

# Traditional Institutions and Power Configuration in Contemporary Northern Nigeria: Kano State Emirate Council in Perspective

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**Abstract:** The study building on the pedestals of the governance theory sought to examine the place of traditional institutions in relation to power configuration in contemporary Northern Nigeria. In this regard, the role of the former Emir of Kano HRH Sanusi Lamido Sanusi in the build up to the February 2019 governorship election in Kano State is examined. Review of relevant literature shows the existence of a consensus across board on the purported political value of traditional institutions. It was duly observed by means of examining prior studies and gazette publications that the open support of the Emir of Kano for the opposition party almost cost the incumbent governor the election, one which he eventually won only after a re-run. To this end, the governor upon re-election initiated legislative amendments that reduced the jurisdiction of the Emir and subsequent deposition of the Emir. The actions of the Kano State government are herewith understood as steps taken checkmate the political influence of the Emir. In lieu, the study recommends for the formal inclusion of traditional institutions as intermediaries between state and society in the event that the neutrality of such institutions can be guaranteed.

**Keywords:** Traditional Institutions, Formal Institutions, Kano State Emirate Council, Governance and Elections.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Despite evident contextual variations, it is not uncommon for institutions to be understood from a Eurocentric standpoint, resulting in the analysis of institutions in Europe and beyond on the basis of formality. Resultantly, there exist higher levels of predispositions not to acknowledge diverse kinds of institutions other than those obtained in the West, which are legitimized by variants of customary laws or traditions across different parts of the world. Substantiatively, Shandama (2006) attributes this trend to the absence of informal and non-regulatory institutions in subsequent theories of contemporary states. Amounting to stereotypical perceptions that denotes indigenous institutions as primitive, backward, and as such their existence are termed problematic in democratic settings.

Nonetheless, these institutions have adapted to and existed alongside modern bureaucratic institutions of contemporary African societies. Prompting studies like that of Bratton (2007) to question the most appropriate framework for studying politics of new democracies between sovereign constitutions in the form formally established rules or

existential political realities in which social and power relations determines who gets, what, where and when. Similarly, Neo-institutionalist scholars like North submit that political institution can be any form of constrictions knowingly concocted by humans to shape social cohesion, through formal constrains in the form of established rules or informal constrains manifested through conventions and codes of conduct (North, 1990). In lieu of North's submissions both formal organizations (legislatures, judiciary, executive and parties) and informal practices (established norms, values, codes and customs) may serve in their capacity as institutions as long as they feature broadly understood rules that individuals cannot break without exposing themselves to some form of sanction (Helmke et al, 2006, p. 6).

Long before the advent of British colonial rule, governance in diverse parts of present-day Nigeria was tantamount with traditional institutions and their rulers. Pre-existing administrative structures were derived primarily from traditional ruler who were considered the fountain and custodians of culture, parliamentary, executive and judicial functions, thereby constituting the basis of governance (Aafigbo, 1972; Osakede et al, 2015). Elements of divinity, cultural custodian and embodiment of collective identity ascribed to traditional institutions, are key to the promotion and preservation of traditional institutions in Nigeria and beyond. The said acceptance of traditional institutions overtime has led to the creation of unpronounced constitutions of a sort, which have played centrifugal roles in enforcing societal norms. Similarly, the indigenoussness of traditional institutions continues to play central role in the resilience of such institutions.

Accordingly, a handful of factors have been identified to account for the resilience and relevance of traditional institutions, for this study however colonialism remains one of the key determinants. While it may seem irrelevant to echo the colonial dead horse, one cannot but acknowledge the centrifugal roles played by the colonial rule in informing the resilience of traditional institutions in contemporary Africa. In Nigeria and elsewhere, to curtail resistance and opposition the British through indirect rule assimilated traditional rulers into their administrative apparatus serving in their capacity as intermediaries between the Brits and the society. Furthermore,

in lieu contextual realities (such as the well-established Emirate System in Northern Nigeria) the British thought the imposition of alien institutions may be disastrous thus resorting to indirect rule as a means of administration and preservation of some of the cultures and traditions of these societies (Falola, Mahadi, Uhomobhi and Anyanwu, 1991).

