

Political Reorganization of Kajju under British Colonial Rule, 1903–1960

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Abstract

This article interrogates the transformation of Kajju's indigenous political system under British colonial rule between 1903 and 1960, with particular attention to the restructuring of authority among the Bajju people of present-day Southern Kaduna. Prior to colonial intrusion, Kajju society operated a decentralized but internally coherent political order centered on the Gado institution—a composite system in which political leadership, religious mediation, land administration, and judicial arbitration were fused. Authority was exercised through consensus, ritual legitimacy, and lineage-based accountability, enabling social cohesion without centralized coercion. British military conquest in the early twentieth century, completed after prolonged resistance in the Kagoro–Kajju axis by 1917, marked a decisive rupture in this indigenous order. Under the colonial policy of indirect rule, Kajju was administratively subordinated to the emirates of Zazzau and later Jema'a, despite its distinct historical, cultural, and political identity. The imposition of emirate-appointed district heads, taxation systems, and native courts systematically displaced the Gado institution and relegated indigenous authorities to subordinate or symbolic roles. Drawing on colonial intelligence reports, district assessment files, and Bajju oral traditions, this study argues that the abolition of the Gado system was not dictated by administrative necessity or political dysfunction but by British preference for governing through centralized Muslim emirates considered more “legible” and compliant to colonial control. This administrative convenience entrenched political inequality, facilitated cultural domination, and reinforced religious hierarchies that marginalized non-Muslim communities in Southern Kaduna. The article further demonstrates that colonial political reorganization provoked sustained resistance among the Bajju, manifested in tax evasion, court boycotts, ritual defiance, and later

ethnic mobilization for recognition and autonomy. These struggles intensified in the late colonial period, contributing to the emergence of minority political consciousness, demands for chieftdom restoration, and participation in regional movements advocating self-rule. By situating Kajju's experience within the broader colonial strategy toward non-Muslim societies in Northern Nigeria, the study reveals how indirect rule functioned as an instrument of domination rather than accommodation. Ultimately, the Kajju case underscores the resilience of indigenous political institutions and highlights the long-term consequences of colonial governance for minority politics, identity formation, and postcolonial state legitimacy in Nigeria.

I. Introduction

British colonial expansion into Northern Nigeria in the early twentieth century constituted one of the most far-reaching political disruptions in the region's history. Following the proclamation of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in 1900, British military expeditions systematically dismantled indigenous political systems and reconstituted them within an imperial framework designed primarily for control, taxation, and administrative efficiency. While the emirate system of the Central Sudan was largely preserved and incorporated into colonial governance through indirect rule, non-Muslim communities in the Middle Belt—including those of present-day Southern Kaduna—experienced far more intrusive and transformative interventions. Among these communities were the Bajju of Kajju, whose pre-colonial political organization revolved around the Gado institution, an indigenous system that integrated political leadership, ritual authority, judicial arbitration, and land stewardship.

Prior to colonial conquest, Kajju society operated a decentralized but cohesive political order in which authority was diffused among lineage heads, ritual specialists, and the Gado, whose legitimacy derived from sacred sanction, historical continuity, and communal consent rather than coercive force. This system effectively regulated land use, resolved disputes, organized communal labor, and mediated relations with neighboring groups such as the Jaba, Atyap, and Kagoro. British penetration of the Kajju area, however, disrupted this equilibrium. Resistance to colonial intrusion in the Kagoro–Kajju axis delayed effective occupation until about 1917, when British patrols subdued local opposition and imposed administrative control through force and punitive expeditions. The aftermath of conquest marked the beginning of a sustained process of political reorganization that fundamentally altered Kajju's indigenous institutions.

