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## Gender and Traditional Music Performance in Yoruba Land

**ABSTRACT.** This paper discusses gender as a social reality from the perspective of the Yoruba people of South west, Nigeria. The paper hypothesizes that, the composition of Yoruba musical ensembles and the people's musical activities, replicate their worldview of gender. Therefore, portrayal of Yoruba as a patriarchy society may not be adequate in representing the people's view of the gender concept. The paper employs the practices and conventions in Yoruba traditional music ensembles to navigate the entire gamut of the discourse. Using ethnographic approach, data for the paper were collated from the six Yoruba states of Nigeria using mixed methods of interview, observation and bibliography. It hinges on the theory of gender complementarities, by Olajubu, 2003), the paper establishes the relativity of gender in Yoruba land. Though the Yoruba cultures is gender sensitive, the people, by their practices, see each of the sexes as complimenting the other and not subordinate or subservient. Therefore, sex to the Yoruba people is an expression of human physiology beyond an object for social stratification.

**KEYWORDS:** gender, patriarchy, ethnographic, ensembles, social stratification

### Introduction

Discourses on gender have taken the front burner with scholars, who, though from varied disciplines, delve into the subject conscientiously. Of a higher interest in the array of discourses is how gender as a social reality is being used to negotiate society balance, particularly in Africa, where gender belief system has been largely crowded by foreign influences. The concept of gender, as it was in the pre-contact or pre-colonial era in Africa, is said to have been altered with new ideas and orientations that are barely unknown to the continent. These new ideas are seen as imposition of western gender identities and narratives on Africa and Africans. This is also coupled with the emergence of new cultures arising from global-

ization and civilization that are ravaging the continent. In the context of this study, which is, Yoruba land, it is not uncommon today to sexualize gender or use it as a form of social stratification or hierarchy. This practice, as explained by (Oyewumi, 1997; Olajubu, 2003; Muraina & Ajimatanraeja, 2023), has no root in traditional Yoruba land where sex did not confer social advantage but restricted to mere means of reproduction and identity. This discourse, has stated earlier, has heightened in recent times with the upsurge of new terms like feminism, inequality, afro-centricism, westo-centricism. Feminism for instance is a European term used in the advocacy of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. All these are terms that were imported into the Yoruba sociological life and were never in existence in the traditional Yoruba society setting. As explained by Oyewumi (1997) gender was not an organizing principle in Yoruba land prior to colonization by the West. The social categories “men” and “women” were non-existence and hence no gender system was in place.

As varied as the thoughts on gender is, so also are these thoughts argumentative and contradictory. (Muraina & Ajimatanraeja, 2023). The new concept of gender in practice, portrays Yoruba as patriarchal- a society that allows men dominance in areas that cut across social, religion, and political strata of the society. (Oyewumi, 1997). Some other opinions tilts towards complementarities of sexes- each of the sexes are not distinguishable on the basis of social relations but compliments one another in creating social balancing. (Olajubu, 2003). As submitted by Muraina & Ajimatanraeja, (ibid) ‘the Yoruba society holds tightly to the heteronormative gender category- this term considers heterosexual as the norm.

To the best of my knowledge, discussion on this topic have been more intense within the ambit of a few disciplines such as Sociology, Anthropology (Rusak, 2004, p. 218), with very little residing in the field of ethnomusicology. Because music carries cultural and sociological values within it, it will not be out of place to give the idea of having an ethnomusicological view of the topic a consideration. My hypothesis in this monograph therefore is that since music reflect the social experience of a people and community, an examination of the musical life of the Yoruba people should give an insight into the gender construct in the Yoruba thought system. ‘It seems clear that gender as a construct should necessarily accommodate multiple paradigms in order to remain valid in scholarly discourses’ (Olajubu, 2003, p. 66).