This contravenes popular opinion that claim colonialism had negligible effects on contemporary Africa (Bayrat, 1993; Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Through the indirect rule policy colonialism in Nigeria empowered indigenous rulers it arguably centralized the roles of traditional institutions and fostered institutionalization of authority in such institutions. For Daniel and Ose (2013) the colonial administrators in their bid to consolidate the position of traditional institutions, their jurisdiction as chief executive were extended to include regions to which they previously had no authority over. Thus, pre-colonial Africa possessed visibly established and well defined hierarchy of administration where acts of legislations were implemented and conflict and inter-tribal clashes were resolved (Osakede et al, 2015). By way of recognizing the other, pre-existing traditional institutions and alien colonial institutions (formal institutions) gave credence to each other. Hence, the relationship between both institutions can be termed to be an interpenetrative and complimentary, under such arrangements roles of both institutions are clearly defined. To this end, countries like Nigeria have made efforts to accommodate traditional structures with certain degree of formal recognition, validation and incorporation. Hence, it will suffice to claim that what matters should not be if rules are established or customs are adhered to, impacts, binding effects and social acceptance on their society should be of more concern. In this regards, both formal and traditional institutions can constrain behavior of actors and condition political outcomes.

While time and space does not permit for an exhaustive interrogation of diverse opinions and submissions that have sought to address the roles of traditional institutions in democratic Africa. This study set out to probe the interplay between traditional institution and formal institutions in contemporary Nigeria. Specifically, the influence of the Kano State Emirate Council (KSEC) in the just concluded Gubernatorial Elections of February 2019 will be examined. This is done with a view to theoretically ascertaining the role and place of the KSEC in the configuration of political power in the Northern state of Kano Nigeria. Through theorization the study intends to set the tone for case specific empirical assessment of traditional institutions within the context of their numerous societies. Ultimately, this will likely address the challenges of blanket statements and generalization as obtained in the literature on traditional institutions in democratic Africa.

## II. TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN DEMOCRATIC AFRICA

Identifying the place of traditional institutions in a democratic setting remains particularly challenging. This could partly be ascribed to the informal and clandestine nature of their involvement in public affairs as well as the changing roles ascribed to them by means of legislation. Penultimately, as is the case in Nigeria they are thought to be widely acknowledged due to the significantly levels of authority they exert in the public space. Hence, this section of the study will attempt to examine the varying types of relationships that underpin the co-existence of formal and traditional institution in a defined political space.

Contrary to orthodox opinions, the establishment of modern democratic institutions in present-day Nigeria has not lead to the demise of traditional institutions. Rather, both institutions have co-existed in varying forms, degrees and dynamics. Such that traditional institutions embedded themselves under colonial administration through formal validation and demarcations along ethnic lines that continues to foster the authority of individual community leaders (Posner, 2005; Ranger, 1993). Under the indirect rule policy, the British hinged on the legitimacy of traditional authorities to implement their policies, while in Cameroon indigenous rulers were empowered by colonial administrators to collect tax from their subjects on their behalf (Jua, 1995).

In a related account, predominant parts of the colonized world have been and continue to be party to dual power structure from colonial era through their independence, first competing and sharing with colonial administration and then with post-colonial states (formal institutions) for social acceptance and societal influence amongst others (Ekeh, 1975, 1977), thus birthing the citizen-subject dichotomy (Mamdani, 1996). Arguably, the underlying relationship between colonial administrators and indigenous traditional institutions of leadership transcends to contemporary Nigeria as in numerous other states in the Sub-Saharan region.