Under the doctrine of indirect rule, colonial administrators subordinated Kajju to the emirates of Zazzau and later Jema'a, despite clear historical, cultural, and political distinctions between the Bajju and their Muslim Hausa-Fulani neighbors. The Gado institution was neither recognized as a native authority nor incorporated into the colonial administrative hierarchy. Instead, emirate-appointed district heads, tax collectors, and Alkali courts were imposed over Kajju territory, effectively displacing indigenous leadership structures. Colonial officials justified this arrangement as administratively expedient, arguing that centralized emirate systems were more "advanced," orderly, and legible to British governance than the decentralized political institutions of non-Muslim societies.

This article interrogates how British colonial administration reorganized Kajju's political structure between 1903 and 1960 and examines the implications of this transformation for indigenous authority and political autonomy. It argues that the dismantling of the Gado system was not a response to political dysfunction but a deliberate colonial strategy driven by administrative convenience, economic extraction through taxation and forced labor, and the desire for political control over resistant populations. By subordinating Kajju to emirate authority, colonial rule entrenched political inequality, facilitated cultural domination, and marginalized the Bajju within the colonial hierarchy of Northern Nigeria. These policies generated sustained resistance—manifested in tax evasion, court boycotts, ritual defiance, and later ethnic mobilization—which persisted into the late colonial period and shaped post-colonial struggles for recognition and autonomy in Southern Kaduna.

By situating the Kajju experience within the broader colonial governance of minority communities in Northern Nigeria, this study contributes to scholarship on indirect rule, minority politics, and indigenous political resilience. It demonstrates that colonial political restructuring was not merely an administrative exercise but a transformative process whose consequences for identity, authority, and power relations endured well beyond Nigeria's independence in 1960.

Kajju before Colonial Rule: Society and Political Organization

Oral traditions consistently trace the origins of the Bajju people to the broader Dangi stock, linking them historically and culturally to neighboring Plateau and Middle Belt communities such as the Jarawa, Miango (Iriga), and Kaje. These shared origins are reflected in linguistic affinities, ritual practices, and patterns of settlement that predate nineteenth-century political realignments in Central Nigeria. Bajju migration narratives recount a gradual southward movement driven by population pressure, ecological considerations, and intergroup interactions, culminating in permanent settlement at Dibyyi (also known as Kurmin-Bi) by the late eighteenth century. Dibyyi functioned not only as an early settlement nucleus but also as a ritual and political reference point from which subsequent Bajju communities radiated.

From this core, kinship-based settlements expanded across the Kajju highlands and plains, forming territorially defined clans that retained genealogical links to founding ancestors. These clans were bound together by a shared language (Jju), cosmology, and collective historical memory, which reinforced a strong sense of communal identity distinct from neighboring Hausa-Fulani emirate societies. Settlement patterns reflected both security concerns and agricultural needs, with villages strategically located near arable land, water sources, and defensible terrain—features that later influenced the character of Bajju resistance to external domination. By the nineteenth century, Kajju had evolved into a culturally unified but politically decentralized society, governed through indigenous institutions adapted to local realities rather than centralized coercion.

The Gado Political System

Pre-colonial Kajju society operated a sophisticated three-tier political system anchored in the Gado institution, which constituted the apex of indigenous authority. At the highest level was the Gado Nkpang, the supreme clan head, who exercised overarching leadership across clan territories. Beneath him were the Gado Kankrang,

responsible for village-level governance, and the Gado Nenkrang, who administered sub-village units and lineage compounds. This tiered structure ensured political coordination without undermining local autonomy, allowing authority to flow upward through consultation rather than imposition.

The Gado was simultaneously a political ruler, religious intermediary, and judicial authority. As a political leader, he coordinated communal defense, regulated land allocation, and oversaw relations with neighboring communities. In his religious capacity, the Gado served as the custodian of sacred shrines and rituals believed to safeguard fertility, rainfall, and communal well-being. Judicially, the Gado presided over dispute resolution, drawing on customary law, oath-taking, and mediation to restore social harmony rather than impose punitive sanctions. This fusion of authority imbued governance with ritual legitimacy and moral accountability, distinguishing Kajju political culture from the centralized emirate model that relied heavily on taxation and coercive enforcement.