The study, therefore, aims to contribute to the discourse on the place of gender in Yoruba society by drawing references from the organization

of Yoruba traditional music ensembles as well as the components of the ensembles that reflect the ways the people perceive the gender system. In this essay, I will be interrogating the concept of gender in Yoruba land by taking a look at the organization of traditional Yoruba music rendition and performance whether or not it embodied the people's gender systems. I will look at the social significances of gender in the organization of these musical ensembles and musical performance. I intend to support my argument with ethnographic reports garnered from various locations of Yoruba land over a 5-year period. This paper will be used to interrogate positions of scholars that had postulated on the topic; gender. One of the things this paper is set to achieve is that, with the acknowledgement of gender disparity in Yoruba land, (male and Female sexes), whether gender in Yoruba drumming translates to hierarchical formations or it is a mere binary opposition with no significance on social relations. And whether by undertaking a critical examination of musical practices of the people further understanding of the people's perception may be achieved. Doing these will require me to transverse the borders of two disciplines- Sociology and Ethnomusicology.

The Yoruba people are concentrated in the south western states of Nigeria. A substantial population of these people is also found in the west coast of Africa and southern America states of Brazil, Haiti, Cuba and a few other nations. The cross-Atlantic slave trade experience has been a major contributor to the displacement of Yoruba people and the distortion of their belief system and culture. Like most nations of Africa, music in Yoruba land is symmetrical to life in its entirety. The social organization of Yorùbá society, which makes people the center of all activities allows situations or, circumstances in the land to have corresponding music or musical performances. There is music for the commemoration of all activities embodied in the cycle of life. Music is employed to mediate conflict, instigate wars and social dialoging just as it is used to construct and deconstruct societal values and ethics. (Bernard, 2023). Yoruba music has evolved over the time. The pre-contact era in Yoruba land saw the people with their own type of music that is generic to them. This category of music is called traditional music. Though still in existence, Yoruba traditional music has been largely altered by foreign invaders, to the extent that, today, the music has waned in influence and patronage. Another category of music prevalent in Yoruba land is the neo traditional or contemporary music. Music in the category is that that have elements of foreign influence. In this study, since my focus is the place of gender before the interference of foreign bodes, I shall sample the Yoruba traditional music.

Yoruba traditional music is both in vocal and instrumental forms. (Akin Euba, 1990; Vidal, 2007; Olaniyan, 2003; Ogunyemi, 2020) There are also solo and chorus formations including male and female. The two can also join in an ensemble. Unaccompanied vocal music exists in the form of chants, poetries and recitations. Focus in this paper will be on ensemble music. Although it is generally believed that females in these ensembles are relegated to singing and dancing, there are cases of female only ensemble just as there are male ensembles. For example, Abebe ensemble in Ile Ife, Sabarikolo Ensemble, Okemesi Ekiti, Igbe Oba, Lagos Island, Obitun Dance, Ondo, and so many are wholly female ensembles. In female ensembles, the women take up the responsibility of playing musical instrument, composition as well as singing and dancing. Musical elements like songs, poetry, instruments and instrumentation as well as ensemble formation and performance, will form the objects of study.

## Literature Review

As briefly mentioned above, there had been significant number of theses focused on gender in music. This paper takes cognizance of submissions that dwell on the social relevance of gender construct in general and Yoruba land in particular. Koskoff's (1987) is noted as one of the books that focuses on women in music. In her book, *Women and Music in Cross Cultural Perspective*, Koskoff published a series of articles that emphasize the involvement of women in varied musical activities across several cultures of the world. Koskoff's collections also focus on subversion of women in some of these identified cultures in addition to laying emphasis on gender disparity in musical performances. Dunbar (2021) attention was focused on the under-reportage of female musical activities. In her book, *Women, Music, Culture: An Introduction*. Dunbar states that the problems of underrepresentation of women in written report, visual Images and recorded anthologies that reach the public persists, 'the issue was first addressed in the 1980s when feminist scholars began to share narratives that expanded the global music lens to include women' (p.42). While these two books were focused on the place of women in the global world of music, and authors have dwelled on the social realities of gender, there is no evidence of the amount of the worked carried out in Yoruba land.

