

# Colonialism And The Transformation Of African Customs In A Global System

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## Abstract

Colonialism in Africa and its influences on the peoples of Africa remains potent and persistent since its official beginning after the Berlin Conference of 1885 up till 1960 when it officially ended. These influences and effects on the African customs and culture are far-reaching, and have resulted to an almost complete transformation of the lives of the peoples Africa. Against this background, the study examines the fundamental transformation which the African society and customs have undergone overtime using the Igbo as a case study. The study discusses the Igbo people before 1885 and as well their colonial conquest as a result of the various British expeditions. The study highlights the establishment of colonial rule and the spread of Christianity, the competition among the early missionaries and the establishment of missionary schools in Igbo land as a vehicle of transformation of the customs, culture and traditions of the people. The paper x-rays the various aspects of the Igbo customs and traditions that underwent such changes during the period of our study and how such changes have endured even up to the post colonial era. The paper concludes that colonialism and its antecedents have since then been a major catalyst in the lives of the peoples of Africa.

**Keywords: Change; Colonialism; Customs; Berlin Conference; Africa.**

## Introduction

The Berlin Conference of 1885 is a major watershed in modern history of Europe and Africa. Before this period, the European presence in Africa was almost majorly confined to the coastal districts, and essentially for commercial purposes(Hargraveas 402), hence the introduction of Christianity and Western education which acted as vehicles to the so-called European civilization mission. However, from the periods after the Berlin Conference, independent African peoples and lands were balkanized, reconfigured and totally recreated, and as well distributed plots of fiefs among the European super powers. This event marked the beginning of Colonialism in Africa. The Berlin Conference thus turned a new tide in history, it was the dawn of a new era; the era of oversees colonial conquest, annexation, acquisition and occupation. The newness of the era was evidenced in the changes in the customs, cultures and tastes of the African peoples and the Igbo more specifically.

It is over six decades since the beginning of the end of colonialism in Africa; howbeit these changes remain ingrained and almost irrevocable amongst the peoples of Africa. Thus the lives of African peoples have been steered in response to external European vibrations and reactions to the same. Whether these changes are losses or gains to the African peoples is left to the reading umpire to ascertain, however, facts shall be made bare here.

### **The Igbo before 1885**

The Igbo people before 1885 had no single centralized state system. This would have made it quite easier for them to be defeated by the British who had earlier done so with little or no resistance to Hausa and Yoruba of almost equal strength and population, save for the Ijebu whom they christened 'stubborn Ijebu'. Afigbo (Afigbo 424) aptly noted that the thought of the Europeans was that the defeat of the Arochukwu people would be the key to the conquering of the whole land, hence the Aro Expedition of 1902 was seen as war to end all wars, sadly to the Europeans it turned out to be the beginning of other wars as their thought concerned the Aro was a misjudgement of the Igbo people. This goes to point out the fact that the influence of the Aro was found in their oracle (long juju) and not in any marked supremacy over other Igbo groups. The Igbo had a decentralized state system similar to the democracy of the ancient Greek City States. The point here is that the Igbo never evolved a formalized hereditary political system. The Igbo republics consisted of free-standing and self-ruling towns and communities, which consisted of persons and kindred with ties having their different heads (Ibenekwu 2) that exercised both political and religious rulership over the people. The heads mostly served as priests that prayed and made sacrifices unto the gods and dead antecedents on the behalf of the people. The implication of this is that Igbo believed in life after death or the existence of an invisible world inhabited by the ancestors into which only death grants one access. These ancestors must be sacrificed to so that they would ensure the general wellness of the people. To these gods shrines were built where worship and sacrifices were made during special events and festivals, at personal levels. The oracular institution in the Igbo society was a major institution and was an influential force in the performance of judicial functions in the Igbo society. The Igbo people sought divine verdicts from these oracles. They were adjudged divinely infallible and inerrant. Most of these oracles had resounding recognitions and enjoyed overwhelming consultations as well from beyond the Igbo society. Amongst these oracles are the Ibini Ukpabi (long juju) of the Arochukwu people, Agbala of the Awka people, Igwekala of Umunneoha, Amadioha of Ozuzu (Afigbo 87). All these oracles among others are verifiable examples of deities and religious symbols in the Igbo society. However, the most respected amongst the Igbo deities was the Ibini Ukpabi of the Arochukwu people. It enjoyed a wide consultation both within the Igbo society and beyond; and against its verdict no appeal was possible. The Ibini Ukpabi had its oracular agents all over Igboland and beyond. The oracles were unifying agents of the Igbo spiritual realm. They fostered interaction among various Igbo groups on one hand and between the Igbo and non-Igbo groups on the other hand. For instance, the Aro oracle was consulted as far as Igala, Ibibio, Ijo, Cross River, Idoma, and the Abriba peoples (Afigbo 88). It should be noted that the long juju had its agents all these places as well. Thus, what a centralized government which the Igbo lacked could have offered, these oracles provided. These oracles also created trade links which facilitated an easy flow of goods and services throughout Igboland and beyond (Afigbo 88). Afigbo stated that these oracles helped to create cultural uniformity among the Igbo but failed to evolve the Igbo into a centralized state union. This does not erase the fact that anthropologists divided the Igbo society into five different sub-divisions which have distinguishing traits one from another, although they remain similar in basic principles and structures (Afigbo 13). The point is that the Igbo had contacts with their neighbours through their oracular institutions that had a beyond Igboland effect which ensured a well structured commercial enterprise. It should then be noted that during the era of slave trade, the hinterland served as centres for the acquiring of slaves transported to the riverine areas from where they were taken to the Niger Delta region from where they were taken to America and Europe. This process continued until the abolition of slavery trade and the consequent start of the so-called 'legitimate trade' in palm oil which was a precursor