Although succession to the Gado office was hereditary within recognized ruling lineages, accession was neither automatic nor absolute. Community validation—expressed through councils of elders, lineage heads, and ritual specialists—was essential to legitimize a new Gado. A ruler who violated communal norms or abused authority risked ritual sanction, withdrawal of support, or removal, underscoring the system's built-in mechanisms for accountability. Regular assemblies of Bagado (plural of Gado) facilitated inter-clan coordination, deliberation on security threats, settlement disputes, and decisions affecting the entire Kajju polity, such as communal labor obligations or responses to external incursions.

This indigenous political system ensured relative political stability, social cohesion, and effective conflict management long before colonial intervention. By embedding authority in shared belief systems and collective participation, the Gado institution maintained order without standing armies or bureaucratic apparatus. The resilience and legitimacy of this system help explain why British colonial administrators encountered prolonged resistance in Kajju territory and why the subsequent dismantling of the Gado structure provoked enduring resentment and identity-based mobilization in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Far from being rudimentary or dysfunctional, Kajju's pre-colonial political organization represented an adaptive governance system tailored to local conditions—one that colonial rule deliberately marginalized in favor of administratively convenient emirate structures.

British Conquest of Kajju, 1903–1915

British military penetration into Kajju territory formed part of the wider imperial conquest of Northern Nigeria following the formal establishment of British authority in 1900. This expansion was driven less by immediate security threats than by the colonial imperative to pacify, map, and administratively integrate territories lying outside the control of established emirates. Kajju, located along strategic corridors linking Zaria, Jema'a, and Wukari, attracted early colonial attention due to its perceived role in disrupting caravan movements and resisting Hausa-Fulani political dominance. British intelligence reports frequently accused Bajju communities of raiding caravans along the Zaria–Wukari route—an allegation that colonial officials used to justify military

intervention, despite limited evidence distinguishing organized resistance from localized self-defense against external encroachment.

Initial encounters between British patrols and Bajju communities were hostile, reflecting deep-seated suspicion of foreign intrusion and the Bajju determination to defend their autonomy. The 1903 punitive expedition against Kankada marked a decisive turning point in these encounters. British forces, equipped with Maxim guns and supported by Hausa constabulary units, confronted Bajju fighters who relied on traditional weapons and knowledge of the rugged terrain. Although the Bajju mounted fierce resistance, the expedition demonstrated the overwhelming technological superiority of British arms and inaugurated a pattern of punitive warfare characterized by village destruction, crop seizure, and forced submission. The assault on Kankada served as a warning to other Kajju settlements and signaled the colonial state's readiness to deploy violence to enforce compliance.

Despite these early defeats, Bajju resistance did not immediately collapse. Instead, it persisted in both overt and covert forms, including the relocation of settlements, refusal to cooperate with colonial agents, and continued loyalty to indigenous authorities such as the Gado. British patrol reports from the period between 1905 and 1912 indicate repeated "pacification" missions into Kajju territory, suggesting that colonial authority remained fragile and contested. The difficult terrain of Southern Kaduna, combined with decentralized political organization, limited the effectiveness of British control and prolonged the process of subjugation far beyond initial military encounters.

Full colonial domination of Kajju was not achieved until 1915, following British intervention in regional conflicts involving the Emir of Jema'a. As the colonial administration consolidated emirate authority as an instrument of indirect rule, Kajju was drawn into disputes that reconfigured local power relations in favor of British-aligned Muslim rulers. The defeat of Kajju resistance during this period owed as much to diplomatic manipulation and alliance-building with emirate forces as to direct military action. By July 1915, British officials declared Kajju "pacified," formally incorporating it into the colonial state and placing it under the administrative supervision of Jema'a Emirate.

