

The genetics of change in Yorùbá *Dùndùn* drumming tradition

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the emerging trends in *Dùndùn* drumming tradition in Yorùbá land. The paper is quantitative in approach and it adopts descriptive research design. It examines how the *Dundun* tradition was practiced before the emergent of the new forms of practices. Using Interview methods, focus group discussions, the primary data for the paper were collated in the six states of the Yorùbá land. 15 *Dùndùn* drum ensembles served as respondents in all the states. Secondary data were sourced from library, archives and other ethnographic materials. The study hinges on acculturation theory by Melville Herskovits. It argues that the *Dùndùn* drumming tradition is threatened if the old forms of this tradition are allowed to taper off. The paper recommends a more concerted efforts by organised bodies and governmental agencies in sustaining the practices of *Dùndùn* tradition of old for the purpose of propagating the Yoruba cultural identity which has for long defined the people of this geographical space. .

KEYWORD: Acculturation theory, Descriptive research, *Dùndùn* tradition, Ethnographic, Yorùbá land.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The modern day Yorùbá musical culture has undergone phases of transmutations. The first phase was occasioned by the internal displacement of Yoruba people due to protracted internecine wars. The second phase of this musical culture preceded the advent of the last century and it was characterized largely by three factors, namely: Incursion of European explorers into the land; Invasion of Yorùbá land by European & Arabian missionaries; Trans-Atlantic slave trade that was executed from the 14th Century to late 19th C. The third phase was precipitated by the movement of Yorùbá people across the sea to Europe and America in search of new-life and European education, while the fourth phase which can be dated to the last 60-70 years was instigated by the rural-urban migration as defined by the people’s desperate search for economic survival and social relevance. The attendant consequence of these experiences is the rapid formation of new cultural practices, through hybridization and acculturation which continued to deconstruct the primordial musical culture of the people otherwise known as traditional music. Traditional music is aboriginal and wholly indigenous to the people, both in content and context. It is a reflection of the innate nature of the people’s cultural-practices. Several scholars have tried to define the term traditional music with each one either corroborating the other or giving a varied submission.

For instance, in his own classification of genres in Yorùbá music Waterman (1990:371) says:

When ethnomusicologists write about "traditional Yorùbá music" they are generally referring either to a core set of genres disseminated over a wide area by the indigenous empires of the 18th and 19th centuries (for example, *Dùndùn* or *Bátà* drumming and certain specialized styles of praise singing), or to localized styles performed by and for people who would identify themselves as Yorùbá only in inter-ethnic contexts and certainly not while participating in community-based ceremonial events.

Akin Eúbà, (1976) is more explicit in his definition of traditional music. He writes;

Traditional music is that class of music which was practiced in Nigeria before the country came under European influence...Traditional music is perhaps most commonly realized as a combination of singing with some form of accompaniment, either by hand clapping or by musical instruments. These are types of music however which are performed either by instruments alone or by unaccompanied voices” (p.1).

The Yorùbá traditional music eventually gave way to neo-traditional musical culture when other elements of foreign cultures began to etch into the people's way of life. Typical genres of music that emanated from neo-traditional music, to mention just a few are, *Àsikò*, *Dadakúàdà*, *Wákà*, *Wéré*, *Àwùrèbe* music etc. It was this neo-traditional Music that heralded the birth of Yorùbá popular music like *Jùjú*, *Fújì* and Highlife. Describing the new waves of musical culture on the popular scene in Lagos, Waterman (1988: 232) citing from several authors says, 'The musical life of inter-war Lagos, colonial capital and major port of Nigeria, was typified by the coexistence of dominant and counter-styles and performance roles, some emergent and others residual'.

Such music which Waterman (Ibid) defined as music that "have sometimes become highly effective symbols of modern African elite identity: ontologically rooted in traditional values yet culturally heterogeneous in content; "autochthonous" yet "modern". There is also the art music which takes after the stylistic and forms of European music and popularized in Yorùbá land by the European Missionaries in Lagos and its environs.

According to Olaníyan (2007:68), "Western and Eastern influences notwithstanding, the Yorùbá in their original home in Nigeria have succeeded in preserving many significant aspects of their tradition of which music is one'. In a similar view Eúbà (ibid) writes that regardless of the impact of the European culture the type of music (traditional music) has survived till today and remained as the most important music in Nigeria. The Yorùbá have continued, to hold-on to their traditional values and musical culture.

The Yoruba people's passion for traditional music, although dwindling in the face of challenges occasioned by emerging sociological realignments, has not been extinguished. However, this category of music, now responds to socialization. There are new and evolving trends that are remodeling its features and deconstructing its practices and delivery. Justifying these changes in relation to culture, Gartis (2004:ii) writes 'Change has always been a factor in culture, but today, with the increasing effectiveness of media and communication, the world is saturated with cultural information and it is rare to find human societies that are even relatively untouched by it'.