to colonialism in Africa. From the foregoing, there is no doubting of the fact that end of slave trade was a result of the Industrial revolution in Europe. This implies that the trade in slaves and palm oil were both in favour of the selfish imperialistic intentions of the whites, not anyway necessarily because of the Africans. Thus slave trade and palm oil trade were favourable to the whites at these different eras. Thus the only logical reason for the end of slavery was the industrial revolution which upturned the logic of production in Europe. This implies that the need for overseas markets where they could dump their industrial products and the source of raw materials for their industries necessitated the abolition of slave trade.

### **Colonial Conquest of Igbo Land**

The colonial conquest and the overthrow of indigenous authority fall in a period later than 1885. It was at this period that Africa was fractionalised and subsequently conquered and effectively occupied by Europeans (Uzoigwe 19). John Atkinson Hobson argued that overproduction and under consumption in Europe after the industrial revolution led to the search overseas territories where excess capitalist goods would be disposed (Uzoigwe 20). The above quite substantiates the stance of the authors elsewhere in this paper. Thus to him and most other scholars economic reasons as a result of the industrial revolution necessitated political occupation and colonialism in Africa. The intent of the authors is not to argue the various schools of thoughts with regards to the reasons for colonialism. However, it should suffice at this point to state the fact that Africa generally and the Igbo society in particular was conquered and occupied by the British which established a foreign or an alien political system afterwards. Colonialism and the absence of a centralized government resulted in the establishment of the Warrant Chiefs System of indirect rule in Igboland which shall be discussed in detail subsequently in this paper.

