper spatial planning distribution claiming that all land belongs to God as such everywhere is place of worship. The research was confronted with some limitation of in accessibility to data record base on sects' evolution, ideology, leadership and daily activities. Authorities concern refuses to accept the custody of sect's affairs believing that its under the control of the sultanate council.

The work recommends among others;

1. The need for spatial planning of religious places of worship in the metropolis for better sustainability of the religious landscape in Sokoto metropolis.

2. Frequent forum should be created by ministry of religious affairs and sultanate council with the view of orientation and in harmonizing the unity of Muslims and their sect's affiliation.
3. Number of *Hallaras*, *Zawiyah*, preaching grounds and *Jumu'at* mosques should be specify to each sect's groups. This will enhance the unity among each group of sects.
4. A certain guideline should be established in the location and time of religious functions in each sects group. No functions should be allowed to be an obstacle to other people affairs and their right of freedom.
5. More research should be conducted on the impact of urbanization on religious space.



Given the z-score of -4.5060963214, there is a less than 1% likelihood that this clustered pattern could be the result of random chance.

### Average Nearest Neighbor Summary

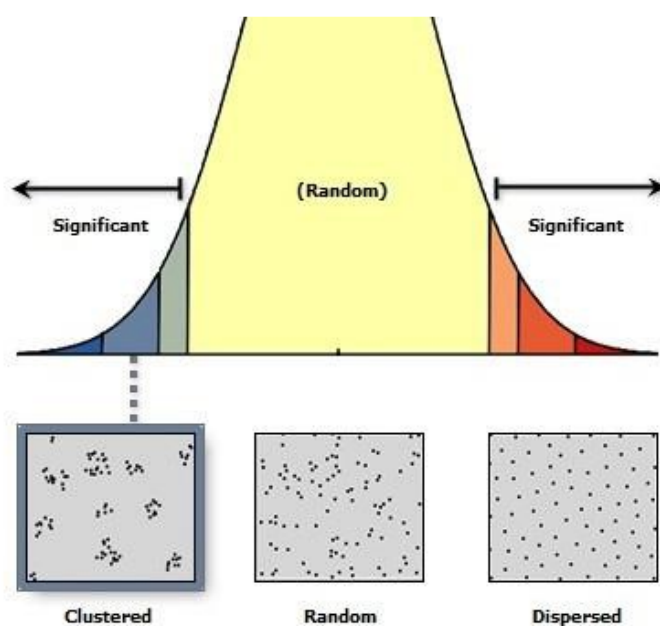
<b>Observed Mean Distance:</b>	451.1468 Meters
<b>Expected Mean Distance:</b>	603.5637 Meters
<b>Nearest Neighbor Ratio:</b>	0.747472
<b>z-score:</b>	-4.506096
<b>p-value:</b>	0.000007

### Dataset Information

<b>Input Feature Class:</b>	Sufi Order
<b>Distance Method:</b>	EUCLIDEAN
<b>Study Area:</b>	126772610.181913
<b>Selection Set:</b>	False

Figure 5: NNA of Sufi order sects' places of worship

Source: OSGOF GIS environment



Given the z-score of -2.45107242137, there is a less than 5% likelihood that this clustered pattern could be the result of random chance.

### Average Nearest Neighbor Summary

<b>Observed Mean Distance:</b>	558.8183 Meters
<b>Expected Mean Distance:</b>	659.0253 Meters
<b>Nearest Neighbor Ratio:</b>	0.847947
<b>z-score:</b>	-2.451072
<b>p-value:</b>	0.014243

### Dataset Information

<b>Input Feature Class:</b>	JIBWIS_Salafiya
<b>Distance Method:</b>	EUCLIDEAN
<b>Study Area:</b>	123345278.996935
<b>Selection Set:</b>	False

Figure 6: NNA of Izala and Salafiya places of worship

Source: OSGOF GIS environment

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