Oyewumi (2007), for instance, in her book, *The Invention of Women: Making of African Sense of Western Gender Discourse*, where she argues

that the term gender was unknown to Yoruba sociology in the ways it was known and expressed in the European world. Gender, according to Oyewumi, was not an organizing principle in Yoruba land prior to colonization by the west, 'the social categories "men" and "women" were nonexistent and hence no gender system was in place' (2007). She affirms the existence of the distinct reproductive roles for Obinrin (Female) and Okunrin (Male) in Yoruba land but they were not used to create social ranking or hierarchy (36). Oyewumi (ibid) states further that:

Sex has been a frame work for gender construction in western culture through so many centuries that on some occasions it has been asserted that sex and gender are the same, but this cannot be said of the Yoruba. The Yoruba's concept of gender as in some other culture is not unitary monolithic or rigid. (47)

The submissions of Oyewumi have generated (perhaps still generating) a lot of debates with scholars taking varied positions on the issues she raised. Fadipe, 1970; Olajubu, 2003; Sarah, 2019; Muraina, 2023) have published divergent views of this same topic. Some of these scholars challenged Oyewumi's submission particularly that which says that the absence of gender differentiated categories in Yoruba language underscores the absence of gender conceptions. Taking a swipe at the submission Olajubu (2003) whose work, *Women in the Yoruba religious sphere*, belongs to the general genre and tradition of feminist gendered study, says, the Yoruba society holds tightly to heteronormative gender category. Though she does not subscribe to the assertion that the Yoruba society is male dominated, she asserts that; The Yoruba worldview is rooted in holistic harmony, hence the principles of relatedness is sine qua non of the people social and religious reality (p. 2). She goes further saying that:

Yoruba is essentially culture bound and should be differentiated from notions of gender in some other cultures. It is a gender classification that is not equivalent to or a consequence of anatomy at all times. Yoruba gender construction is fluid and is modulated by other factors such as seniority (age) and personal achievements (wealth and knowledge acquisition. (8)

Mathew (2014), in her book *Aje & Aje; Gender and Female Power in Yoruba Land*, criticizes Oyewumi's assertions saying; Oyewumi over emphasizes the point in such a way that, if taken at face value, dismisses many of the vital roles female power has played within Yoruba land

throughout history. My argument in this article hinges on the complementarities of the sexes in Yoruba land as expressed by Olajubu and others in her category.

Beyond the field of sociology and anthropology, are the scholars of ethnomusicology who have also taken interest in the topic; gender, as it relates to the field of music particularly in Africa (Euba, 1990; Vidal, 2012; Omojola, 2012; Barz, 2004; Kubik, 1994; Oludare, 2018). Each of these have written about the involvements of women in music organization and performance in Africa in general and Yoruba land in specific. For its relatedness to this study, I will dwell more on Oludare's article *Masculinity and Femininity in Yoruba Traditional musical instrument*. In his article, Oludare examines the social and musical factors relating to the gender status and nomenclature of masculinity and femininity of Yoruba traditional instruments, as well as their musical and extra-musical functions.

In his views, the organization of Yoruba instrumental ensembles in Yoruba land is in a replica of their family system.

The Yoruba culture sees the gender (femininity) role of the mother as the creative and procreative image of the family, through her guidance, vocal articulation and leadership qualities. So also, are Yoruba traditional instruments treated as a family of feminine and masculine symbols, with the biggest and leading instrument referred to as mother (Iya-ilu) instrument.

Though paper is largely in consonance with the position of Oludare (2018) as canvassed in his paper, I will examine it in relation to the submission of Olajubu. This I will do by categorizing gender not as biologically determined but rather culturally determined in Yoruba land.