Accordingly, the manifesting difficulty of contemporary states in the post-colonial world to domesticate inherited formal institutions, has arguably led to the creation of mixed polities as postulated by Richard Sklar (1993, 1999a, 1999b). This parallel may be moderately accounted for by the argument that recognizable traits of democratization across selected African countries has been accompanied by fairly open and accommodative public space, with traditional groups, like other groups in society, regaining voice in the process and participating in the political process (Englebert, 2002). Hence, the expansion in public space has also led to the resurgence of dormant ethnic, religious and other popular forms of identity. Based on their argument, one could link the resurgence of tradition to this increased salience of ethnicity, arguably fostering the promotion of political associations along ethnic and traditional lines. Evidently, it will suffice to claim that colonial policy of indirect rule played centrifugal roles in

enforcing the relevance and resilience of indigenous traditional institutions of leadership in postcolonial Nigeria.

In lieu, the wide array of interpenetrations and co-habitation that exist between formal and traditional institutions can be summed up under the following frameworks; the complementary type where they exist reinforce and exist side-by-side, the substitutive type, under which formal or informal institutions are effective in the sense of being functionally equivalent and one can replace the other; finally, the conflicting type, when the two systems of rules are incompatible. In cases of conflict, formal and informal institutions can displace each other or, in terms of their way of working, they can be interconnected to the extent that the functioning logic of formal institutions becomes interfered with (Hans-Joachim, 2000). However, it is important to note that the relationship between both institutions is not one that is static. As in the Nigerian context the union between state governments and traditional institutions is one that determined by existential realities as will be further delved into in subsequent sub-headings.

Based on the aforementioned types of relationships, traditional institutions are arguably product of formal institutions, in the sense that in pre-colonial societies indigenous traditional institutions were custodian of the law and symbol of leaderships in these societies. The advent of colonialism and subsequent introduction of formal bureaucratic apparatus led to the labeling of indigenous institutions as informal institution. Upon decolonization, indigenous institutions were incorporated in various degrees. In Nigeria for instance, the heterogeneous configuration of the society has given credence to traditional institutions as representatives of their community. Additionally, Laakso (1996) goes on to submit that the influence of informal institutions should not be downplayed, as they are capable of exercising considerable influence on the functionality and capability of formal institutions. However, traditional structures ideally seem to be less preoccupied with increasing their sovereignty or autonomy, rather they tend to be more interested in getting their own share of the national cake, a term used to describe the far reaching patronage system in the average postcolonial state. Conventionally, traditional institutions are either enlisted on formal payroll or incorporated into prevailing patronage structures. Albeit their shortcomings, traditional institutions have exerted themselves as dominant feature to be reckoned with in Nigeria as in other parts of the colonized world.

### III. PERCEPTIONS ON TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Critics of traditional institutions maintain that such institutions are remnant of the past and such should not be encouraged in the modern world. Furthermore, with the advent of democracy, the traditional system has also been castigated on the basis that leadership is ascriptive and hereditary; as such they tend to be less accountable and responsive to their subjects. In this regard the Economic Commission for Africa

(ECA) in its 2007 find acknowledged two dominant perspectives on the above subject matter.

The first school are of the view that traditional institutions belong to historic relies and should be left in the past (Fatile, 2010). They are of the opinion that these institutions are impediments to development, highly divisive and require a lot of funding through taxpayers money. In addition, their proximity to colonial administrators and the roles they played in the colonial process made the society skeptical about their intent (ECA, 2007). Relatedly, it has also been documented that the inheritive nature traditional leadership makes it incompatible with democracy, in other times this system of leadership have also been referred to as democratic pragmatism (Koelble, 2005). Within the purview of this research, this school of thought is conceived as the abolitionists, they emphasize the primitiveness of traditional institutions, autocratic tendencies and patriarchy amongst other features as the basis for incompatibility with democracy. Similarly, it has also been argued that residents of communities where traditional institutions are upheld are not citizens per se, this is premised on the claims that citizens cannot be subject to systems void of accountability simultaneously (Mamdani, 1996).

