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## CONFLICT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF BORI CULT TRADITION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

This article explained several challenges Bori cult, as an indigenous religion of the northern Nigeria, encountered before the establishment of Islamic religion in the Hausa land. With the influence of foreign religions in northern Nigeria and the advancement of the British colonial system in the northern emirate several traditional religious practices of the Northern ethnic groups were abolished but the Bori cult survived as a cultural practices through a religio-cultural synthesis: first as an institution which survived from Tsumbrubura tradition. Secondly as a cultural practice that survived into Islamic faith. The article explains further with the Marxist' conflict theory of social change several factors that affected the Hausa traditional religion in different contexts and the phenomenological study of its strategy of survival till date within the Islam religious context, unlike the other African traditional religions that have died out and few became mutated yielding to the formation and growth of a hybrid religion- Aladura- in Christianity.

**Keywords: Bori, Hausa tradition, Tsumbrubura, Hausa Animism, Bori cult**

### **Introduction**

Before the emergence of foreign (Islamic) religion in Nigeria, the northern region of the country was marked with traditional religious practices that dominated the Hausa tribe. These Hausa indigenous people dominated the north western sector of Nigeria with their economic and political dominance and had traditional religion based on the belief in spirit; a concept of iskoki recorded in the Kano chronicles around 900-1000 A.D. but described as animism by anthropology and existed as an indigenous religion system in form of cult (Onwuejogwu 1969). Unlike other traditional religion that had died out in other ethnic tribe of the country due to conflict of social changes of the native pre-colonial Hausa states by the Islamic religion and the British colonialism, the Bori cult tradition survived rigorously having faced different social conflicts like the British conquest of the northern emirate, Slave trade, influence of western education, and the invasion of the Islamic religion through its jihadist movement across the colonial era (Danfulani 1999). Again with the socio-political pressure and socio-economic pressure put on the several Nigerian regions during the Ahmadu Bello Islamic Proselytization, many northerners of non-Hausa origin who were adherents of the traditional religion and some southerner-Yorubas and Igbos were converted to Islam after independence but the Bori cult with its core adherent remained without

succumbing to this pressure till date. In fact, when Islam made inroads into Hausa land from the 14<sup>th</sup> century era, some aspects of the tradition were driven underground including the practice of the cult of Tsunbubura in the then sultanate of Kano. And others were suppressed except the Bori cult tradition that survived in spirit-possession ritual practice by integrating some aspect of Islam. The main objectives of this article include understanding what Bori Cult tradition is and its cultural synthesis in Hausa Land, to provide empirical facts for better determination of factors that affect the Indigenous tradition as pressures that conflicted its growth and development using Karl Marx' conflict theory of social change, and to see from another dimension how Islamic religion can co-habit with Non-Islamic Religion in its traditional context without secular, legal, constitutional, or as it is commonly misunderstood from jihadist perspectives. Again the article discusses further on the main practices of Bori cult tradition and one of the Major factors that favors its transformation into the Islamic system despite the influence of the foreign and other social pressure that could have destroyed the Hausa tradition.

### **Significance of the Study**

With the empirical evidence provided in this research work, scholars and researchers can see that cultural synthesis of every traditional practice is subject to change and can lead to several transformations but the sustainability of the developed tradition with its tenet and the factors that enhanced its sustainability varies. The significance of this article centered on the correction of wrong definition, misidentification and wrong classification of indigenous cultural practice by mainstream anthropologist. Bori cult, in its traditional setting, is a spiritual religious tradition of the ancient Hausa and Fulani tribe with all the features of Religion as James Hastings (1955) characterized, and not "animism" as field anthropologist theorized. Generally "animism" is referred to the doctrine of spiritual beings which in several religious contexts can be extended as the belief that inanimate objects and animate subjects can be inhabited by supernatural beings (of force) endowed with reason, volition and perhaps intelligence, and the concept that the world is a community of living beings only some of whom are humans (Gerald Benedicts 2008). As an idea identified with theories of the origin of religion according to Edward Taylor (1871), the word "animism" has become a western theoretical tool for the definition of African traditional practices due to the fact that the tribal religions in African, being non-literate, have not produced the kind of philosophers and philosophical movement that are familiar to the west as an objective interpretation of anthropological concept. While the western philosophy is based on the idea of "being", the traditional religion of the African tribe is also based on the concept of "force" or "power". The development of "animism" is "*religious incorporationism*" of anthropology. By *religious incorporationism* it conveys the idea of the development and the incorporation of scholarly etymology and classification of ideas, behavior, beliefs etc from social scientific concepts for the secular scientific study of religion and its systematization. By James Hastings' characteristics features of religion both "beings" and "force" are referred to as a features of religion of which, in general, the two philosophical belief systems share the concepts of a powerful high God (or deity), an inaccessible and impersonal cosmic activity, or perhaps supernatural force which by virtue of factors of religion conveys the concepts of transcendence. More significantly, the Hausa/Fulani tradition had its origin as a theological revelation from the details of possibly Kano chronicles and not a theoretical format both for the enhancement of religious incorporationism from anthropological perspectives or the

explanation of the origin of religion because most of indigenous tradition which occur as religion existed as an institution within that traditional setting.