The study is qualitative design and descriptive in nature. Primary data for this study were collated during my ethnographic survey of the states of Yorùbá land in Nigeria, which is consisting of Òyó, Ògùn, Lagos, Òṣun, Èkìtì, Ondó and other adjourning States that also have large concentration of Yorùbá people such as Kwara and Kogi in the North Central Nigeria. Primary data that I used in this study were collated using mix methods that include interview, direct observation, focus group discussion. Secondary data were sourced using existing library and other bibliography materials. In all, a total of 12 music ensembles of different categories and taxonomies were purposively sampled across the states that make up the population of the study.

## Theoretical Framework

This study hinges on the complementarity theory of Olajubu (2003). Olajubu in her book, *Women in Yoruba Religious Sphere* argues against the notion earlier created that gender as a social relation was in practice in Yoruba land. She says the fact that Yoruba worldview assigns certain features exclusively to one gender or the other and seeks to offer explanation for any breach of those clarifications' points to the existence of gender construct amongst the people (9). Olajubu would not deny the existence of gender construct in Yoruba land but says it does not translate to the notions of oppression and the domination of one sex over the other 'because it is mediated by the philosophy of complementarity, which is rooted in the people's cosmic experience.

In buttress of her position, Olajubu (ibid) cited Sofola 'The Yoruba worldview is rooted in holistic harmony hence the principles of relatedness are the sine qua non of the people's social and religious reality'. This theory of complementarity will play a major role in mediating this topic. This theory will be shore-up by a conceptual frame work that is drawn from a Yoruba proverb, *otun we osi, osi we otun, lowo fi n mo*. (to achieve a clean hand wash, the two hands must wash in complimenting of one another). This is predicated on the order of corresponding dualism.

## Analysis of Findings

In any circumstance of the Yoruba people, there exist two opposing sides not necessarily working in dissonance but in unison in achieving sonority. The negative and positive are treated as an essential order to synergise the existence of man in his society. The reason, being that the functionalism of the Yorùbá society is predicated on the principle of binarism. That is, in all circumstance of being, the Yorùbá social order attracts two face views which are not only distinctive but conditionally complementary. This is otherwise known as the models of socionics dichotomies. In Yoruba land for instance, *Ikú* (Death) is conditional to *Ààyè* (Life), *Ire* (Goodness), is conditional to *Ibi* (Misfortune), *Obinrin* (Female) is conditional to *Ọkùnrin* (Male), *Òsì* (Left) is conditional to *Ọtún* (Right), *Ayé*, (Earth) is conditional to *Ọrun* (Heaven), *Bẹ̀ẹ̀ni* (Affirmative) is conditional to *Bẹ̀ẹ̀kọ* (Negative). The Yoruba aphorism that explains this concept is *Tibi ti ire la da ile aye* (the world is predicated upon the good and the bad prisms). Even



though these 'usages and many more as highlighted stands parallel apart in ideation, their complementarity is instructive to life and living in Yorùbá land. No one of all these can exist, in the mind-set of the Yorùbá people, in isolation of the other. Therefore, the patriarchy nature of the society may not be absolute since female as complementary of male is prerequisite in attaining a balance society.

Yoruba traditional music ensembles, are a part of layers of communal activities that are used in the engagement and negotiation of beliefs and religious practices of the people. The art of drumming for instance, goes beyond generation of sound. Drumming is a part of other activities that are representation of the people's sociology and philosophy. The Ayan family in Yoruba land is associated with drumming and they are the custodians of Ayan, the Yoruba god of drums (Euba, 1990; Villepastour, 2010; Olaniyan, 2011, Samuel, 2012). Thereby making drums anthropomorphic as a result of which its practices are ritualised. (Ogunyemi, 2022). Every child born into the Ayan family is a devotee of Ayan, and also a potential drummer. The initial insight into the place of gender in the organization of Yoruba ensemble is noticed at the point where rituals are performed for the off springs of Ayan. As many rituals as are performed for Ayan offsprings from birth till death, the female gender is not exempted from any. Although the order of these rituals may vary from one sub ethnic group to the other, in all, both genders are all recognised and considered essential in the attainment of fluidity in the polity.