From this standpoint, it can be deduced that traditional structures of authority does not support and promote an atmosphere of recourse in the event of arbitration with regards to exercise of authority. Been according little audience for redress, they espouse authoritarian tendencies, which should be condemned in its totality. Secondly, they have also been castigated for not give room for persons outside the royal family or chieftaincy lineage to aspire for elective position. While such claims cannot be brushed aside in an era characterized by individual liberties and right, the aforementioned features are synonymous with traditional institutions in Nigeria and beyond.

However, as popularly acknowledged they are not peculiar to Africa alone, the British have preserved their monarchical structures as have the Danish. The Queen of England in her capacity cannot be subject to the social contract and has more power than elected public officials and representatives. In the sense that the Queen cannot be summoned by the parliament but the Queen reserves the unapologetic right to summon an elected Prime Minister. Contrary to these state governors in Nigeria reserve the right to dethrone or restructure traditional indigenous through legislative pronouncement or other means as stipulated by the law. Nonetheless, United Kingdom has thrived as a democracy despite preserving its monarchical institution. To this end, the condemnations availed to traditional structures in Nigeria and elsewhere should also be extended to the monarchs in Europe. In dismissing the propositions of the abolitionist school, it is the view of the researcher that the Queen of England and other monarchical structures are evident observable instances that traditional institutions can co-exist alongside liberal democratic institution. Surprisingly, the propagation for the abolition of

traditional institutions in Nigeria has also been championed by numerous political elites and government officials. In recognizing the influence of such institutions, government officials have resorted to using their political power to either depose monarch or curtail their jurisdiction. Such instances are prevalent in build up to national elections, should monarchs fail to by action or gesture support political ambitions of incumbent office holders, they are subjected to political vendetta's. The desecration of traditional institutions by elected officials is peculiar to the power tussle that characterizes modern day Nigeria. The decision of Governor Abiola Ajimobi of a South-Western state in Nigeria to reduce the jurisdiction of Olubadan (the indigenous traditional ruler) by means of decimating Ibadan royal lineage into smaller unit is a replication of Governor Ganduje's decimation of Kano State Emirate Council, by creating additional Emirate Councils. Ganduje's desperation to demean the emir was evident in the hurried manner in which the bill creating new emirate councils in Kano was passed and published in a national daily (Rotimi, 2019).

The second school of are popularly referred to as retentionists, they are of the opinion that political transformation and modernization can be realized without altering with pre-existing structures. In this regard, they also champion the retention of traditional institutions on the basis of their deep rooted nature. They believe such institutions as custodians of history and embodiment of collective culture are significant in realizing the African project (Ejoifo, 2004). Corroboratively Dore (2011) is of the view that attempts to detach policies from historical antecedents and social culture can result in poorly conceived initiatives. Closely related to the retentionists are the revivalist, in their thesis they claim the solution to addressing the challenges of the African continent abounds in revamping and reintroduction of traditions that have lost their place in the wake of colonial imperialism. Furthermore, they are of the opinion that colonialism disrupted the African indigenous model of development and imposed alien social organizations on the colonized societies (Gyekye, 1997). For Hughes (1969), traditional leadership ought to be conceived as alternative form of democracy that places more importance on cultural-moral principles expressed through human feelings and less emphasis on how governance comes into being. Hence, they are convinced that culture, tradition and customs should not impede the democratization project in Africa, further claiming pre-existing cultures cannot be done away with by mere legislative proclamations (Chigudu, 2015). In lieu, the inability of the average postcolonial state to fashion out functional institutions decades after independence does give credence to this line of thought. Similarly, contrary to claims that traditional leader and the institutions they represent are outdated and pre-modern, the Emir of Kano His Royal Highness Sanusi Lamido Sanusi amongst notable other are is not only educated, prior to ascending to the throne he served in his capacity as the former governor of Central Bank of Nigeria. Similarly, Fatile (2010) submits that most occupiers of traditional leadership positions

across the country are not only modern they tend to be educated and professionals before their ascendance to the throne. While the study does not in any accord clamor for a return to traditionalism, it argues in favor of incorporating such institutions considering the influence they have in their respective regions.