According to Samuel (2014: 30) while justifying the changes in culture, "certain customs, belief systems and practices are sometimes subjected to modifications through further learning, acquisition of other habits, contacts with other customs, beliefs, social structures and institutions". Therefore, this new experience in Yorùbá musical culture may not be strange and unwarranted. The need to understand these changes in respect to age long *Dùndùn* tradition, categorize them and isolate their implications, inform this vignette.

DUNDUN IN YORUBA TRADITION

The Yorùbá people parade an ancient culture that has been historically traced to the far East. A people of over 60-70 Million that populate South Western Nigeria and a part of Republic of Benin and Togo, The Yorùbá are civilized and cosmopolitan. They are a people of rich cultural heritage whose influence transcends the shores of their geographical space to the West coast of Africa, Northern and Southern America. Asserting this view, Bastide (1967: 115) writes, "Of all the African religions that have been preserved in America, it is undoubtedly that of the Yorùbá which has remained most faithful to its ancestral traditions. Bascom (nd) also asserts, "The Yorùbá people of Nigeria are the most urban of all African peoples of comparable size. They believe in the existence of an omnipresence God which they refer to as *Olùdùmarè*". *Olùdùmarè* is so revered for His awesomeness that they can only reach him through a set of pantheons.

Before the coming of these new cultures-informed by human movements, the Yorùbá states had been institutionalized. The people had a system of government, a sociological life built on a strong belief system. Supporting this view Ológundúdí (2014: 5) says that "Before the influx of the Catholic missionaries and the Jihadist of Uthman dan Fodio, the Yorùbá had a religion. They had their faith and belief" On the other hand these new experiences have brought about civilization and globalization into these people of the South Western Nigeria.

As put by Ogunyemi (2020: 1) "Music plays commendable roles in the organization of Yorùbá Society, the Yorùbá cosmology and philosophy of life'. An in-depth perspective of Yorùbá music shows that Yorùbá do not only regard music as an integral part of the peoples' way of life, but also a repository of traditional knowledge, philosophy and beliefs, with which they establish constant rapport with the tripartite of, people-ancestors-gods. The people parade several musical ensembles which can be vocal or instrumental. Their music performance, highly percussive, dance oriented, cuts across gender, age and social status.

The *Dùndùn* musical tradition which forms the core of this paper is one of the most populous musical traditions in Yorùbá land. The term *Dùndùn* is used variously to mean, an ensemble, a musical form and a dance type. All the components drums in *Dùndùn* ensemble is hourglass shaped except one, *Gúdúgúdú*, which is a pot drum and the only drum of the ensemble that is not tensioned. Gaines H. (2005) while quoting Akin Euba, states that the *Dùndùn* is the most characteristic type of Yorùbá traditional drumming and features in a wide variety of social context, both religious and secular. It is more visible than *Bàtá*, (*Bàtá* is another prominent music ensemble in Yorùbá land). *Dùndùn* is notable for its speech surrogacy-capacity to imitate speech and spoken verses. As put by Dúrójayé (2019), the *Dùndùn* drum is unique and appears to be the most popular, probably

because of its 'talking' capability. By inflecting on the three tonal layers (Low-Mid-High) of the Yorùbá people the drum is able to mimic the human speech frames and communicate effectively.

The history of *Dùndùn* is as old as the history of Yorùbá land itself. Oral history attributed the source of *Dùndùn* to Àyàn Agalú, Sòúngòbì (Àyàngalú) the Yorùbá god of drums (Éúbà 1990). Samuel (2014: 27) while quoting Thieme writes:

The first drummer of Odùduwà invented the *Dùndùn* drum and gave his children the name 'Àyàn', which until now is prefixed to the name of everyone born into the family of *Dùndùn* drummers. Indeed, when anyone bears such names as Àyànlékè (Àyàn is victorious), Àyànwùmí (Àyàn pleases me), Àyàndòkun (Àyàn has turned into a sea) and so forth, it is an indication that such an individual is of a drumming lineage. The legend concluded that after the drummer's demise, Odùduwà deified him and he became the god of drumming.

Aside from oral history, there are also myths associated with the origin of *Dùndùn* tradition in Yorùbá land Narrating the history of dundun drums in Yorubaland Samuel, 2014:27).

Another tradition (from *Ògbómòsò*), similar to the creation myth, attributes the invention of *Gáangan* and *Dùndùn* to a professional drummer by the name Sabigana (a palace indentured servant to Oba Lókun who reigned in the seventeenth century). This man gave his children the name Àyàn. However, Oba Láoyè (1959) reports that *Dùndùn* was first used by Àyàn, a native of Saworo in Ibariba land, who established the lineage of the Yoruba family of drummers. They loved him so much that after his demise, he was deified as the god of drumming.

While myths are sometimes made up of unsubstantiated tales they may not be totally ruled out of relevance in projecting African history which was transmitted via oral tradition. According to Gaines (2005/2006) "not all mythology was based on irrational thought. It (Myth) was also viewed as an ancient way of thinking founded on natural facts and still verifiable phenomena" (np).