In relations to gender construct, music ensembles in Yoruba traditional setting can be categorised into three. Those that are male denominated. Those that are exclusive to female gender and those that are not restricted to any gender. In the first category are such ensembles like; *Bata*, *Agba*, *Gbedu*, *Igbín*, *Agere*, *Ipese* and a few others. These ensembles are phenomenal musical experience across the Yoruba space. Each of these ensembles is also attached to at least one Yoruba pantheon. A situation that classifies the ensembles as sacred. *Bata*, for instance, is two-headed conical shaped drums that is dedicated to Sango, the Yoruba acclaimed god of thunder and brimstone. See more in Villepastour (2010). *Agba* is the musical ensemble of the Ogboni cult. It consists of sets of upright drums that are found and performed in the enclaves of the Ogboni across the Yoruba space. Ogboni cult according to Idowu (2005, p. 77) is a 'powerful traditional attitude (in the) 'moral represents(s) the traditional attitude (in the) moral, legal, social and political life" of the Yoruba. The group, Idowu explains further, wields enormous constitutional powers" in the religious, judicial and political spheres and that its members are the de facto law makers



in their respective enclaves. Gbedu is another Yoruba sacred-royal drum that is exclusive to the Oba (kings) of the Yoruba people and the kingship institutions. Gbedu is the sceptre of kinship. It represents the institution of kingship. Igbin ensemble is the dedicated ensemble to Obatala the Yoruba God of purity and divination while Agere ensemble is associated with the hunters and Ogun the Yoruba God of Iron. The participation of women in all these ensembles mentioned above is regulated. The restriction placed on women participation in these ensembles, though, seemingly discriminatory, it is energised by the communal ethos which consider women of reproductive age a risk in the chamber of the drums/gods because of the menstrual flows. During their menstrual period, Yoruba people consider as impure, filthy, unclean and unfit to have close encounter with the stools of these gods. This is one of the restrictive cultural beliefs, stigmatizing practice and gender stereotypes, though not peculiar to the Yoruba people, that is being discouraged. 'The Yoruba believe that some mysteries are harboured in the vulva of a woman which contains power to neutralise charm through contact' (Bernard 2023, p. 83).

In an oral interview with Chief Ojo, a traditional chief and a drummer from Erin-Ile, Kwara State it's only women of reproductive age that are restricted from any contact with some instruments. The reason being that 'it is a taboo for women who is experiencing her monthly flow to access the sacred confines or altar of any god in Yoruba land' Ojo said.

A similar view is shared by Chief Jimoh Seliu Akerele, the Aro of Oto Awori who is the custodian of Gbedu Oloto, 'Gbedu Oloto is considered an altar of worship for the king. It is venerated, propitiated and highly revered. Like any other gods in the land, many taboos are associated with the drum. While it is not forbidden for women to come in contact with other drums in the ensemble, they stay clear of *Iyalode* being the mother drum and the sceptre of the ensemble, 'because in Yoruba land women are considered unclean during their monthly flow.

This position is also buttressed by Familusi (2012):

A menstruating woman must not participate in the sacrifice to Obatala, Yoruba divinity of fertility and other religious activities. Obatala is renowned for whiteness and this symbolizes purity (as Menstrual period is believed to be a time impurity of defilement) also, they are forbidden from entering into any sacred places because they could render all objects there ineffective.

However, a new layer has been opened in this construct. Women who had attained menopause enjoy some level of indulgence in this regard. Since this category of women are no more experiencing the monthly flow, they enjoy a relatively equal status with men in certain instances. This new practice is what Alaba (2004) expresses in his work, *Understanding Sexuality in the Yoruba Culture* where he says that there is no known Yoruba cult, which has no female representative, not even the Oro, bullroarer cult. In all ensembles sampled in the course of this research, the imagery of male and female is recreated but not in the contest of sex or reproduction but rather in that of functionality and value placement.