This conquest had profound implications for Kajju political life. Military subjugation dismantled the foundations of indigenous autonomy and created the conditions for the subsequent restructuring of authority under indirect rule. The suppression of resistance also delegitimized traditional institutions in the eyes of colonial administrators, who portrayed Bajju political systems as disorderly and incapable of self-governance. Thus, the conquest of Kajju was not merely a military episode but a transformative moment that paved the way for administrative subordination, cultural marginalization, and the erosion of indigenous political authority—a process whose consequences would reverberate throughout the colonial period and beyond.

Colonial Administration and the Reorganization of Kajju: Imposition of Indirect Rule

British colonial governance in Northern Nigeria relied heavily on the doctrine of indirect rule, which theoretically sought to govern through pre-existing traditional authorities to minimize administrative costs, legitimize colonial authority, and maintain

social order. In practice, however, the application of this system was highly selective, especially in non-Muslim regions such as Kajju. Rather than engaging with the indigenous Gado institution—long-established as the apex of political, judicial, and ritual authority—the colonial administration subordinated Kajju to the emirates of Zazzau and later Jema'a. This arrangement placed Bajju communities under political systems alien to their cultural, religious, and historical experiences, effectively displacing indigenous leadership and restructuring local governance to align with British administrative convenience.

The subordination of Kajju to emirate authority illustrates the instrumental nature of indirect rule. Although the policy was officially justified as respect for indigenous institutions, it systematically favored centralized emirate structures that were more legible, compliant, and efficient from the perspective of the colonial state. Muslim emirates, with their hierarchically organized leadership, codified taxation systems, and established courts, presented a governance model that could be easily incorporated into the colonial bureaucracy. By contrast, the Gado system's decentralized and consensus-based approach was deemed "inefficient" or "unruly," even though it had long maintained order, managed conflict, and regulated resources effectively within Kajju society.

The administrative reorganization under indirect rule had profound implications for the Bajju. Village heads and sub-clan authorities were either co-opted into subordinate roles or ignored altogether, while the Gado Nkpang—the supreme political and ritual leader—lost formal recognition, authority, and jurisdiction. The imposition of emirate-appointed district heads and colonial intermediaries disrupted customary dispute-resolution mechanisms, undermined land tenure practices, and introduced new channels of taxation that were unfamiliar and resented by the local population. This disruption also intensified ethno-political tensions, particularly between Kajju and neighboring Muslim communities, who now wielded authority sanctioned by the colonial state.

The selective application of indirect rule in Kajju underscores a broader colonial pattern in Northern Nigeria: indigenous political systems that did not conform to British perceptions of "order" were marginalized or abolished, while those that facilitated extraction and control were preserved. In Kajju, this approach generated sustained resistance, including evasion of tax collection, boycott of colonial courts, and loyalty to unrecognized Gado authorities, highlighting the resilience of indigenous political consciousness despite formal subordination. The case of Kajju therefore challenges narratives that depict indirect rule as a neutral or benign policy, revealing it instead as a calculated strategy for consolidating colonial power, restructuring authority, and undermining non-Muslim societies in favor of administrative expediency.

Abolition of the Gado System

One of the most consequential interventions of British colonial rule in Kajju was the effective abolition of the Gado political system. The Gado, who had long functioned as the apex of political, judicial, and religious authority in Bajju society, was stripped of executive powers, relegated to symbolic roles, and deprived of jurisdiction over land allocation, dispute resolution, and ritual mediation. The supreme ruler, or Gado Nkpang, previously responsible for coordinating inter-clan assemblies, supervising communal

labor, and arbitrating conflicts, became little more than a ceremonial figure whose authority was neither recognized by colonial administrators nor enforced through colonial law.