The colonial conquest involved the removal of all noticeable opposition or threats of such standing in the way of absolute colonial administration in Igboland. This was evidenced in the crushing of the Aro Oligarchy and the perceived threat of the people. The Igbo given their nature were a sophisticated and difficult people to handle; hence they posed different levels of resistance to colonialism. The sole objective of the Igbo during the period was the defence of their sovereignty, customs and traditions (Mbaye and Ado Boahen 114-117). By the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British already had a firm grip of the coastal areas of what is now Nigerian, and had arrived at the Southern borders of Igboland, heading for the interior areas. The result of this was that the British encountered stiff opposition from the people in the interior (Anene 24). The Aro people were a clear case of resistance to the British penetration into the interior as they knew that that would deal a terrible blow on their commercial interests. The British developed a vivid hostility against the Aro people in the interior who they feared could persuade the people to take up arms against the whites. This resulted into the famous Aro expedition which began in late 1901 and was concluded in March 1902 where conquered. However, the initial thought of the whites that the conquering of the Aro people would submit the whole Igboland to them willingly and that it was going to be the war which was to end all wars proved to be the very beginning of all wars in Igboland (Afigbo 413). Military actions were employed and executed against the Olokoro clan of Umuahia, and the Uzuakoli communities in Bende to demonstrate to them the utter futility of resisting them like the Aro people did. In 1903, Afikpo and Umunneoha were routed, Akwete and the Onicha interior were conquered in 1904, the Ezza, Ovoro, Nonya, Ahiara were defeated in 1905 (Afigbo 413). Such expeditions and conquering of various opposing Igbo communities continued even up to the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And by 1917, various British troops still patrolled various Igbo communities conquering various dissident and unyielding Igbo communities. Thus the defiance among the Igbo communities was ruthlessly and completely crushed in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One could then argue that colonialism in the Igbo society was quite later than it was in other ethnic nationalities.

### **Entrenchment of Colonial Rule Igboland**

At the end of the conquest of the people, the next major challenge was how to entrench or establish a virile colonial administration in the Igbo society. This is also true of other colonized African societies. With particular reference to the Igbo, this was made more serious as a result of the fact that the Igbo never evolved a centralized state system under which the whole Igbo society could be brought through which the British administrative system of indirect rule could thrive.

Thus, the end of one challenge marked the beginning of another which appeared to a labyrinth to the colonizers. Afigbo opined that the greatest need of the Igbo as envisaged by the British was to establish a political system which would maintain law and order among the people so that the people's resources could be easily exploited. This again supports the already established that that core reason for colonialism was economically oriented. The appointment of Lord Lugard and the amalgamation of the northern and the southern protectorates in 1914 led to the establishment of the Indirect Rule system. Some factors that necessitated the establishment of the indirect rule system include;

1. Shortage of British staff
2. Lack of communications and means of transportation
3. Shortage of funds.

It should be noted that the unfavorable nature of the African climatic condition was very scary to the whites. This resulted to the fleeing back of most of the British officers. Also, Britain was unwillingly to invest from the metropolis into her oversea colonies, they only did when such investments were going to result to greater resource exploitations from such colonies. The evident limitations made it difficult for the colonial administrators to govern such large expanse of lands and territory with an overwhelming population, which made up a division. Thus, an option for the indirect rule system was embraced. Although it thrived in other regions, in Igboland it was an abysmal flop. This system not only reduced the cost of administration, it as well cushioned the effect of transformation of the cultures and customs of the people on them as the system allowed that the people be ruled according to their customs and traditions. Unfortunately, as have been noted, the system in Igbo society unlike it was elsewhere was a total failure. It should be noted at this point that the foremost transformation of the people was in their system of government; the indirect rule. The undoing of the British administrators was in the appointment of warrant chiefs in the absence of a unified native central administrative system. The British thus misjudged the Igbo people's ways of administration as one of chiefdom rather than a representative government which ensured the participation of the people in the decision making process and decision execution in the villages and communities (Afigbo 414). The warrant chief system turned out to be a strange fire among the people, and expectedly failed when compared to indirect rule in other Nigeria ethnic groups. At this point one could assert that the initial bane of colonialism in Igbo society was the appointment of the warrant chiefs, which were totally alien to character and the customs of the people. What 73-83 and the already bad situation was the fact that the persons appointed as warrant chiefs had no traditional status such as titles in the Igbo society. For instance, communities who had thought that the appointees would be sold as slaves chose slaves as their delegates. Also, criminals and people who were despised among in the various communities were as well selected for the positions of warrant chiefs (Afigbo 417). These selected chiefs were vested with excessive powers beyond what they had before colonialism; this signaled another formed another round of transformation of the Igbo traditional political system. The net effect of this was the abuse of power and oppression of the general populace by the warrant chiefs.