A typical *Dùndùn* ensemble consists of *Ìyá ilù*, *Ìsáájú*, *Àtèlé Gúdúgúdú*, *Agogo/Aro*, *Séí*. In some parts of Yorùbá land, like *Òyó Aláàfin*, there is an addition of *Kerikeri* and *Sèkèrè* (Éúbà, 1990) (Figure 1 and 2). Adégbitè (1988) Oláníyan (2007), Dúrójayé (2019). According to oral sources in *Ìlá Òràngún*, *Òsogbo*, *Ìbàdàn* and *Ilésà*, *Ìlù Dùndùn* (*Dùndùn* drums) are made from *Òmò* tree while the *kòngó* (beater) is usually made of *Igi Ata*. It takes over 12 months to complete the process of making a *Dùndùn* because the tree of which the trunk is made must be allowed to ferment before processing. Fermentation of this wood enhances its resonance capabilities. It is the duty of *Gbénàgbénà* (wood carver) to prepare the trunk of *Dùndùn* while it is the drummers who affix all other gears and ornaments to the drum.

Few rites, taboos and rituals are associated with the construction of *Dùndùn* drums. See Éúbà (1990). A well-constructed *Dùndùn* drum according to Fátá Ayélabówó a *Dùndùn* drummer can last a century. Explaining the process of making *Dùndùn* to the researcher, Músibáù (2021) a *Dùndùn* drummer based in *Ìbàdàn Òyó* state, in an oral interview says, Before the tree earmarked for making *Dùndùn* drums is cut, oracular divinations are made to ascertain the suitability for the purpose. Sacrifices are made to decipher the gender of the tree before it is cut. Propitiation are equally made to *Àyàngalú*, the god of drums. Músibáù goes on to narrate the various rituals associated with the components of the drums in the ensemble, "*Gúdúgúdú* was a part of *Bàtá* ensemble that was bequeathed to *Dùndùn*, by *Àyàngalú*. *Gúdúgúdú* houses the spirit of the entire *Dùndùn* ensemble in *Kúsàrin*. Whenever propitiation is to be made to *Dùndùn*, drummer or for a drummer, *Gúdúgúdú* serves as the altar for the offerings" (oral interview).

These processes may vary slightly from one Yorùbá community to the other but the differences do not negate the universality of rituals in *Dùndùn* tradition in all the Yorùbá communities sampled for this paper (Figure 3).

The art of *Dùndùn* drumming in Yorùbá land is male dominated (Éúbà 1990). The traditional belief is that *Dùndùn* drumming and practices are exclusive to the male with dire consequences for female foraying into it. Many reasons have been adduced to this by different scholars. According to Samuel (2005) who had done elaborate works on the place of gender in *Dùndùn* drumming, the reasons for this restriction are basically physiological, and spiritual. As Samuel (2014: 29) puts it:

Women are restricted from participating in some specific musical activities. Though, they can freely sing without inhibition, especially at occasions such as funerals, weddings or other ceremonial events. They are rarely known to play membranophonic drums. Consequently, it is not customary to find female drummers of either *Dùndùn* or *Bàtá*, two prominent drum ensembles in Yorùbá land.

What might have been left out in this respect is the ethical conventions which are informed by the patriarchal nature of Yorùbá people. As put by Ògúnymí;

Yorùbá society is largely viewed as patriarchal, hence men are understood to be more privileged than women... The dominance, (perceived or real), of male gender, in the customary practices and philosophy of the Yorùbá people has been a part of the societal development... The inner caucus of most Yorùbá temple are controlled by the male gender. Norms, mores and myths in Yorùbá land are carefully drafted to preserve the dominance of the male gender (2021: pp 2-4).

The process of skills acquisition and transfer in *Dùndùn* tradition follow the orthodox practices of either apprenticeship by affiliation or by acquaintance. Apprenticeship by affiliation involves the candidates being enrolled with experienced drummer to be taken through the process of drumming over a period of time. Apprenticeship by acquaintance is today, the most common means of skills transfer. It is the type of learning that involves training of relations or offspring of Àyàn lineage. Any of these methods is acceptable to the mainstream of *Dùndùn* traditional drummers. However, the point of divergence between those practitioners Samuel (2014) calls liberalists and hardliners in the art of *Dùndùn* drumming has to do with the appropriateness of enlistment of women into the trade. While the liberalists are amenable to women learning the art and trade of *Dùndùn* drumming the hardliners completely rebuff the idea. Explaining the position of the hardliners Samuel (ibid) posits, "However, the second group of male *Dùndùn* practitioners, who could aptly be described as hardliners and sustainers of stereotypical traditional roles, refused to give any recognition to female drummers in the Yorùbá society. As far as they are concerned, female drummers are not 'serious or real' practitioners of the art. Their objections are informed by their spiritual and practical reasons" (31).