### **Literature Review**

As distinct from other African traditional religion in Nigeria by religious leadership and priesthood services by priestesses among the pre-colonial Hausa states, the Bori cult was founded by the ancestors of Maguzawa (Onwuejogwu, 1989) and was with the original tradition of the Hausa land in northern Nigeria. There has been in existence an indigenous religion which the forebears of Africans regarded as their authentic religion and has been passed from generation to generation (Awolalu 1983) as the inheritance of the Bori spirit tradition by the Maguzawa for Abagayawa. This religion forms the basis of the existence of Kano descendants and perhaps conditioned their behaviors and reactions to external stimuli. Noted also is the absence of scriptural instrument for the propagation of the traditional religion of African which does not limit the acceptability and consequent growth of the religion with oral tradition the traditional religious practices remained the sustaining faith held by the forbears of the past generations of the northern Nigerians, and which is being practiced today in various indigenous traditional practices of Nigerian ethnic tribes (Adeline Masquelier 2001). By oral tradition, the Abagayawa were the descendants of Kano-a blacksmith who settled near Dala Hill. They believed in the forces and the supernatural beings like Tsumbrubura whose Temple was at Dala hill with Barbushe, Kano's grandson who served as its chief priest. With the battles for political dominance the ancestors of Maguzawa conquered Abagayawa and from the conquest the Maguzawa took over the traditional religion with the contemporary belief in Iskoki spirits called Bori which is connected with adolescence, women's aspiration, fortunes, healing, marriage, and male dominance in Hausa society. Concerning spirits in African tradition, conception of different tribes of Nigeria ethnic group sees spirits as invisible, agile, indestructible, immortal and omnipotent (M. Angulu ). They (spirits) control human economic, moral, and social lives and are also concerned with the Hazards of the human environment. Onwuejogwu (1969) explained further that evidence from Archeology, linguistic, ethnography and political anthropology showed that diffusion, acculturation and assimilation of the three principal peoples of Nigeria (Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba) and their ideas have long been grouped through the centuries with a good summation of the Nigeria belief system which borders on Universality of faith and doctrinal belief about the supreme beings, the super sensible world and the purpose of Man's existence in the world and his reactions and inter-relationship, he contended that Nigeria ethno religions have a common philosophical background and a comparative analysis of Hausa land and other ethnic groups exhibit a common infrastructural and content of belief. By this theory the concepts of spirits in the Bori cult as similar to that of other traditional practices of the ethnic tribes and the basic code for practice of the Hausa tradition is based on oral tradition which is well expressed and preserved in elaborate idioms, proverbs and figures of speech (Abraham 1962)

As oral tradition explained, the spirits are differentiated in their type of possession and collectively the assumed possessed formed a loosely organized group. They have meeting house where the chief officials of the association live and where other members can rally for the possession ritual and rites. With the officials of the lodge which vary from state to state; headship of the MasyBori is generally Magajiya (priestesses) whose appointment was sanctioned by the Sarki (village chief). The first Magajiya was Sarki's daughter but by

recognition it was an obsolete political title where they will be served by female and male assistants. Male serves as messengers and apothecaries of the society but the female help in the initiation of neophytes into the secret and techniques of Bori.

### **Sprit and Spirit Possession**

The Spirit is believed to mount the head of the person through a miniature objects (tsere-bow), which most masu Bori carry it rides the person and the person possessed is regarded as the spirit itself (Fremont 1977). By this view either the spirit rides the person or vice versa because the spirit and the person are identical as it was believed in their traditional practice, the horse is a noble animal and a symbol of aristocracy. Those possessed by the Botri spirit are Masu Bori (spirit owners), Yan Bori (spirit children), or Dowakin Bori (horse of spirit), and to be possessed means to be mounted by the spirit. The person mounted is regarded as a horse (doki) of the spirit if male, and as a mare (godiya), if female.

The Hausa believed that spirits live in spirit worlds called Jangari located somewhere unknown in the Hausa physical world. They are grouped according to Hausa categories and hierarchical arrangement. The first is the Babbaku or Pagan (shamanic) spirits. They are black ones who are village dwellers. Some are farmers and others are hunters. The chief is Maj-Ja-ciki. Secondly is the Yan Garki i.e. the warriors' spirits (Onwuejeogwu, 1989). They are children of the shield. Their head is Garki Baba. They came into existence with the emergence of Muslims in the north and more to that Yanriga was also present as the Muslim spirits who wear cloths. Children of small pox are Yayan Zanzanna came into existence with the epidemic of small pox in Hausa land. Yay zanzanna are spirit children who cause small pox and other skin diseases. They possess both the school children and young spirits as yan Mata. Finally is the bush spirits which is most significant with the Bori cult (Robinson 2004).

Each community of spirits has its king and hierarchy of officials; leper spirit has political authority. The spirits neither die or grow old and they live in a physical world of eternity subject only to a higher being in a way not fully understood, excepts the being (later regarded as creator –Allah). In their timeless world, adult remain adult, youth remain youth, and children remain children. They are invisible, agile, immortal, omniscience and omnipotent. They are associated with wind commonly called Iskoki. The spirits inflict illness on hidden or unknown evildoers and as such served as the fountains of fortunes and misfortune, wealth and poverty, happiness and sorrow. Their characters as identified with the individual spirits shown in their dance movement are love, sensuality, nobility, humility, and restraints etc attributes of human beings. The spirit controls the moral community by controlling the community's economic activities and its natural environment-epidemics, rainfall, storm structure, and the social, moral and natural orders (Lewis, 1991).