Colonial officials justified this action by claiming that the Bajju lacked centralized political structures, a narrative that portrayed indigenous institutions as “inefficient” or “disorganized” and in need of replacement by emirate-style governance. Such claims were historically inaccurate and contradicted ethnographic and archival evidence. Reports from early colonial officers and anthropologists such as C. K. Meek consistently documented the existence of a well-organized, tiered political system in Kajju, in which authority flowed through Gado Nkpang, village-level Gado Kankrang, and sub-village Gado Nenkrang, all validated through communal consent and ritual sanction. Oral histories collected from Bajju elders further emphasize the Gado’s role in maintaining social cohesion, adjudicating disputes, and mediating relations with neighboring communities such as the Jaba and Kagoro.

The abolition of the Gado system disrupted indigenous governance, eroded political legitimacy, and severed the link between authority and community consent. Villages were compelled to recognize emirate-appointed district heads whose authority was enforced through colonial sanction rather than communal validation. Customary courts were replaced or subordinated to emirate and colonial courts, undermining traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms and introducing legal procedures that were alien to local practices. The erosion of ritual authority further alienated the community, as the Gado’s oversight of sacred shrines and communal festivals—central to maintaining social order—was effectively nullified.

The consequences of this intervention extended beyond immediate governance. The marginalization of the Gado provoked covert and overt forms of resistance, including noncompliance with tax obligations, evasion of colonial labor requirements, and continued allegiance to unrecognized Gado leaders in local rituals and festivals. Over time, these tensions contributed to the emergence of political consciousness among the Bajju, reinforcing the significance of indigenous institutions in shaping identity, governance expectations, and claims for autonomy in the post-colonial era. The abolition of the Gado system thus exemplifies the broader pattern of colonial interventions in Northern Nigeria, whereby British administrators undermined decentralized non-Muslim political structures to consolidate power, prioritize administrative convenience, and facilitate economic extraction.

Political Officers and Colonial Control

Following the dismantling of the Gado system, British political officers assumed the central role in the administration of Kajju, effectively replacing indigenous authorities as the primary arbiters of governance. These officers—often drawn from the ranks of the colonial civil service or local Hausa-Fulani intermediaries—were responsible for tax collection, supervision of local labor, enforcement of colonial law, and oversight of economic activities such as trade and agricultural production. By concentrating administrative, judicial, and fiscal powers in the hands of appointed officers, the British established a bureaucratic apparatus that prioritized colonial objectives over traditional systems of accountability and legitimacy.

In practice, the authority of political officers extended deep into the daily life of the Bajju. They presided over disputes, particularly land and boundary conflicts, which had previously been adjudicated through clan councils and the Gado's ritual-sanctioned courts. Colonial records indicate that officers often resolved disputes not on the basis of customary law or fairness but according to considerations of revenue stability, ease of administration, or maintenance of order favorable to colonial extraction. For example, a 1921 report on Kajju settlements notes that land disputes between Kajju and neighboring Jaba villages were arbitrated to ensure that colonial tax assessments could be collected efficiently, rather than to honor traditional tenure rights. Similarly, fines and punitive measures imposed by political officers were frequently designed to enforce compliance with labor obligations for road construction or military conscription rather than to redress grievances.

Political officers also mediated relations between the Bajju and the emirates of Zazzau and Jema'a, which were now formal colonial intermediaries. This often placed local communities at a disadvantage, as officers relied on emirate chiefs to monitor populations, report potential dissent, and collect taxes. In several instances, Bajju villagers resisted the imposition of these officers, citing historical loyalty to the Gado and the illegitimacy of externally imposed authority. Colonial intelligence reports from 1923–1925 detail recurring noncompliance, including tax evasion, refusal to attend courts, and covert support for ceremonial Gado activities, reflecting the persistence of indigenous political consciousness despite formal subordination.

The establishment of political officers in Kajju thus exemplifies the dual strategy of British colonial governance: the formal abolition of traditional authority combined with the bureaucratic centralization of power under personnel whose loyalty was to the colonial state. While officers were often presented as neutral arbiters, their interventions were inseparable from the imperatives of revenue extraction, administrative control, and cultural domination. This restructuring entrenched the subordination of Bajju communities within the colonial political hierarchy and disrupted centuries-old mechanisms of consensus, ritual legitimacy, and communal accountability, laying the groundwork for the political and social tensions that persisted throughout the colonial period.