These chiefs received certificates which were called 'warrants'. This distinguished them from every other person in the Igbo society, as they were referred to as warrant chiefs. There were as

well minor chiefs that were selected to deputise the warrant chiefs or act on their behalf in their absence. It was from among these ones that a dead or deposed warrant chief was replaced. The establishment of the warrant chief system led to the establishment of native courts located in each district. This was the beginning of a formalized courts system in the Igbo society, and as well the beginning of separation of powers although the same individuals controlled the courts. Hence it is not merely in the persons who were involved, but the system established.

To source funds for the administration of the colonial government, Sir Hugh Clifford felt the need to establish a taxation system. To do this, first a detailed assessment of the people's wealth was to be carried out using the warrant chiefs who also would carry out the collection of taxes. Already the warrant chiefs had attracted for themselves hatred, thus using them for the collection of taxes would further establish the failure of the system. As a prelude to taxation, a census was of the lands, livestock, palm trees, yam farms were taken, which resulted in a protest by the people. The people could not readily understand how prices of imported European goods were skyrocketing, and those of palm produces and other local goods were on the decline. The first year's round of taxation had some considerable opposition free success. However, the second year's collection came with rumours that women would be taxed alongside the men. This snowballed into the famous Aba Women Riot of 1929 which took the British government unawares and dealt a heavy blow on the warrant chiefs system as well. It should be noted that the outbreak of the Aba Women Riot sparked of a major transformation in the British indirect rule system. It led to the abolishment of the warrant chief system. This more than every other thing justified the fact that the Igbo were never ruled by an absolute monarch unto whom the whole Igbo society paid allegiance, or a single-man chief who had control over others. This led to the establishment of a representative government.

Village assemblies were created which allowed every adult member of the community access to participate in governance. Thus the communal integrity of the people was reassured. To check the abuse of power in the new system as it was in ill-fated warrant chief system, the British separated the executive, legislative and judicial powers from being vested in an organ or individual to a body. This was an official beginning of the local government system. This arrangement enjoyed an initial success, however, around the 1940s; the excitement that greeted the system had waned considerably. They soon found out that arrangement cheapened the erstwhile revered position of a chief as a result of the largeness of the size of chiefs. Also, the outbreak of the World War II dealt a major blow to the administration. This was because the British administration was braced to satisfying the war needs of human and material resources, hence British Empire suffered empire fatigue that made it difficult to execute the war and administer her colonies concurrently. Thus attention was diverted from the native administrative machinery of her colonies to serve the needs of war in Europe. The effect of this was that at the end of the war, the arrangement had also joined the league of failed systems in the Igbo society. At this period, Igbo educated elite had begun to spring up and begun posing threats to the uneducated chiefs in the native authority administrative system. This led to a break of law and order, and the British government was left with no option than to initiate a British-type local government administrative system of which the first County was at Ikot Ekpene. This arrangement to an irrevocable extent caused a great transformation in the administrative system, as the educated elite flooded the local government administration, leaving the uneducated elite and chiefs as toothless bulldogs. Thus, this lead to continued struggles between both elite groups. It should be noted that the uneducated elite never regained this loss of power even at or after independence as the educated elite took over the instruments of power and politics of the post-colonial era.

### Colonial Rule and Christianity

Among most of the peoples of the world, religion is in varying degrees the handmaiden of the law. As a matter of fact, even the church and the state are long divorced. Indeed the primary function of religion would be to formulate rules and standards of social behaviour. Among the Igbo, religion and the law are most closely interwoven that many of the most powerful legal sanctions are derived directly from the gods.