If a person becomes ill, and several attempts by the Masu Bori to effect a cure having failed, begins to exhibit hysterical tendencies, they will then decide to initiate the person as a Bori cult member. This initiation takes about seven days and involves drugging the initiate, teaching him Bori music, dancing, going into a trance, foretelling the future, and treating or prescribing remedies for diseases. After the death of a Bori cult member, a meeting is held by the Msubori. The music appropriate to the spirit that mounted the diseases person is continually played to his children until one becomes possessed. If this happens consequentially for three days to the same child, he has inherited the parent's Bori.

### **The Religious Music and Ritual Dance**

Traditional music in form of Ghost dance is one of the major features of Bori cult tradition. Two variants of the bori dances are distinguished namely, the Boringidance which is staged by individuals in the compound for personal purposes. In Boringida dance, initiation is done by a woman who will start the events of possession by first screening loudly to draw other bori women who hear the shrill cry and proceed to the scene and in a matter of moment the inner compound is converted into small bori stage. The women sing and beat calabash turned upside down, while the originator and some other become possessed. Each bori will be dancing and acting according to the character of the spirit possessing her. This type of private dance is correlated with the occurrence of crisis in the marital life-cycle of the female occupants of the compound. Marriage, death, ceremonies, quarrels and divorce and is staged by female individuals inside a compound were both members and non-members of Masubori will participate. But married women are secluded and may not take part in the public bori cult or in Muslim public ritual. Generally with the ritual dance and music spirits are controlled and illnesses are healed (Lewis, Al-Safi- Hurreiz 1991). Spirit possession is very unique and a characteristic features of African traditional religion but in bori cult the gender of the possession spirit takes precedence over the gender of the possessed i.e. a man possessed by a female spirit for ritual purpose takes the personality of a woman and vice versa. Although this often has no relevance to everyday living but as a means for cultural and religious identity of the Hausa and Fulani tradition, spirit possession is commonly regarded as a difficult idea for Europeans to conceive and understand because many scholarly Europeans look at the syncretic tradition from their own cultural lens.

Another type of traditional ritual dance is the Borin Jama'atu. A bori staged in the public and very elaborate than the gida dance. In Borin Jama'atu all local Masubori attend the dance, even married one may sneak out of the compound to participate. Musicians are males and consist of fiddlers, guitarists, and Calabash rattlers. Each spirit has a praise-song and its own music and special song. The musicians occupy one part of the arena with mats spread in front of them. Masubori emerge from behind the musician to dance. During the dance, the woman puts on the color appropriate to the spirit and in some cases carries the miniatures symbolic objects, bow or spear, etc in her hand and starts acting as the spirit as she will be assumed but that depends on the type of spirits she is possessed with. If, for instance, she is possessed with the spirit Mallam Alhaji, She will walk round bent and cough weakly like an old earned Mallam and reads an imaginary Koran but this possession was initialized when the Islamic influence infiltrated the Hausa land. If she is possessed by Dan Galadima (prince) she will act like a noble man by wearing kingly robes, and sits on a mat hearing cases, while receiving obeisance from people. Possession with Mai-gangaddi (the nodding one) she will dance and suddenly dozes off in the middle of some act and wakes repeatedly as a spirit that causes sickness. Possession with Jaba-fari is another indication of a spirit that causes madness, with an imagination that she east filth and simulates copulation and in some cases she will leap into the air and lands on her buttocks with feet stride thrice. She falls exhausted and will be covered with a cloth to signify a state of foretelling the future. Spectators wishing to obtain a favour from or appease the spirit that has mounted her place their gifts and alms on the mat. She will sneeze; the spirit leaves her, and returns her to normal state though she will be referred to as spirit.

For years the cult with its priestesses who served as the chief overseer maintained the normal influence over the sultanate that replaced the earlier animistic kingdoms but its chance for easy survival became a challenge as the pre-colonial era near its ends, while the serving priestesses hoped to continue guiding and maintaining the state's ruling houses.

### **Factors of Conflict**

With the invasion of Islamic religion through their coercive and jihadist attack on the Sokoto caliphate, several traditional cults started facing several pressures which in some occasions lost their original practices that were suppressed. Perhaps it is obvious that Karl Marx's conflict theory of social change through his class struggle concept can be used for further analysis of the Bori cult tradition and its chance of survival due to the fact that political pressure of the northern caliphate along with the invasion of the Islamic scholars from the Mediterranean and further Islamic revival movement of Sir Ahmadu Bello conflicted the social influences of the indigenous Hausa and the British colonial advancement to the north suppressed the public practices as the traditional religions went underground; only the modified Bori cult influence survived in Islamic contexts. According to Karl Marx, class struggle exists between the Bourgeoisie (ruling class) who suppress the working class (the proletariat) during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and as a result economic needs should be usurped purely on the basis of need while providing general well-being for all. He maintained that Capitalism only helped fuel class division. By this theory, this article divides these conflicts against Bori tradition into Pre-political struggle for Political and Religion Capitalism, Religious Capitalism, and Political Capitalism. All have strong conflicting effects on the Bori religious practices.