The principal drum in the musical ensembles sampled for this study is tagged with the prefix “*Ìyá*” which literarily means mother in Yoruba Language. Therefore, we have names such as *Ìyá ilù dùndún* (the mother drum of Dùndún) *Ìyá ilù Bata*, (the mother drum of Bàtá), *Ìyá ilù Gbèdu* (the mother drums of Gbèdu). In all these, the *Ìyá ilù* plays the dual roles of rhythm and melody (Melo-rhythm), that are employed in the process of improvisation and extemporization. The two (Improvisation & Extemporization) are compositional idioms that characterise Yoruba musical heritages. *Iya Ilu* is called the lead drum since it is central to all activities in the ensemble. *Iya Ilu* is not subordinate to any other drums even though it is not wholly independent too.

As said earlier in this paper, the literary meaning of *Iya* in Yoruba land is mother, but a simple translation of the word may not be enough to understanding its conceptual meaning in Yoruba worldview. Therefore, for a better understanding of the place of gender in these ensembles, it is imperative to explore the conceptual meaning of *Iya* in Yoruba language. Yoruba words like *Iya Aye*, *Iya Ajibola*, *Iya nla*, *Iyami Osoronga* come with derivational suffix; *Iya*. *Iya Ajibola* for instance is a name adopted by the members of Ogboni cult to reference Edan Ogboni which is the sceptre of Ogboni cult. The name describes the essence of the *Iya* status in Ogboni cult and by extension, in the Yoruba worldview, Olaiya (2021) says, *Iyami* are the carriers of *Ase* (Authority). They favour the acquisition and wisdom of beings and they transmit it to the Orun (heaven) through settlements already consecrated to them, initiations and the realization of constant offerings and ebos (np). *Iya aye*, literarily means mother of the world. In Yoruba land the word *Aye*, (the world) is also used to reference the metaphysical powers. *Iya Aye* therefore are women that are believed to possess the metaphysical powers ruling the universe. These are women who patrons the demonic spirit world. They are also common as initiates of Osugbo cult, Gelede cult, Ogbon cult. “They belong to a group

of spiritual being called Ajogun' Olaiya (ibid). Olaiya goes on to define Iyami Osoronga as representing the female ancestral power and the mystical elements of the woman in their double aspect: protective and generous, dangerous and destructive. Iyami Osoronga is the appellation for the witches. The coven of witches in Yoruba and is not exclusive to the female. There are also male members of the occult. Awolalu and Dopamu (1974). This goes to show that the word Iya may not depict gender in the real term of the meaning in the western world.

My argument above is that a deeper reflection of the word Iya reveals a several layers of meanings that if explored may provide insight into the Yoruba worldview of Iya in their musical ensembles beyond the narrow scope of a mere sexual nomenclature. Iya as a name for the mother drums in Yoruba land, though sexualised connotes spirituality and power. It has no correlation with the female gender.

Another layer in the organization of Yoruba musical ensemble that illustrates Yoruba's worldview of gender is constituted in the rhythm section of most of the ensemble. The rhythm section of Dundun ensembles for instance, consists of two principal drums, Omele Ako (male rhythm drum lead rhythm player) and Omole Abo. (female rhythm drum). The same goes in the Bata ensemble. In the two ensembles, the Omele Ako also known as Omele Isaaju in Dundun ensemble leads the rhythm line while the Omele Abo, otherwise known as Omele Atele in the Dundun ensemble corresponds the lead. Because the naming of these two instruments is denominated in sexuality (Ako and Abo) (Male and female), it shall be used to interrogate my position at this juncture. An examination of the sonic components of these two musical instruments shows that Omele Ako is higher in pitch than the Omele Abo. However, none of the two is superior to the other. Both the male and female drums, Siamese in nature, work simultaneously in providing rhythm line. This has further established the complementarity nature of gender in Yoruba land. The functionality of these two drums in this ensemble is not premised on any idea of gender or sexuality but relational complementarity.