The Igbo tradition believes in the existence of a deity whom they believe is the source of all creation. He is the called 'Chineke' meaning the God that creates or 'Chukwu' meaning the almighty God. There is a group of famous gods and deities headed by the Chukwu or Chineke; the supreme spirit; Anyanwu (the sun), Igwe (Sky), Amdaioha (Lightening), and Ala (the earth deity). They believe this mighty being and creator could be served through various other smaller gods and deities in whose shrines sacrifices are made. Different communities had different deities whom they believed were the source of life, wealth and protection as have been noted somewhere else in this paper. Amongst them, the Ibini Ukpabi of the Aro people was believed to be the most supreme. They Igbo believed that they could communicate as with their ancestors or the spirits of their dead forbears whom they believed gave health and help to their living descendants. To these gods shrines were erected, dedicated and sacrifices made as well. There were priests who consulted these oracles on the people's behalf. It should be noted that the Nripeople are seen as possessing religious headship in the Igbo society. However, the activities of these priests, their shrines and deities were truncated with the advent of Christianity in Igboland.

F.K. Ekechi remarks that the Christian missionary attempts to convert the Igbo to Christianity began in the first decade of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in about 1857 (Ekechi 103). Mr. Ofili Ukpabi; the palace registrar of the Obi of Onicha in an oral interview remarks that the first missionary group in Onicha was the Anglican Church led by Bishop Ajayi Crowther and four others and agrees on the same date with Ekechi above (Ukpabi 06/06/19). The zeal the Igbo attached to their indigenous religion was a major reason for the initial failure of the early missionaries' attempts at making Christian converts among the Igbo. This assertion is quite apt in the words of John Christopher Taylor; one of the pioneer missionaries, he said "none was elated, nor did the people consider the regenerating power of Christianity relevant to their needs" (CMS: CA. 03/037). The Igbo considered their traditional beliefs superior to the alien Christian beliefs being peddled by the whites, hence they held tenaciously to their own beliefs. Most the Christian adherents of this period were those who suffered some social deprivations in the Igbo society, like the Osu caste system. Aside this, most persons treated the Christian faith with negligence and indifference. This indifference that characterized the Igbo reception to Christianity was in tandem with the Igbo nature of weighing the pros and cons of a novel system using what seems like the law comparative advantage. Hence those who embraced Christianity did so because they considered it advantageous while those who rejected it did so because they considered it disadvantageous. Thus V.C Uchendu argues that if the acceptance of the innovation would make the individual or towns arise, then there would be a large possibility of the change being accepted, however, such must be demonstrated early before acceptance is done (Uchendu). It should be noted that during the periods of expedition in Igbo land, acceptance of the Christian faith by a people acted as a buffer against being plundered by the British administrators as such persons or communities were treated with preference. This could explain why most Igbo communities and populations accepted the Christian faith when they did. A CMS missionary observed that the acceptance of Christianity was a major immunity from British expeditions (CMS.G3/A3/0). The result of this was that the young men began fondly association with the missionaries and communities as well implored the missionaries to build churches in their communities. This led to a spread like wide fire of what could be termed conversion to the Christian faith. Most persons according to Dilim Okafor-Omali in Ekechi's work, converted to Christianity to evade forced

labour imposed on Africans by the whites (Ekechi 109). So, from the above one could argue that part of the reasons for the initial spread of Christianity in Africa generally and the Igbo society particularly was fear of forced labour and the wrath of the Europeans, not necessarily of the missionaries but of the colonizers whose agents the missionaries were.

The establishment of mission schools was a tool for evangelism. Most persons who were educated and attended churches earned the respect and due regard of the society as more than being a chief. Thus, parents released their children to the mission schools and churches as well. As an aid to the rapid and unobstructed spread of Christianity was the destruction of the Arochukwu long juju oracle, which was demolished during the Aro expedition and thus was a final blow on their dwindling oligarchy. It was after this that the hinterland of Igboland was laid bare to the missionaries. The establishment of schools by the churches led to a period of competition for converts between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestants; hence schools were used to ensure that a denomination got a stronghold in an Igbo society. Thus, it was a period of scramble for converts among the Igbo. It should be pointed out that the spread of Christianity was not an end in itself but a means to an end. To buttress this point, the missionaries had social transformation, civilization and as well colonialism in mind. The intention of this paper is not to contest the so-called civilizing mission in Africa as stated by the colonialists. These factors were agents of transformation in Africa and in the Igbo society more specifically. This could be explained by the fallacious beliefs of the assumed superiority of the whites over the blacks. It should be noted that to the Africans, western education was a means to their end; a tool to fight colonialism. To the whites, the case was the same as well. Thus Father Shanahan remarks that those who had the school had the country, its religion and future (F.H.G Paris: 192/A/11).