- **Pre-Political Struggles for Political and Religion Capitalism**

Throughout the pre-Islamic and pre-colonial era of the Hausa and Fulani land was almost the period of tribal war for economic and political dominance and also conflicts for traditional religious dominance against Islam but ruler ship style was absolutely monarchy (1349-1805). According to the Kano Chronicle, Bagauda, a grandson of the mythical hero Bayajidda became the first Hausa king of Kano in 999, reigning until 1063, but this research work is concentrating on the concerted effort and struggle for the survival of Bori Cult Tradition as a religion as it contacted with other social factors. The Hausa tribes are known for prominent tribal marks which they draw mainly on the face and sometimes on other parts of the body. Its genesis was for identification which was distinct with every clan/village and makes it easy for them to identify their Kilt and Kin in the event of war. But later, the Capitalist among them started ripping them off by being creative and making unnecessary taboos on their bodies especially the women. At first the traditional religion of the native land was identified with the descendants of Kano, a black smith, called the Abagayawa along with the traditional practices of Tsumbrubura- a cult tradition with its Temple built near Dall Hill. Serving as the chief priest was Barbushe – the grandson of Kano. According to Legend, Barbushe killed elephant with a stick and carried then for miles on his head. By his wonders and sorcery, and the power he gained over his brothers, he became lord over them and as served as the chief priest of the Tsumbrubura Temple. Between 1463-1499 AD, Muhammad Sarki Rumfa became the most celebrated ruler of Kano. When Barbushe assumed the priestly role, people came from all over to participate in the ceremonies, meeting at the foot of Dall Hill at Evening. With their traditional religious identity as oppose to Islamic religion, the inhabitants became Maguzawa people. The name

Maguzawa was named to ancient Hausa people after the jihad of Shehu Usman Fodio of Sokoto who spread Islamic religion in some northern part of the country, these group of Hausa were named Maguzawa by their fellow Hausa because they resisted accepting the Islamic faith from Shehu Usman Fodio and continue with the general Hausa or the known Hausa tradition which includes their way of worshiping the Gods with the help of idols. Maguzawa means "those that run away from Islam". Before their contact with Islam, Maguzawa had a religion which revolves around an infinite number of spirits or iskoki(Bori) in Hausa which literally translates into 'WINDS' with its practices as Bori Cult tradition. However, the dominance of Islam in the region has diluted the original meaning of the Gods/spirits with the imposed Islamic canon, and they are also referred to today as Al-Jannu (singular Jinn) also known as the westernized 'Genie'. The Isoki are divided into two main categories: The Gona or "Farm spirits" who are tame and easier to manipulate, and the Daji or "Bush Spirits" who are untamed and much difficult to contact. As an aspect of the traditional Maguzawa Hausa religious traditions, Bori became a state religion led by ruling-class priestesses among some of the late pre-colonial Hausa states.

The rise of the Hausa states occurred between 500 and 700 A.D., but it was not until 1200 that Islam really began to control the region. The history of the area is intricately tied to Islam and the Fulani who wrested political power from the Hausa in the early 1800s through a series of holy wars. Leadership in the early Hausa states was based on ancestry. Those who could trace their relations back to Bayajidda were considered royal. With the introduction of Islam, many Hausa rulers adopted this new religion while at the same time honoring traditional ways. This position allowed the elite to benefit from the advantages of both systems. As Islam gradually made advancement in the ancient Hausa land in the 14th century, rural areas generally retained their traditional beliefs and their urban leaders drew on both Islamic and African traditions to legitimize their rule. The Muslims scholars of the early nineteenth century disapproved of the hybrid religion practiced in royal court, a desire for reform was a major motive behind the formation of the Sokoto Caliphate (David Robison, 2004), and it was after the formation of the Caliphate state that the establishment of Islam became firm in the rural Areas as a result of the sacred struggle designed for the expansion of the realm (Rudi Matthee 2002), and can be seen as achievement through the destruction of the basics of indigenous political authority in Hausa land which united the indigenous Hausa state under an Islamic theocracy. Thus certain aspects of the religion of the Maguzawa people were driven underground, but bori practices were partially suppressed in Fula courts. In 1349, the King of Kano Ali Yaji dissolved the cult of Tsumbubura, the powerful theocratic cult of the Hausa indigenous religion; this sparked a wave of rebellion throughout the kingdom. At some point afterwards, the remnant of the high priests of the cult converged on Santolo, an important seat of Hausa traditional religion. Invigorated by religious zeal, the new 'Sultan', with the support of Wangara Muslims, descended on Santolo where an epic battle was fought. As the Kano Sultanate was declared, the cult of Tsumbubura tradition in the then Sultanate of Kano and many other similar Bori cults were suppressed, but Bori survived in "spirit-possession" cults by integrating some aspects of Islam.

In 1463, Rumfa enforced Islamic law which influence in the humiliation of the Abagayawa tradition and compelled the leading cities to become Muslims and built a Friday mosques on the sacred shamus site and adopting a failed carrier of eleven year non-stopped war against

Katsina. "With this he hasequaled in might, from the time of the founding of Kano until it shall end" (Kano Chronicles) because the earlier inhabitants conquered by Rumfa were in Dall hill in search of limestone. In this modern era, Maguzawa practices is regarded as a taboo and its magic is considered harmful, but Bori possession rituals as an aspect of its tradition which had survived in the Hausa refugee states such as Konni and Dogondutchi (in what is today southern Niger) and in some rural areas of Nigerian Hausa land. The powerful advisory roles of women, exemplified in the Bori priestesses were transferred to Muslim women in scholarly, educational, and community leadership roles. British and French colonialism, though, offered little space for women in the official hierarchies of indirect rule, and the formal roles, like the Bori, for women in governance largely disappeared by the mid 20th century (Bergstrom, 2002) because of Islamic influence. Bori ritual is also surviving in some places assimilated into syncretic practices like the syncretism Islamic Sufism. The pre-Muslim "babbaku" spirits of the Maguzaci tradition have been added with "Muslim" spirits ("farfaru") over time, and spirits of other ethnic groups sometimes as representation, even those of the European colonialists. The healing and "luck" aspects of Bori members' performances, almost entirely women, give new social roles for their rituals and practitioners (Umar Danfulani, 1999). As ritual societies separated from governing structures, Bori practices provide a powerful corporate identity for the women who belong to them through the practice of traditional healing, as well as through the performance of Bori festival like the girkainitiation ritual (Adeline Masquelier, 1992).