Division and Reunification of Kajju

For administrative convenience, the British colonial administration divided Kajju between the emirates of Zazzau and Jema'a, a move that fundamentally reshaped the political landscape and fractured long-standing ethnic and communal unity. The division was part of a broader colonial strategy to consolidate authority over the Middle Belt by integrating non-Muslim communities into neighboring emirate structures, which were perceived as more centralized, controllable, and legible to British administrators. In practice, this arrangement created overlapping jurisdictions, forced some Bajju clans to answer to Jema'a-appointed officials while others fell under Zazzau oversight, and disrupted traditional networks of authority mediated by the Gado.

The consequences of this artificial partition were immediate and profound. Bajju communities experienced conflicting demands over taxation, labor contributions, and legal obligations, which intensified resentment toward both emirate authorities and

colonial officers. Oral histories from Kajju elders recount cases where families were penalized for failing to recognize dual authorities, leading to tensions within and between clans. Moreover, the division undermined communal cohesion by fostering competition and suspicion among clans aligned with different emirates, weakening the traditional mechanisms for dispute resolution and inter-clan cooperation.

Resistance to this division manifested in both formal and informal channels. Bajju communities submitted petitions to colonial authorities, arguing for administrative reunification under a single emirate and highlighting the historical and cultural unity of their territory. Some reports from the 1920s document Bajju delegations traveling to Kaduna and Lagos to press their grievances, emphasizing that the division violated customary land rights and disrupted traditional governance practices. Administrative reviews by colonial officers eventually resulted in the reunification of Kajju under the Zazzau Emirate. This reunification addressed certain logistical challenges, such as overlapping tax collection and inconsistent law enforcement, but it did little to restore indigenous autonomy. The Gado remained a marginalized figure, and emirate-appointed district heads continued to exercise authority over local governance, legal adjudication, and resource allocation.

The division and subsequent reunification of Kajju illustrate the ways in which colonial administrative convenience often took precedence over indigenous political realities. Rather than respecting the historical cohesion of Bajju society, colonial authorities manipulated boundaries to facilitate indirect rule, maximize revenue collection, and assert control over resistant populations. While reunification resolved some bureaucratic inefficiency, it failed to reverse the broader process of political marginalization and cultural disempowerment, reinforcing the enduring tension between imposed colonial structures and indigenous governance.

Resistance, Marginalization, and the Struggle for Autonomy

The imposition of colonial rule and the systematic marginalization of the Gado institution relegated the Bajju people to a subordinate position within the broader political hierarchy of Northern Nigeria. By integrating Kajju into the emirates of Zazzau and Jema'a, the colonial administration disrupted indigenous governance, imposed alien authority structures, and undermined customary dispute-resolution mechanisms. In response, Bajju communities employed a range of resistance strategies, reflecting both the persistence of indigenous political consciousness and the limitations imposed by colonial power.

One of the most common forms of resistance was tax refusal. Bajju villagers frequently evaded or delayed colonial taxes, citing the illegitimacy of emirate-appointed officers and the erosion of the Gado's authority. Colonial records from the 1920s document repeated incidents of noncompliance in villages such as Kurmin-Bi, Kankada, and Zonkwa, where local communities collectively withheld payment, organized petitions, or staged passive resistance to undermine revenue collection. These acts were often accompanied by appeals to colonial administrators for redress, emphasizing the community's historical rights and the coherence of indigenous authority structures.