Versatility in the art of *Dùndùn* drumming is not wholly dependent of drumming skills but certain essential factors, like knowledge of Yorùbá language, knowledge of Yorùbá oral literature, and Yorùbá history as well as the history of the people. The content of traditional *Dùndùn* performance is premised on the tri-forms of instrumental, vocal and dance. While the men are regarded as the instrumentalists, the women form the singing cluster and both men and women participate in the dance. There are no specific songs associated with *Dùndùn* but the Yorùbá have regulated dance steps which Olánfyan (2007) refers to as *Ìsísẹ̀* for *Dùndùn* music (*IjóDùndùn*) as well music (*Ìlù Dùndùn*). Across Yorùbá land there are traditional *Dùndùn* drumming patterns like *Ètike*, *Gbandikan*, *Wòrò*, *ÌsáÁáró*- Death procession dance for women, *Àsàńkan* *Ìdígemu*, *ÌlùỌba*, *Ìsẹ̀lúỌkú*, *Elékóto*, *Àpónranto* mention but a few. (See Table 1 below) In *Òkẹ̀mẹ̀sìÈkìtì*, a town on the eastern flank of Yorùbá States, for instance, there are three main forms of dance styles ascribed to *Dùndùn* music, namely; *Àgèrè*, *Àlùbánsi* and *Ègbò*. *Àlùbánsi* is further divided into three sub-forms; namely; *Èle*, *Áárín* and *Àlùbánsi*. These names are used to describe the rhythms and the accompanying dances. In the *Ọyó* axis of Yorùbá land for instance some rhythm patterns are christened *Gbandikan*, *Ijó Ọba*, *Ìlù Èsù*, *Ìlù Ọgún*, *Èsà*. Each one is characterized by different forms.

Of all drums and drumming traditions in Yorùbá land, *Dùndùn* is the most written about and the most discussed by scholars. From different perspectives, scholars like Eúbà, (1977,1990); Akpabot, (1975);Olánfyan,(1993, 2007); Adégbité,(1998); Vidal,(2012); Samuel, (2012); Dúrójayé,(2019); Olúdàre, (2018); have all explored various components of *Dùndùn* drumming and tradition in journals, seminars and workshops. Eúbà's (1990) '*Dùndùn drumming*' is adjudged the most comprehensive and analytical work on the theory of practice of *Dùndùn* in Yorùbá land. More recent works by Samuel (2018), *Gendered Space Transgressors: A Study of Two Yorùbá Female Dùndùn Drummers*, and Dúrójayé, (2018), *Born a Musician: The Making of a Dùndùn Drummer among the Yorùbá people of Nigeria*, are attempts to contextualize *Dùndùn* drumming practice in the course of recent Yorùbá sociological state.

Having discussed the theory of practice of traditional *Dùndùn* drumming, by characterizing it, in the first part of this paper, this study, in the second part, will therefore undertake a descriptive discourse of emerging trends in *Dùndùn* drumming tradition in Yorùbá land. The paper will dwell on the cultural and stylistic changes that are beginning to shape and deconstruct the age long *Dùndùn* musical traditional practices. As described by Flolu, (1996: 9), the performance of indigenous music is now frequently divorced from its original social and religious setting.

This study, therefore, intends to explore contemporaneous *Dùndùn* music by examining the form, context and meaning in this evolving musical tradition. It is argued, insofar as available data allow, that emergent *Dùndùn* music tradition, although contemporary, are socio musical process synonymous with developing cultures. This study applies ethnographic survey, laced with interviews and observation methods of data gathering to examine the form, context and meaning in the emergent *Dùndùn* music tradition. The research design is descriptive and the approach is qualitative in nature. Primary data for the paper were collated using observation and interview methods. Secondary data were collated using existing literary resources. Pre-field work involves critical analysis of both audio and video recordings of selected *Dùndùn* drummers garnered from notable archives. The research was conducted in five states of Yorùbá land namely Lagos, *Èkìtì*, *Ọyó*, *Ọsun* and *Ọgùn*.

The paper hinges on Acculturation theory by Melville Herskovits. Acculturation theory is a modernist update of early diffusionism theory. The theory, was developed in response to the perceived inadequacies of previous anthropological theories relating to change in cultural behavior. Acculturation theory shifts the focus of

anthropologists' studies on human cultures from cultural integration to historical approach. Coming from the background of diffusionism, Herskovits (1948) says "acculturation theorists privileged the cultural consequences of Westernization among Native-American cultures and later among African cultures in the New World. These contacts could be observed "on the spot" (525)".

The theory, developed in the 1930s and '40s by North American anthropologists was central in studies of contact among several Native-American groups and in the emergence of African-American studies. With the diffusionists growing interest in history in the making, according to Joao (2010) "the acculturationists were more interested in history as a narrative of things past. "Moving from diffusion to acculturation also meant an accrued attention to context, or to put it otherwise, from the externalities of the cultural circulation of isolated traits to the internal processes of reaction to foreign cultural influences. Acculturation theorists were thus able to attune diffusionism with modernist anthropology and its emphasis on synchronic cultural wholeness" (316).