- **Religious Capitalism**

With the rise of foreign religions in the northern Nigeria, the suppression of the Hausa animism became certain due to the fact that the foreign religion was identified with the "bourgeoisie. And by being "bourgeoisie" what characterizes it rapid establishment in the north was the expansion of the frontier of Islam to non-Muslim areas (eastern Nigeria), the effort of the Muslim of north and southern Nigeria to come together in cooperation throughout the establishment of certain Muslim organization, the resurgence of Islamic militancy, and the effort of Muslim to challenge and displace the dominant Christian tradition established in Nigeria by the Christian British missionaries and colonial administration. Islam found its way throughout northern Nigeria in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and gained foothold in the areas by the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Approach of the Islam against the traditional religion (Bori cult) was different from the Christian approach (Garba Ashiwaju 1989). Islamic missionaries did not demand a sudden break with the traditional Religion, as did his Christian counterpart (awolalu, 1981). Despite the fact that Islamic belief requires total submission to Allah, surrender, and peace, it is centered not just as a religion but also as a "cultural way of life which characterized a community of believers – the Umah (Muhammad Sani Umar) with the Sharia as its legal system Islam is seen as generated a complex phenomenon comprising key elements of human existence as culture, law, and perhaps intellectual tradition etc. and its manifestation in pre-colonial Nigeria was not restricted to the rituals of Salat, Zakat and hajj but extended to all the manifestation generated by the Islamic faith.

By the 11<sup>th</sup> century Islamic faith entered Borno and its presence became established in Nigeria by 1800 AD in Kanem-borno Hausa Land and Yoruba when Mai Umme Jilmi was the Muslim ruler. So before the coming of the British colonialist, the Arabic religion had already taken over in Nigeria except the igboland where it manifested itself as a religious



piety, a political force, a legal system as well as cultural tradition. After UmmeJilmi's death MuhammadIbn Mani also assisted in converting ummes's predecessors namely Bulu, Arki and KadiaHawani; eachleant different portion of the Quran which assisted in the spreading of Islam. By the fourteenth century, Islam spread to Hausa land caused by its introduction to Kano during the reign of Sarki Kano Yaji (1349-85) through the Wangara (Dyula Traders) from Mali. Assisted were Fulani Muslim scholars who later consolidated the religion in the Area as they arrived during the reign of Sarkin Kano Yaquib with books on Islamic Law and theology and Arabic grammar. With this supporting force behind, Islam gradually spread throughout the Hausa states, Nupe and Yoruba land and indirectly suppressed various forms of traditional religions and by the end of the eighteenth century, the Majority of the people of Kastsina were Muslims while strong Muslim community existed in Kano, Gobir, Zaria and Nupe. By this period the Yoruba has also accepted Islam and had begun to spread the religion to Dahomey through their iterant scholars and preachers. while the traditional religion is mingling with its tolerable Islamic religion, vigorous scholarship of Islam was been pursued by a dispersed group of Muslim in the best tradition of Islam and the traditional leadership of the pre-jihad Hausa land became despotic with heavy taxation of the citizens, confistication of property unjustly and it threats to stand in the way of the pursuance of scholarship. As the pressure continues to press forward, Jihad results as the leadership stem the tide f mass conversion to an unadulterated Islam by wagging war on the community of Shehu Usman Dan fodio ( Jamma ) who was the leading scholar and a force behind the revival of an Islamic past. The war ended in a triumphant victory for the Shehu, and consequently facilitated the establishment of a state which derived its legitimacy from the Sharia and whose leader governed in accordance with same, as it was seen as a combined force of both Fulani Muslim and traditional religionist who were seen as pagan. Hogben (1967) stated that:

“The Jihad had as its confessed object the purification of Muslim religion, and it was directed against the corrupt rulers of Hasua land, who had supposedly been oppressing or ignoring the rights of their Muslim subjects. In reality , it was originally a national fight of the Fulani, both Muslims and pagans, against the forces of Yunfa, the King of Gobir, who had decreed their extermination. Only after the victory when the pagan Fulani, who had done more than their full share in order to achieve it, had retired to their flocks and herds, did the Malams who had been the leaders, exploit the opportunity under the cloak of religion to oust the native rulers and put themselves into their palces with usman Dan fodio at their head. Henceforth, the movement was no longer confined to a particular race; yet from its very nature, it appealed more strongly to the fanatical and more highly strong elements in the Fulani clans” (p.73)

With the existence of strong Muslims communities in various parts of Hausa Land, Nupe and Yoruba land the land became fertile for the Jihad of ShakihUsman Dan fodio which eventually broke out in Gobir in 1801. Through the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate other communities were brought under the same political umbrella which hitherto was governed by several state systems. While Islam gained victory over the tradition of the

native land, it enjoyed the statute of a state Religion in most parts of northern Nigeria in the Nineteen century, but the Arab religion was under a serious challenge in colonial Nigeria especially in southern Nigeria and was posed in the Christian mission, the Europe, traders and Later the British colonial rulers. To counteract these invading factors, Islam employed a diplomatic approach to advance and strengthen the faith of its tradition that is indirectly affected by foreign politics and Christian mission. They established various Muslims organization and societies to provide Muslim students with western education within an Islamic setting; such as the Ahmadiyya movement in Lagos in 1916, the ansar-ud-deen society in Lagos in 1923, the Isabatudeen society in Ibadan in 1958 and the Jamaatu Nasril Islam which served as Islamic revival Movement established by Sir Ahmadu Bello with its headquarters in Kaduna state in 1962.