#### IV. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

To account for the involvement of traditional institutions in public affairs, the study will examine the theory of governance as the framework upon which theoretical assumptions will be deduced. At this juncture it is pertinent to outline that governance and government are not synonymous, even though they tend to share similar objectives. For Rosenau (1992) government derives when legally stipulated and formally derived authority, policing power (coercive apparatus) formulate and implement activities, by contrast governance denotes the creation, execution and implementation of activities driven by collective interest of citizens and organization, who may or may not possess formal authority and coercive apparatus (In Mohammed et al, 2016). Similarly, (Smith, 2002) submit that government constitutes bureaucracy, legislation, fiscal control, regulation and enforcement, while governance refers more to use of non-regulatory instrument in public space. Furthermore, within the conventional discourse, governance entails the capacity of governments to formulate and implement public policy as well as monopolizing the legitimate use of coercive apparatus. While the new paradigm of governance has more to do with interactions of the central authority or state with society, comprised of non-formal networks who can alter policy outcomes (Kajr, 2004). To begin with, traditional institutions in their capacities as informal components of the state occupy central roles in the public space, in amongst others they bridge the communication between citizen and the state as they also play major roles in sanctioning formal forms of political participation. Should the argument that governance entails interactions at multidimensional levels involving structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exerted, decisions arrived at and the active participation of stakeholders are espoused by (Graham et al, 2003, in Mohammed et al, 2016), it will then suffice to claim that the involvement of traditional institutions in public affairs is not misplaced.

Conventionally, the notion of stakeholder as noted above includes in amongst others civil society, citizens, social organization as well as other informal associations as the case maybe. Within the precepts of liberal democracies the underlying stakeholders tend to be recognizable actors that within their limits possess the mechanisms to dictate policy outcomes, more so with citizens in their capacity as voters. Ideally, citizens elect their preferred candidate to represent them largely based on policy preference and values. The citizen-state interaction as observed is not one that is static and is subject to vary contextually. While prevailing presupposition on the dynamic of state-citizen relations

continues to adopt a straight-forward relationship between states (in the forms of public institutions, elected representative and public officials on a divide) and citizens (in the form of taxpayers, voters, recipients of state services) on the other side of the divide (Mohamand et al, 2014). This assumption fits into the ideals of equality and individualism as obtained in most consolidated democracies. In these societies, the use of new interactive media amongst other platforms to bridge communication gaps between the state and society. Contrary to this, citizens in less advanced societies rarely have access to the state or their representatives, more so in rural communities. In other times, owing to high levels of poor civic awareness, citizen may be less inclined to demand representation. This existential reality has accorded traditional institutions intermediary roles, as a result of their proximity to corridors of power. Corroboratively, Shandama (2016) argues the inequality of citizens have accorded access to state and its services to selective persons, birthing alternative informal mediums for accessing the state. Traditional take up intermediate and mediatory roles between the state and their indigenous communities. As rightly observed by Fatile (2010) traditional institutions have assumed advisory roles at different levels of governance in Nigeria, which came to bare in their support for the Lagos State Government to create 37 Local Council Development Areas against the will of the central government. Beyond this, through the prevailing individual preferences and variations in behavioral personalities, they sway which paths within the corridor of action are taken; accordingly there exist a correlation between traditional institutions and political participation. Seemingly, they facilitate for alternative channels of influence for political participation beyond formal institutions.