This theory is supported by Sótúnsà on the dynamism of culture as quoted by Oyèwálé (2018) 'culture is both evolutionary and revolutionary. It goes through internal evolutionary process involving growth change and adaptation as a result of contact with other culture... (16)

EMERGING TREND IN DUNDUN TRADITION

The *Dùndùn* rhythm/dance patterns of *Gbandikan*, *Ètike*, *Wórò*, *Ìlù Eégún*, *Àgèrè* and a few others (See Table 1 below) that characterized the early era are fading away or are only patronized in the agrarian communities. The prevailing pattern now is *Àlùjò* and its many variants like *Saje*, and *Fúji* (Modified *Sákàrà* pattern). (See Table 2 below). In rare occasions some ensembles still perform a rehash of *Ijó Oba* (See Table 1 below) as witnessed in *Ìgà Ìdúnùgánrán*-the palace of *Oba* of Lagos. It is very uncommon to see *Dùndùn* drummer (s) in urban Yorùbá cities like *Lagos*, *Ìbàdàn*, *Abèòkúta Àkúrè*, *Ilésà*, still trading any of the old patterns of *Dùndùn* drumming. In an oral interview with *Jímòh Fowóránú*, 85 years *Olóri Onílù*, (Chief drummer) *Oba* of Lagos, *Àso Şèrèkè* unit (2018) he explains the rationale behind what he calls adaptation of the old patterns of *Dùndùn* music to soothe the needs of the moments. According to him:

we are conscious of what the people here (Lagos palace) understand and accept. The people determine the music we play for them. Even though we are capable of playing the old patterns, we need to perform to the admiration of our audience and in most cases they desire something modern and uncomplicated". (Oral Interview, 2018).

He goes further explaining that the majority of their patrons in the palace of the *Oba* of Lagos are elites who will not engage in rigorous dancing activities regardless of the skills of the drummer. He furthers his explanation saying;

The old patterns need a lot of efforts from the drummers to learn and master. It also requires competent dancers to complement it. All these are missing in the new emerging patterns. Coupled with the fact that we don't have many professional drummers who are ready to commit the time and dedication required for one to excel in the art of drumming. Most of the boys following us today as drummers never learnt drumming like we did. They are just gifted. They have other vocations/trades outside drumming (Oral Interview, 2018).

The implication of this development is the gradual eradication of the Traditional patterns of *Dùndùn* drumming which dominated the early era. The *Dùndùn* drumming scene is now, particularly in the urban towns, limited to social engagements. (Table 1)

Sharing his own view on the dwindling fortunes of the old dundun drumming tradition, *Jímòh Dáre*, a leader of a *Dùndùn* Ensemble in *Òkèmèsí Èkìtì*, *Èkìtì* state says, the old rhythm/dance patterns of *Dùndùn* music are not totally out of vogue but it takes much more than ability to drum or play it. He explains:

For one to be prolific in drumming the old patterns such a drummer must be good in Proverbs (*Òwe*) Panegyrics (*Oríkì*), *Ògèdè*, incantations, and implied tenses. (*Ènà Ìlù*). It is also imperative to know the history and tradition of the people, knowledge of the gods of the land and current affairs. Most of those old drumming patterns are not for entertainment but purposed for rites and worship. (Oral interview. 2020)

The question now is; on what occasion do they feature the old patterns now? *Jímòh* says such occasions may include, inter/intra-state drumming competitions, state sponsored performances where towns and communities or selected ensembles are meant to display their knowledge of the art and any other organised performances as demanded by their patrons; government agencies inclusive.

Personal observations of some *Dùndùn* ensemble performances in *Ìbàdàn*, *Ìkìrun* and Lagos reveal a dearth of Stylistic elements like *Ènà*, (implied speech), *Òwe* (proverbs), *Oríkì* (panegyric), *Ìfòròwérò* (Comparative tenses) in their rendition, particularly those ensembles plying trade in Lagos and Ibadan. While some of the new era *Dùndùn* ensembles still do a little of proverbs, the majority do what they call *Saje*-a derivative of *Fúji* music, which is a later day introduction into *Dùndùn* music and a by-product of *Sákàrà* music.

They are not actually a pattern but a coinage of voguish dance steps that featured in Fuji music in the early 1980s. He justifies the new styles by saying *Dùndùn* music is dance oriented with less emphasis on oral/drum communication as it used to be (Figure 4).

Components of the *Dùndùn* ensemble is being depleted. Many *Dùndùn* ensemble found in metropolitan Lagos, Àkúrẹ̀ and Abuja are without *Gúdúgúdú*, *Sélí*, *Agogo/Aro* and *Kerikeri*. Some of them parade *Àkúbà*- (upright drums) and *Sákàrà* as a part of the ensemble. Some old and experienced drummers still endeavor to keep *Ìyáilù* in the ensemble but what is prevalent today is the ensemble of *Gángan* and accompanied by *Omele ako*, *Omele abo*. Many itinerant *Dùndùn* drummers in Lagos, *Abẹ̀òkúta*, *Ìbàdàn*, *Òşogbo* and *Ilẹ̀şà* go about without *Iyailu* *Dùndùn* drum and *Ìşáájú*. In *Fújì* and *Jújú* music for instance - two genres that are acclaimed to have incorporated *Dùndùn* drumming into their music, have replaced *Ìyáilù* *Dùndùn* with *Gángan* and they have *Omele Ako* and *Omele Abo Sákàrà* with *Ìşáájú* and *Àtèlé*. There are also instances where *Omele Meta Bata*, & *Gúdúgúdú*-components of *Bàtá* ensemble, with *Omele ako*, *Omele abo-Sákàrà* ensemble; come together to form the rhythm section of a *Dùndùn* ensemble. These are fragments of three ensembles being synchronized into one under the name *Dùndùn*. (Figure 5 and 6)