By 1960, Islam had spread to most of northern Nigerian even though large concentrations of no-Islamic Remained in certain areas of southern Zaria, Plateau, Benue and Gongola state with strong Islamic cultural impact. In the eastern Nigeria, dominated by Christian few Muslims were mostly non-indigene- Hausa/Fulani, Nupe and the Yoruba. The Situation among the Yoruba of western Nigeria Was different for there was an influenced development of strong Muslim communities especially Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states where the Majority of the Indigenes were Islamic converts. The Afemai of Bendel state had a strong Muslim influence through the Nupe. The Pattern of the spread of Islam in Nigeria up to 1960 has made its own contribution to the process of setting the stage of post-independence development in the country and as well dominates throughout the northern region by suppressing the indigenous tradition of the Fulani and Hausa ancestors.

#### **The Rise of Islamic Revivalism**

After independence, as Islam face challenges of advancing its mission from the middle belt and the south east there was a conflict of its concerted effort and its nationalist spirit which ushered in independence for the country in 1960 and was undermined due to its reactions to Christianity and the traditional religions found within the ethnic groups of the country. To counteract counter influence that could weaken its growth, the activities of the Saruana of Sokoto emerge in 1962 as a revival movement with activities of Jamaatu Nasril Islam the spread of Islam was orchestrated to all parts of northern Nigeria through the provision of and engagement of competent scholar with adequate language power and armed with necessary preaching technique. As Jama'atu Nasril was established, Bello found very able supporters in all the emirs of Northern Nigeria who were involved. Among the scholars was Alhaji Abubakar El-Nafaty who was the first-secretary general of the Ansarul islam society (El-Nafaty was assisted by late Ali Akilu, the first secretary to the Military Government of Northern Nigeria. Among others foundation member are the first Grand Khadi (qadi) of Northern Nigeria, alhaji abubakar Gumi; Alhaji Abraham Dasuki etc. already it was the traditional; pattern of spreading Islamic faith for conversion through the local Muslim scholar and traders but with the arrangement of Jamaatu Nasril, the self-employed scholars and traders carried out their proselytization on their individual effort. While the method continued in most areas to which Islam had already spread, contact with Christianity made it unsuitable for establishment in Christianized colonies. Having posted different trained Islamic scholars with western education and knowledge of the local languages for evangelization to foster the advancement of Islam in Yoruba, Igbo land and Hausa Land, Jamaatu Nasril Islam established school in different areas such as Islmiyyah schools-

Koranic school made to integrate western type primary education into their original program of Islamic education in areas like Auchi, Ikare, and Parts of the eastern Nigeria.

The influence of Jama'atu Nasril Islam pervaded the whole of northern Nigeria through its organizational setup with each major emirate having a branch established with the Emir as the local chairman, but under the coordination by the Kaduna headquarters. Through this arrangement, missionaries, preachers and other Islamic teachers were deployed to various areas of the northern and eastern Region of Nigeria to carry out the activities of Jammatu Nasril Islam. In the Western region, Muslim organization such as the Ahmadiyyana, the Nawar-ud-Deen etc have already covered mid-west and the Lagos. Above all, Saruana of Sokoto financed and supported the activities of Jama'atu Nasril Islam along with the support of his friends from the Arab world-King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and King Sabah of Kuwait.

After the death of Sir Ahmadu Bello, Islamic organization had a big blow on activities which afflicted the spreading of its faith but unified its adherent under a common faith base. Within the period of 1966-1969 the Muslim communities in Nigeria, in their search for unity, embraced various organizations like the Muslim association of Nigeria, and the Muslim student's society of Nigeria founded in Lagos in 1964. With the progressive success of the growth of Islam, the religious faith was weakened and bedeviled with the existence and reactions of various sects-Tariga, the qadiriyya, Tijjaniya, and its arch enemy –the Izalah (S.A. balogu). Their outburst and escapades contributed in weakening the strength of the Islamic religion especially in 1960-1965 thereby allowing response of the non-Islamic indigene to Christian faith.