Physical resistance, while less sustained due to the technological superiority of British forces, also occurred. Bajju oral histories recount raids on colonial outposts,

sabotage of supply lines, and ambushes against district officers attempting to enforce labor obligations or assert judicial authority. For instance, during the early 1920s, reports indicate coordinated attacks on colonial patrols along routes connecting Kajju to Zaria and Jema'a, particularly in forested and hilly areas where local knowledge gave Bajju fighters tactical advantage. These engagements, though ultimately suppressed, demonstrated both resilience and an enduring commitment to defending indigenous autonomy.

Legal appeals provided another avenue for asserting political agency. Bajju elders submitted petitions to colonial officials and district courts, challenging the imposition of emirate authority, contesting land disputes, and seeking recognition of Gado leadership in ritual and judicial matters. While these appeals rarely succeeded in overturning colonial policy, they contributed to the development of collective political consciousness and a shared sense of marginalization that transcended individual villages.

The cumulative effect of these strategies was the emergence of a sustained sense of collective identity and political awareness among the Bajju, which persisted beyond the colonial period. Resistance was not merely reactive; it fostered new forms of organization, solidarity, and cultural affirmation. Festivals, ritual ceremonies, and the covert recognition of Gado authority served as symbolic forms of autonomy, reinforcing historical claims to land, governance, and communal cohesion even in the face of formal political subordination.

In sum, the struggle of the Bajju illustrates the duality of colonial control in Northern Nigeria: while the British administration succeeded in restructuring political authority to suit imperial objectives, it could not fully extinguish indigenous consciousness, social cohesion, or aspirations for autonomy. The experience of Kajju underscores the enduring significance of local institutions, the adaptive strategies of marginalized communities, and the complex interplay between imposed authority and indigenous agency in colonial Africa.

II. Conclusion

The British political reorganization of Kajju between 1903 and 1960 fundamentally reshaped the region's governance and social order. By dismantling the Gado institution—the apex of indigenous political, judicial, and religious authority—the colonial administration imposed an externally defined political structure subordinated to the emirates of Zazzau and Jema'a. This transformation marginalized the Bajju politically, undermined the legitimacy of traditional leadership, and institutionalized social and political inequality within the colonial hierarchy. The relegation of Gado authorities to ceremonial roles, coupled with the appointment of emirate-aligned district heads and political officers, severed the link between leadership and community consent, a connection that had historically ensured social cohesion, effective dispute resolution, and the management of inter-clan relations.

Kajju's experience exemplifies the limitations and contradictions of indirect rule. While presented as a policy that respected indigenous institutions, the system selectively favored centralized emirate authority over decentralized, consensus-based governance. The artificial division of Kajju between Zazzau and Jema'a emirates, followed by eventual reunification under Zazzau, demonstrates that colonial administrative convenience often

outweighed historical, cultural, and political realities on the ground. Petitions, legal appeals, tax refusal, and occasional physical resistance by Bajju communities underscore that indigenous political consciousness persisted despite formal marginalization. These strategies of resistance not only challenged colonial authority but also fostered a collective identity and awareness of political rights that continued to shape local mobilization throughout the colonial period.

The long-term implications of this reorganization extended well into the post-colonial era. The erosion of traditional authority and the privileging of emirate intermediaries left a legacy of political marginalization that affected Bajju representation in local and regional governance structures. Identity, land tenure disputes, and claims for autonomous governance in Southern Kaduna continue to reflect the historical fractures introduced during the colonial period. Furthermore, the persistence of ceremonies and covert recognition of Gado authority highlights the enduring resilience of indigenous governance norms, even under externally imposed political systems.

In sum, the colonial reorganization of Kajju illuminates the broader dynamics of British indirect rule in Northern Nigeria: a strategy that prioritized administrative efficiency and revenue extraction over local political legitimacy, often at the cost of undermining functional indigenous institutions. Kajju's historical trajectory demonstrates that colonial interventions did not merely restructure governance—they actively reshaped social hierarchies, fueled resistance, and generated long-term tensions over identity and autonomy that continue to inform the politics of Southern Kaduna today.

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