In an interview on the changing features of *Dùndùn* drumming tradition, conducted by the researcher with Músíbáù Ìdòwú, a lead drummer with the *Ọ̀yó* State Ministry of Arts and culture, *Ìbàdàn*, Músíbáù says emphasis is shifting from aestheticism and symbolism to functionality. Citing example, he says 'we don't go about today with *Ìyáilù* being adorned with *Saworo idẹ* (jingle bells) adorning the edge of *Ìyáilù* which is basically for aesthetics, because it adds more weight to the drums. Unless we are giving state performance and there is an express demand that we should appear in full complements of the ensemble we won't add *Şaworo Idẹ*. Most times when we include *Ìyáilù* *dùndùn* with *Şaworo Idẹ* and *Gúdúgúdú*, it is meant to extol the status of the lead drummer.

Interpretation of Table 2

The form of *Dùndùn* patterns in the emergent era is classified into; Traditional, Sacred/Religion and Social. Most of the patterns as performed for the researcher share few characteristics in common. For instance, in *Ijó Ọba* and *Wórò* patterns which fall into the traditional patterns category. what was performed in towns like *Ìşàlẹ̀ Èkó* in Lagos State, *Òkẹ̀mẹ̀sí Èkìtì* in Èkìtì State, *Ilesa* in *Ọ̀sun* State, when evaluated alongside the same patterns as performed in *Ìbàdàn* and *Ìkìrùn*, the dissimilarities both in delivery and practice were outlandish. Same goes for *Ìlù Eégún* (masquerade Dance/Drumming Pattern) as performed in *Àkútẹ̀*, *Ọ̀gùn* State, *Ilẹ̀şà*, *Ọ̀sun* State and *Ìşàlẹ̀ Èkó*, Lagos state. In the case of *Àlùjọ* (Dance Music), all ensembles sampled in Lagos, *Ìbàdàn* and *Èkìtì* share same characteristics. *Àkúbà*, *Sákàrà* and *Gángan* featured prominently in the ensemble while *Ìyáilù* *Dùndùn* (*Dùndùn* lead drum) played negligible roles. In several cases *Iyailu* was not deployed in the ensemble. The implication of this is identity shift. Patterns are not only changing but are also losing basic features. In some cases two patterns are merged together under another identity.

The traditional rituals and myths that characterize the practice of *Dùndùn* drumming are waning in influence and patronage. Although most of the drummers I spoke with in the process of collating data for this paper acknowledged the existence of the rituals, they alluded to the fact that it is being confined to the background.

We have people of different faiths -Christian and Muslims, playing *Dùndùn* today. Not all of us are from the *Àyàn* family/lineage. These new entrants only interact with the *Dùndùn* ensemble strictly on the artistic and trade basis and nothing more. They don't want to be seen appealing to the gods of drums or adhering to any formalized rituals. Even when they do, it is discreetly and covertly done. It is only those of us from the traditional background that still sustain those practices because we value it and know its essence and consequence of neglecting them. We still see drum as a god (*Òrìşà*) while they see it as a mere Cultural element (*Àşà*). In Yorùbá land every god *Òrìşà* demands sacrifice and offerings' (Oral interview February, 2020).

The practice of drummers adorning mystical objects like *Kúsàrín/Kúsóró*) and *Òróhùn* as part of their paraphernalia as they ply their trade is being de-emphasized. These objects which drummers claim were bequeathed to them by *Àyàn* Agalú, the god of drums are no more a common fixtures in the trade. *Kúsànrín/Kúsóró* for instance, is installed inside *Gúdúgúdú* while every drummer is expected to go about with *Òróhùn* in form of a ring or bracelet. *Kúsànrín/Kúsóró* is *Ọ̀wọ̀* (charm to confer respect on drummers) while *Orohun* is *Awórò* (trade enhancer charm). As explained by Músíbáù, most of the new entrants into the art of *Dùndùn* drumming, particularly those not of *Àyàn* lineage do not respect this tradition any more. He goes further saying, "there are rituals we make for any child born of *Àyàn* lineage as well as for any off-springs of *Àyàn* that died particularly those that practiced the art of drumming while alive. There are taboos associated with the drums itself and the drummers. These are mandatory rituals for us in the lineage but all these are being abandoned.