#### **Influence of Christianity in the North**

As the stakeholders of Islamic religion had the impression of Islamizing the whole indigenes of the northern state with their divisive strategy through various Islamic organizations, the southern part of the Sokoto, Borno, Kaduna, and native areas and few territories of the middle belt remained non-Islamized due to the intervention of the British government, indirect rule, and utilization of the powerful rulers of the emirate which produced protection from Christian proselytization. With independence, the protection was wiped away which produced localized nationalism and again opened new fields for Christian missionary activities. As a result the old northern bloc splintered as Christians sought to convert forbidden regions and possibly re-recovered and re-converted back to Christianity some already Igbo Muslims. This evangelization in the North was mainly organized and carried out by evangelical sectarian groups like the Sudan Interior Mission, the Sudan United Mission, the Dutch Reformed Christian Mission and other sects who banded under an umbrella Ekwu. By their organization they refused to unite with the southern main-line churches and held regular consultations at Mango for years where they used notes and made emphasis on minimum structures and maximum geographical spread. With the fear of resurgent Islam under the Saruana of Sokoto, they made an enormous impact on independent northern Nigeria and benefited as Orthodox Church flourished under the patronage of southern businessmen and artisans. As it established itself in the north, the church became the symbol of the southern presence within its influences on the "indigenes" as it contested with Islam in winning and converting souls from the native Hausas who abandoned their traditional "cult" practices and was ineluctantly caught in the political web of the first republic. Unfortunately it suffered in the pogrom which preceded the civil war and was badly hit by the closeted

Nationalism of the war period which allowed the church to grow more in the former middle belt and plateau regions of Nigeria in the Post-Civil War period as it rode on the back of a nationalism which later signified the breakdown of the old north.

- **Political Capitalism**

Following the negotiation of the Royal Niger (Oil Company) on trade agreements and political agreements with emirs, and the Sokoto Caliphate, there was inroad creation for the invasion of the British colonial Masters in the Northern Emirate. In 1897, Lord Lugard was the appointed head of the West African Frontier Force which was tasked with stopping Fulani resistance and possible French incursions in the northwest area (Isichei, 1983). After the revoking of a charter for retaining and taking over the Royal Niger Company on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1900, the same Lugard was appointed the High Commissioner of the newly created Northern Nigeria Protectorate, and Military operations began in 1902 and continued for about five years of sporadic fighting. Through the War the remnants of the Bornu Empire were conquered in 1902 and the Sokoto Caliphate and the Kano Emirate were taken over in 1903. Fighting continued in 1904 in Bassa. In 1906 a large Mahdist revolution which can be regarded as “deadly battles” (Isichei, 1983) began outside of the city of Sokoto in the village of Satiru, a combined force of the British and the British-appointed Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Attahiru II, destroyed the town and killed most residents involved. In fact it was later confirmed that the same tribes of the Nigeria ethnic groups were used in the bloody war which was fought with “impunity” which if realized, they wouldn’t have partaken on it (Carland 1985, p. 60-62). After 1907 there were fewer revolts and use of military force by the British and the focus of the High Commissioner turned toward taxation and administration. The British led a series of military campaigns to enlarge its sphere of influence and expand its commercial opportunities. Most of the fighting was done by Hausa soldiers, recruited to fight against other groups. The superior weapons, tactics, and political unity of the British are commonly given as reasons for their decisive ultimate victory (Asiegbu, 1984)

The British colonialism of the northern empire accelerated the rate of change in political, religious, economic and perhaps social terms. The nature of the colonial attitude towards Hausa tradition and Islamic religion in particular introduced currents that retained the old politico-religious order in the north. Their pacification ended the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903 and curtailed the power of the old aristocracy, but in the actual sense the British colonial Masters did not embark on a project of dismantling both the Islamic structures and social institutions of the Caliphate as well as the traditional practices of the native ancestors. All were retained and incorporated into the colonial bureaucracy. In order to overcome local resistance and legitimize British power, the British encouraged Islamic institution as a way of forging deliberate policy to cooperate with the Muslim elite and to defend Islam against Christian Missionary encroachment (Korieh and Nwokeji 2005) by creating schools for them. For instance, in Kano they created a school of Arabic studies to teach Islamic law and allowed Muslim Magistrate to preside over Muslim marriages and other civil cases. In the actual sense the British did not fight with the leaders of Muslim communities but saw their administration as a less costly management to cooperate with and their colonial policy certainly contributed to increasing the upper hand of Islam in both within the Hausa/Fulani territories and in national politics by supporting the emergency of separate political and religious identities in the Northern Region thus becoming an indirect ruler under Nigeria’s

Lord Lugard. It was Lugard's objective to conquer the entire northern region and to obtain recognition of the British protectorate by its indigenous rulers, especially the Fulani emirs of the Sokoto Caliphate. His campaign systematically subdued local resistance, using armed force when diplomatic measures failed. Borno capitulated without a fight, but in 1903 Lugard's RWAFF mounted assaults on Kano and Sokoto with clear-cut military victories needed because the surrenders of the defeated peoples weakened resistance elsewhere.

Lugard's success in northern Nigeria has been attributed to his policy of indirect rule; that is, he governed the protectorate through the rulers defeated by the British. If the emirs accepted British authority, abandoned the slave trade, and cooperated with British officials in modernizing their administrations, the colonial power was willing to confirm them in office. The emirs retained their caliphate titles but were responsible to British district officers, who had final authority. The British High Commissioners could depose emirs and other officials if necessary.

While Islam is gaining upper hand it co-operation with the Bori practices of spiritism gained ground in Sufism. With the indirect administration of Lord Lugard of the North as opposed to the south was reinforced thus to make Islam an identity of "tribal" (instead of Bori and other indigenous tradition) which strengthen it and the integration of political and its religious ideology in the North but weaken its integration with Christianity in the Non-Muslim areas. In fact OgbuKalu (2003) stated;

"(the) arts, architecture....horses.... and tone of skin colour led to the racist conclusion that this was a non-African people and culture worthy of protection and preservation. A protectionist's policy by "Christian" Britain ensured that Islam benefitted most from colonial presence. Missionaries were brutally criticized' their products were termed as insolent "black English men" and served as the butt of while jokes as could be seen in Joyce Cary's novel."