However, it is pertinent to note that forms of participation as brought about by the involvement of informal institutions in public space does not translates to or spontaneously result in democratic participation. The specific forms of participation, as shaped by informal institutions, can also lead to the limitation and relativization of existing democratic participation (Hans-Loachim, 2000). Hence, traditional institutions can foster and deter democratization in the sense that they can serve as channels through which political participations such as voters registrations are encouraged. In other times they have also played opposition like roles serving as rallying points through which indigenous communities further collective interest. As observed by Osakaede et al (2015, p. 39) who are of the view that traditional institutions play a crucial in complementing the efforts of the government in the areas of mass sensitization, as they in some cases urge their subjects to turn out for immunization, voter registration and the likes. In one of numerous campaign outings the then President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan urged traditional leadership to appeal to their subjects to come out in their numbers to vote for their preferred leaders.

By acknowledging Stoker (1998) claims that governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationship

between associations and institutions involved in collective action and the state, and that getting things done should not necessarily rest solely on the apparatus of government or that institutions the public space can be drawn from within the government and beyond. By propagating for a divorce from assumptions that decision making in solely a formal state affair and by recognizing the existing power dependence as abound in Nigeria and beyond, then can we tentatively account for the contextual dynamics of power relation within these societies. To do so, the next section will attempt to address the relationship uneasy relationship that characterizes the co-existence between the Kano State Emirate Council and the Kano state government as habitants of same public space. In their capacities as enforcing agents, their differences came to bare in the build up to the recently concluded governorship elections in Kano state.

#### V. KANO STATE EMIRATE IN PERSPECTIVE

The sovereign powers that came to be in the wake of decolonization were accompanied by the significant reduction and subversion of the powers of traditional institutions. Thus, relegating them to pawns of elected public officers<sup>1</sup>; in the sense that they are expected to lead at the instance and disposition of elected officials, who by means of constitutional pronouncements can install and remove them. (Rotimi, 2019). In his capacity the Emir of Kano His Royal Highness (HRH) Sanusi Lamido Sanusi has prior to his ascendance to the throne served as the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria. During his stint with Nigeria's apex bank Emir Sanusi was notorious for speaking to the seat of power, a personality that caused him his job.

Conventionally, emirs are known for speaking very little with regards to matters concerning the state, more so in the areas of politics as they are expected as rulers of all to be apolitical. The same however cannot be said for HRH Sanusi Lamido. HRH in one of his numerous public speeches raised an alarm that Nigeria may be labeled as the world capital of poverty and slum in the next three decades, as a result of policy deficit on the side of the government (Musliudeen, 2018). From criticizing public policies, prevailing culture of child brides, poverty, poor infrastructure and the likes, HRH was thought to have criticized the person of Governor Ganduje Abdullahi of Kano State for his poor management of the state. Recently, the public was thrown into frenzy as a result of the Kano state government under Ganduje's to create four additional emirate councils of the same status. They are the Rano, Gaya, Bichi, and Karaye emirates respectively (Abdulmumin, 2019). Furthermore, investigative journalist affiliated with Daily Trust Periodicals, claims the speedy approval of the legislative pronouncement to split the emirate council is not unconnected to the fact that the Speaker of the House of Assembly stands

<sup>1</sup> The Jurisdiction of traditional rulers fall within that of states, hence the state governors can depose, install and dictate the roles such institutions assume by way of legislative acts and constitutional amendments. This accounts partly for the changing roles of traditional institutions within Nigeria.

to benefit directly from the split. Considering he the speaker in the person of Honorable Kabiru Alhassan holds the traditional title of Turakin Rano, and by default the creation of Rano Emirate accords him the position of Kingmaker as recommended by the Kano state appointment and deposition amendment law 2019 (Yashua, 2019).

By and large the creation of the additional emirate councils is perceived to be geared towards reducing Sansui's jurisdiction. The action of the state government can be attributed to the public criticism of the governors policies as well as the claims of the emirs open support for Ganduje's main opposition party the People's Democratic Party (PDP), in which Ganduje emerged victorious after a re-run. In one of Nigeria's top periodicals, it was observed that, Ganduje has taken some drastic measures (i.e. creation of four additional emirate councils) as a result of the infractions that existed between him and the Emir of Kano (Yashua, 2019).