Speaking on the physical features of *Dùndùn* drums, a drum seller in *Àkútẹ̀*, *Ọ̀gùn* State, *Túnjí Ọlórúnfúnmi*, who spoke with me in the course of data collection for the paper said the *Dùndùn* drum is now made of any wood and not necessarily *Ọ̀mọ̀* wood as earlier practiced. "Some *Dùndùn* drums are made of White wood and *Ìròkò* tree now. The membrane covering the hollow of the hourglass can be made of cow, ram

hide or hide from the fetus of a cow. Because the skin of the kid is very scarce” .he said (Oral Interview,2021). He denied any knowledge of any rituals involved in drum making.

I started the drum business by playing *Gáangan* drum in my church - Cherubim and Seraphim Church. Later I moved to drums repairs and now, I sell drums. Most of the drums I sell are purchased in bulk from Lagos Island where drum makers from places like *Ìbàdàn*, *Ìlòrìn*, *Ògbómòsò*, *Ìkirun* are gathered. I doubt if they had done any rituals or laced it with charms before production, I just buy after haggling the price”. He explained.

He goes further to acknowledge the existence of mystical practices in the art of drumming but he would not associate such with either of *Kúsàrín/Kúsóró* or *Òróhùn*. “just as we the Christians believe in the power of prayers those traditional drummers also believe in traditional power. So, it is individualistic. I have not seen any charm in any drum I bought and it is not a consideration when I want to buy. I know some native drummers have rings and charms probably used for their own protection or to attract luck (Oral interview, Sept; 2021)

The process of skill transfer in *Dùndùn* tradition today does not require any extraordinary skills beyond interest and finance. One does not have to possess any extra skill or traits of musicianship or have any affiliation with *Àyàn* lineage. Learning the trade is rated as any other trades where apprentices are enlisted for a period of time, undertake training and become certified. There are ad hoc *Dùndùn* playing training facilities all over Lagos and *Òyó* state, where formal lessons in *Dùndùn* playing are given. These facilities enroll both female and male of any age and of any background. Few of these pupils attend the facilities as regular trainees while many of them are on part times basis (Figures 7, 8 and 9). The pedagogy in these institutes are not formalized but structured on schemes designed by the master drummer/trainer. Francis *Eniolá*, a 20 years pupil of one of the informal learning centers in *Àkútè*, *Ògùn* State, who was interviewed by me in the course of the research says;

I come to learn every evening after my school hours. My interest in talking drum (*Gáangan*) was developed by my interactions with some of my friends who now play for churches. I am not from *Àyàn* family but an ordinary music enthusiast. Every day, I spend 3 to 4 hours here. I Started by playing the smallest *Gáangan* (*kànàgò*), where I was designated to play straight beats, Now, after 3 months I already have my own taking drum and beginning to lead the rhythm section. I am expected to be discharged after 1 year unless my rate or learning and assimilation are considered low. Then I may stay for another 6 months.

Dùndùn Tradition in Yorùbá land today have transcended the realm of gender. The once preserve trade of the male gender is being contested by the women fold. The restrictions placed on women is giving way for the liberalism. Women are not only serving as accompanists but ensemble leaders and owners of *Dùndùn* ensembles (Figure 10).

II. CONCLUSION

The vignette examined the emerging trends in *Dùndùn* drumming in Yorùbá land. It did a concise review of the old practices to premise the position and went further to isolate the noticeable changes- forms and styles context and practices. It confirmed the general assertion that the Yorùbá *Dùndùn* tradition remains the most celebrated musical tradition in Yorùbá land. (Eúbà 1979). The tradition has evolved through ages with the people propagating the culture even beyond the shores of the land. With an acknowledgement of culture as an evolving phenomenon, the changes identified in the unique tradition are viewed as ideal although with considerable caveat. The study is significant to the Yorùbá people who are desirous of preserving their identity via their traditional music which according to Eúbà (1976) is the most important Music in Nigeria. It is beneficial to music scholars of all cadres whose adequate knowledge of traditional music may form a precursor to greater scholarship exploits. The study further recommends efforts for stakeholders at sustaining the practices as of old without necessarily negating the emerging ones. This paper does not argue against creativity and innovation in whatever form as the tradition under study is concerned, but suggests that changes occurred as a result of acculturation which, Mindoti (2006:158), refers to as cultural disorientation. Some of the factors responsible for this disorientation are urbanization, search for economic survival, mandatory migration-which are necessities of life. The concern of the paper however, is the feeble attempts, by agents and bodies concern to reverse these trends- which look more negative than positive. Already, in the course of carrying out research for the paper, I have come to realize that some government cultural agencies who are granted the responsibility of preserving and promoting culture are negligent. Some of these agencies, according to several sources, have acceded to the proliferation of adulterated *Dùndùn* ensembles, the symbol of the tradition they are meant to preserve. They have not frowned at the introduction of potpourri of membranophones into the ensemble. If at that level, identifies of this unique drumming tradition could be so flagrantly redefined, and reconstructed as we see in the case under study, human cultural identity may face a great danger.