While acknowledging the patriarchy nature of Yoruba people, Alaba (2004) is still able to highlight the complementarity relationship between male and female in Yoruba land. As he puts it:

Both males and females in the Yoruba culture have access to power, albeit relatively. However, the patrilineal lineage system practiced by the Yoruba gives apparent upper hand to the males. But in reality, the males derive spiritual power from the females who, in their wisdom, prefer anonymity in most cas-

es. The main idea is that behind every powerful Yoruba man there is at least a woman – mother, wife or wives, concubine(s), and daughters(s). A case in point is that of Orunmila and Aabo, his wife. She ably assisted her husband to properly entertain Mr. Death, Mr. Sickness and Mr. Esu, his mischievous guests, in spite of Orunmila's financial handicap...

It is also important to examine the circumstance of the non-involvement of the female gender in certain musical events and renditions in Yoruba land. The non-inclusion of women in the performance process of some musical ensemble in Yoruba land, according to my findings is not discriminatory of the body-type of women. Examination of the ensembles where women are restricted shows the ensemble are sacred ensembles and largely domiciled in the grooves of specific pantheons. They are, though musical instruments, anthropomorphic and objects of worship. This opinion is general across the Yoruba space. For instance, Iyalode, the mother drum of the Gbedu ensemble of the Oto Awori people of Lagos state is a deity. It is venerated and propitiated like any other gods in Yoruba land. Iyalode has all the attributes of a god yet it is a drum.

It is important to state that women are not cut off in music performance in Yoruba land. There are music ensembles dedicated exclusively for women as well as men. There are also ensembles forbidden for women. There are musical forms which are either exclusive, restrictive or inclusive of the women fold. Examples of musical form exclusive to the women are Yùngbà also known as rárà. Ìgbè Olorì, Ọbitun, (maiden dance) Èkún Ìyàwó, bridal song and many others. Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀ is another genre of Yorùbá musical plays that is designed for the celebration of female gender.

Through the application of musical arts, which may come either in form of song, chants, speech song, dance drama, poetry (drama in Africa is intertwined with music), spoken verses, the Yoruba women had made themselves relevant. While there is a school of thought that attributes greater success in vocal music and vocaling to the women some others like Omojola (2014) have also submitted that the women in certain regions of Yoruba land are involved selected traditional drumming activities.

## Conclusion

This paper illustrates gender in the worldview of the Yoruba people using the organization of Yoruba musical ensemble and other musical activities as study. Exploring the ethnomusicological option to navigate the

study, it scrutinizes the place of gender in Yoruba social realities. It discusses how the composition of musical ensemble, the organization of the musical activities and musicologizing in Yoruba land give insight into the worldview of the Yoruba people on gender and sexuality. In other words, the study posits that the organization of Yoruba musical culture reflects the people's belief in the collaborative nature of life which reflects in the complementarity of the genders. The paper did not dispute patriarchy nature of Yoruba society but further establishes the indispensability of female as an essential component of Yoruba social organization, It also establishes that even where events or objects are sexualized it connotes a deeper meaning contrary to the European interpretation. The study also acknowledges the forbearance of women in certain musical activities but goes further to say that the circumstance excluding women in some musical activities cannot be compared to what operates in the western nations See Rusak (2004, p. 85–88) in the accounts of Rusak, discrimination against women was prevalent in the music circle in Europe. It took the evocation of the civil rights acts of 1964 and other laws dealing with gender discrimination in the other cities of Europe before more opportunities were created for women in the orchestra. Therefore, the new realities of gender associated with the Yoruba people are convincingly are creation of the western ideals which is also an offshoot of colonialism. The realities are not a true representation of the worldviews of the Yoruba people of gender. The paper did not set out to refute the patriarchy nature of Yoruba society, but to reinforce the complementarities of sexes in Yoruba land.

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