

THE IMPACT OF ISLAM ON CAMEROON'S SOCIO-CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

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ABSTRACT

Cameroonians have and peacefully accommodate a variety of religious beliefs, and many individuals combine beliefs and practices of world religions with those of their own cultural groups. Islam penetrated Cameroon through the Northern Region (Adamoua, North, and the Far North) especially around the Lake Chad long before the Holy wars. An approximation of about 53 percent of the Cameroonian population is members of Christian denominations, about 23 percent practice mainly "traditional" religions, and approximately 24 percent are Muslim (Mbaku: 2005:56). In the French-speaking area, which is largely the Muslim North and a handful of pockets of Muslims in other Regions of Cameroon, Islam has through its growing integration into the Cameroonian society influence the already existing complex socio-political background and multifaceted cultural jamboree. This paper as such aims at conceptualizing and depicting the impact Islam has had since its inception in structuring the socio-political picture of the group of people who are in contact with it and the cultural practices in Cameroon in general.

KEYWORDS: *Structuring the Socio-Political Picture, Cultural Groups, Law and Scriptures*