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Table 1. Classification of *Dùndùn* Drumming Patterns in the Early-Era.

Traditional patterns	Sacred/religion patterns	Socio patterns
<i>Etike</i>	<i>Gbèdu</i>	<i>Àlùjò</i>

<i>Wórò</i>	<i>Ìṣẹ̀lú Egúngún</i>	<i>Ijó Oge</i>
<i>Gbandikan</i>	<i>Ìṣẹ̀lú Ògún</i>	<i>Ìlù Ọba</i>
<i>Ìṣá àáró</i>	<i>Ìlù Ọsun</i>	<i>Àpónrán</i>
<i>Gbèdu/Ìlù àwọn Àgbà</i>		<i>Jalantín/Ìlù Fàájì</i>
<i>Ìṣẹ̀lú Òkú</i>		<i>Àsá `nkan Ídí ẹmu</i>
<i>Ìṣípà oḍe</i>		
<i>Elékóto</i>		

Table 2. Classification of *Dùndùn* drumming patterns in the emergent-era

Traditional	Remarks	Sacred/Religion	Remarks	Social	Remarks
Ìlù Ọba	An adaption of the early era pattern	<i>Ìlù Eégún</i>	Undefined	<i>Àlùjò</i>	A variation of <i>Jalantín</i> , of the old era
<i>Wórò</i>	The ensemble playing this has <i>Àkúbà</i> (upright drum) which makes it different from the early era pattern			<i>Saje</i>	Undefined
				<i>Ijó Wórò</i>	Undefined

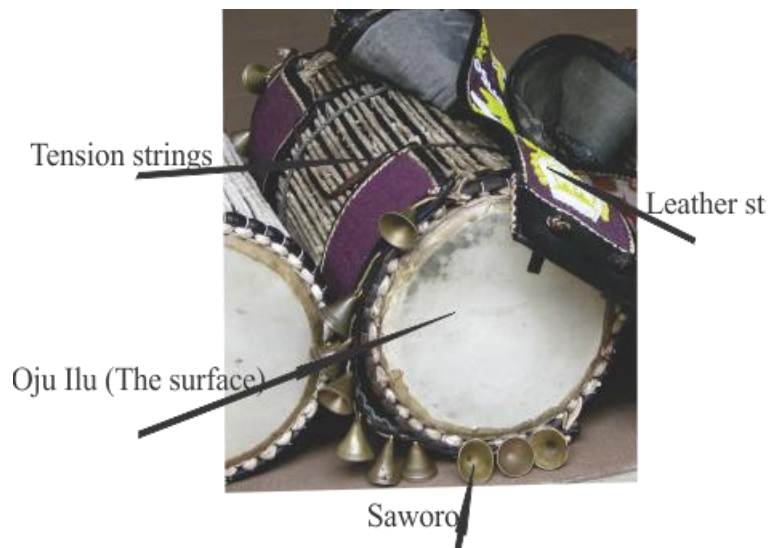


Figure 1. Ìyáìlù Dùndún.



Figure 2. Set of Dùndún ensemble (Source: The Researcher, 2018).



Figure 3. A 75years Old Trunk of *Dùndùn* Drum with the Inscription of the Carver Being Displayed (Source: The Researcher, 2018)



Figure 4. Itinerant Dùndùn Drummers on Stage. Source: The Researcher, 2020

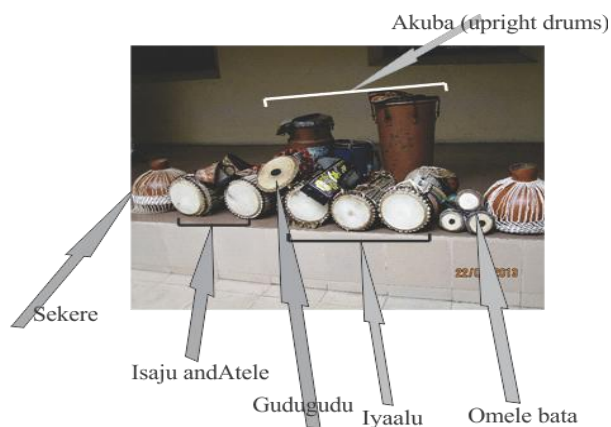


Figure 5. A Set of Dùndùn drums in Iga Ìdúnùngánràn Showing the New Additions to the Ensemble (Source: The Researcher, 2018)



Figure 6. A Dundun Ensemble in the Palace of Oba of Lagos With the Complements (Source: The Researcher, 2018).



Figure 7. A young male drummer in training (Source: The Researcher, 2018)



Figure 8. A group of budding dundun drummers in Okemesi Ekiti, Ekiti State undertaking the traditional learning process (Source: The Researcher, 2018).



Figure 9. Young boys undergoing training in drum making and playing in a make shift school in Iju Ishaga Lagos (**Source:** The Researcher, 2021)



Figure 3. Ladies undergoing training in drum playing in a make shift school in Iju Ishaga Lagos (**Source:** The Researcher, 2021).

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