After the formal amalgamation of the different sectors of Nigeria, the British colonial authority continued to prevent meaningful social transformation of Northern Nigeria by preventing Christian missionary activities in the north thereby preventing those contact of Bori practices as an indigenous tradition with the Christianity. It only allowed traditional Muslim rulers to continue to govern, reinforce their position under colonialism and firmly establish extremely powerful Muslim elite, while creating a new geopolitical landscape with the amalgamation of the northern and southern province in 1914, there was a problem of religion and politics at the national level. Even different religion with an ethnically diverse society became part of the political process which generated its own contradictions raising tension of religious, political, and cultural controversy at every arm of the government and within the Nigerian territories

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

As several conflicting factors of change suppressed the traditional religions in African culture, Bori cult tradition rigorously survived into many transformations in Islamic culture. One of the most important types of social changes which occurred in the Nigeria from around 900 AD through the 14<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and early 20<sup>th</sup> century is in the field of religion. Nineteenth century showed a significant mark where the traditional religion of the Hausa was under heavy attack. By the time the British conquered Hausa land between 1900 and

1910. Other traditional religions were destroyed as they went underground only the Bori cult tenaciously continues to this day. Muslim's approach to the traditional religion was different from the Christian approach. As Islam was introduced to the Hausa and Fulani by Muslim traders, they gradually won converts through a clever approach to prevent sudden break with the traditional religion. They made sure that they first got the rulers interested. The ruler in turn influenced their subjects and encouraged them to say the Muslim confession of Faith; "I believe there is no god but Allah"  
"And Muhammad is the prophet of Allah"

Between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century only very few real converts were made among the adherents of traditional religion-Maguzawa (Goriawala 1970). Unfortunately those who confessed to the Islamic faith continued practicing the traditional religion most especially with tradition of iskoki found everywhere (sky, forest, bodies etc). In fact, with the passage of time, the practices of Islam come to be syncretized with some identifiable traditional "idol" worshiping because general ignorance of the religion pervaded the society (Nura Alkali 1993).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Usman Dan fodio penetrated a radical change came in as he became an enthusiastic Muslim teacher who felt disgusted at the way his fellow Muslims were compromising with the adherents of traditional religion. He engaged his followers into a fighting force and waged Jihad (holy war) against non-Islamic indigenes and practitioners of Bori cult. Through his Jihadist Movement, he forced Hausa to boycott the Bori Tradition and accept Islam. He conquered the Hausa Land and gained a foothold in Adamawa and Nupe areas of the north and got entry into Ilorin. The forest areas in the south, however, remained attached to the traditional Religion till the arrival of Christianity from the sea in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as earlier stated above.

With the religious struggles Bori's survival could stand the onslaught of about five centuries even when Jihads of the early nineteenth century and the political and economic pressure were put on adherents. For instance, many northerners of non-Hausa origin who were adherents of the various traditional religions and few southerners who were converted to Islam after independence were converted as a result of the socio-political and economic pressure put on them, especially during the Ahmadu Bello Islamic revivalism but the custodians of Bori tradition remained zealous with their tradition. In spite of this, traditional religion was fossilized in the Bori cult and remained a belief to reckon with because Islamic practices have the power to accommodate traditional practices and the indigenous religion has an adjustive mechanism which makes it possible to co-exist with any other religion. Unlike the Christian religion that has outright condemnation and abolishment of traditional religion it termed "pagan". The case was different in the north. Then, there was an adjustive mechanism of traditional religion as it manifested in non-Muslim northern people who had accepted Christianity. In Tiv, Idoma, and Gwari dominated areas, Christianity and traditional religion co-existed in a cultural and social symbiotic relationship. Bori tradition survived through co-habitation, but its major sufferance was lack of elites of western education and coordinating system. The Islamic scholars who introduced Islam with the Quranic tradition had Arabic education. For evidence showed that western education was not identified with Hausa cultural life. In fact, when the British came for sixty years, they left a documented policy that the northerners would not be educated (with the western education). This policy was documented as a British colonial policy (Sanusi Lamido Sanusi 2001). Western

education was mainly introduced through the Islamic religion in schools during the proselytization movement of Jama'atuNasri Islam by the then Saduana of Sokoto. Both Islam and Christianity were highly bureaucratized with a complex unifying hierarchy that looks outside Nigeria for supreme leadership and push i.e. ecclesiastical system , but Bori religious tradition remains ethnic-centered and relatively localized which is not significant with elite's activities. The African tradition also remains non-aggressive and non-bureaucratic as it looks "fetished" and "disorganized" from western concepts. To influence the elite, it requires the traditional religion to lose its africanness of communalism and its basic theological structure but the case was different in Bori. Its culture has the capacity to co-exist and sustain itself with Islam because it created the socio-cultural environment in which Islam strove. It tremendous adjustive capability has sustained it from the fourteenth century when Islam invaded it through the North and from nineteenth century when Christianity, colonialism and Neo-colonialism invaded it through the south. Yet its tradition has the ability to remain alive in the face of assault by highly bureaucratized religious and socio-political pressures of the British colonization. However many practitioners of the Bori Tradition who broke away from it are not so much attracted to other religion because of faith and prestige the bureaucratized religion confer on them. In conclusion, they carry over to the new religious belief and practice of the ethno-religions of Nigeria which modify the forms and content of other imported religions.

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