In addition, there were claims making rounds about gross financial misconducts leveled against the emir in the build up to the February 2019 gubernatorial elections. To this effect, the Kano State Public Complaint and Anti-Corruption Commission opened an investigation into claims of alleged fraud in the emirate council, bothering around the mismanagement of huge sums of money, for which personal aides of the emir were invited by the Anti-corruption agency for questioning (Abdulmumin, 2019). Months after the investigation was initiated the findings are yet to be made public and the emir is yet to be officially charged to a court of competent jurisdiction, brewing allegations of witch-haunting.

Relaying the specifics, officials serving with the governor disclosed that in the build-up to the heated elections in Kano state, he the Emir presumably meet with the leader of the Kwankwasiyya movement (the red cap movement) on numerous instances, a former governor of Kano state and now a serving member of parliament Senator Rabiu Kwankwaso, who happens to be Ganduje's main opposition to devise means to defeat the incumbent in the person of Governor Ganduje. One of the sources of a journalist with Daily Trust claimed the emir directed district heads under his jurisdiction to vote for the opposition party and ensure that the incumbent lost the election at all cost (Yashua, 2019, p. 2). In furtherance, upon declaration of the February 2019 governorship elections as inconclusive by the electoral body, a close government official claims the emir called out to several power brokers to forstall the rerun election in Kano (Yashua, 2019). Similarly, another top government official claims the emir directed district heads in the councils were rerun elections were held to write damaging reports on the conduct of the elections with a view to discreting the outcome (Yashua, 2019). Although, the abounds conflicting claims as to the rationale behind the creation of additional emirates councils, it is the opinion of this research that the Emirs presumed and sometime open support for the opposition candidate in the governorship elections of February 2019 played a significant role in informing the decision of the state

government. Secondly, the urgency at which the councils were created also hints a unfolding vandetta, taking into consideration the snail like pace at with legislative pronouncements in Nigeria are notorious for. In lieu, the study submits that, while the emir may be subjected to the formal state apparatus, it has created some unpronouncement constitution of a such and thus occupies a seat at the table of power.

## VI. THE WAY FORWARD

In Nigeria and beyond, the roles played by traditional institutions in informing the power dynamics from the pre-colonial through the post-colonial era cannot be dismissed. Legitimized by variant sources, traditional institutions have come to play complimentary, substitutive and opposing roles as earlier observed. While their autonomy may have been lost they continue to wield significant relevance, which could be tied to elements of divinity, intercessor and intermediary accorded these institutions by their subjects-citizens. On the other side of the divide the government officials have also come to acknowledge the influence of the institutions. As Adebisi would have it; in the build up to the just concluded elections in 2015, political parties and their candidates romanticized traditional rulers in the course of their electioneering campaigns across the country. Going further to argue that should negative comments ascribed any candidates made by high profile traditional leaders, could cost such candidate or party the elections (Adebisi, 2016), as was the case in Kano state where the perceived lack of support of the emir resulted in a rerun which the incumbent struggled to win by a thin margin.

In recognizing the influence of these institutions, self-seeking elites and ethnic entrepreneurs have made efforts and succeeded in compromising a section of these rulers for private gains as observed in the oil rich region of Niger-Delta where the traditional institutions are thought to fraudulently divert royalties paid by multinational corporations for community development. Additionally, traditional institutions also possess the tendency to instigate ethnic chauvinism, hence there is need subject them to higher authorities. To this end, the study is of the view that, traditional institutions are not primitive, they can exist alongside democracies; they can complement, substitute or replace the formal institutions. More so in the rural communities were the impacts of governance are almost nearly never felt. Thus, there remains the need to not only address the stereotype associated with these institutions but also to recognize that their functions and structures vary across time and space. To this end, their proximity to citizens-subjects and their accessibility to seat of power can be harnessed towards bridging the gap between the state and society. In addition, they can serve in their capacity as leaders of ethnic-religious groups to re-orientate the masses and foster for national integration.

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