It is worthy of note at this point that the traditional Igbo society stands on three legs; agriculture, trade and craft. However, education was a major vehicle for transformation as people who received it secured western jobs as clerks, teachers, receptionists and other jobs that were assumed as white collar jobs. Thus, the possession of a large barn was almost ceasing to be a means to measure wealth and respect but education and a white collar job, or simply put education and a city job. The effect of this was a major departure from the value system of the Igbo society and a decline in the Igbo traditional economic systems. We shall then proceed to such areas of the Igbo customs and traditions which suffered or witnessed evident transforming changes.

### **Transformation in the Igbo customs and Traditions**

The evangelization and the establishment of the establishment of missionary schools among the Igbo were on one hand transformative and on the other hand destructive. Most of the Igbo culture, traditions and ways of life were lost to an alien and western ways of life. For instance, the preaching and evangelization led to the abolishment of some obnoxious cultural practices like the Killing of twins in the Igbo society. Birth of twins was aforesaid seen as an abomination to the extent that the set of twins were killed and their mothers who were considered cursed and abominable were banished.

As have been noted, westernization marked the beginning of the decline of the Igbo traditional economy. The reason is because many of the educated young men never returned to farming or to the families' craft industries but sought white collar jobs with the colonial government in the rising urban centres cities. This led to a massive rural to urban migration of which its net effect was a remarkable decline in the Igbo economy. As a result of urbanization, able bodied young men left the interior food producing and locally industrialized areas for the rising big cities in search of greener pastures and a better life. Thus the villages were abandoned for the aged who died and almost could not transfer their economic know-how to the younger generation.

There was also shift in the Igbo traditional authority system through then establishment of the warrant chiefs' system. This was a total departure from the egalitarian system for which the Igbo was known. The failure and abolishment of the warrant chiefs' system of indirect rule and the native authority system led to the establishment of a local government authority system which displaced the uneducated chiefs and enthroned the newly emerging educated elite in the administrative affairs of governance. This power wrestled out of their hands was never restored again even at independence.

The rise and spread of Christianity also had an irrecoverable effect on the traditional religion of the Igbo people. For instance, the Aro expedition led to the destruction of the Ibini Ukpabi or the long juju oracle, and this was the demise of the Aro religious stronghold in the Igbo society. This was also the case with other smaller deities who were likewise demolished. Also, most of the shrines of oracles were donated to these missionary societies and churches, who in turn built churches or schools in the very sites where shrines were. Hence, there was a great decline in the African Traditional Religion (ATR). Also, most of the children of traditional priests who were enrolled in schools and got converted to the Christian faith abandoned the shrines, refusing to take over the priesthood of the shrines at the demise of their fathers. This led to the debilitation of the oracular institution in the Igbo society. Most of these religious adherents also demolished their family shrines which they accused of being the cause of their misfortunes through family liberations.

Also, new converts could reject the authority of the kings and chiefs, they could ridicule indigenous religions by burning religious symbols and ritual objects making a mockery of marks and sacred spaces, violate norms by disregarding taboos and revealing age-old secrets, and take a new social path by condemning some aspects of the cultural practices. For instance, most Christian converts forbade polygamy and some even sent their other wives packing save their first wives. It should be noted that the Igbo society encouraged polygamy and a large family which provided much hands for agricultural production in the farms. It should be noted that the major reason why the Igbo society encouraged polygamy was because hands were needed for a high production in the crude farming practices.

Also, even objects associated with decorations were destroyed for their association with so-called paganism. The society became divided between Christians and primitive paganism; all with implications for politics and economy.

Christianized African missionaries could criticize the African Traditional Religion as idolatry, condemning dancing and singing as being with cults, opposed some marriage practices, and take other steps that undermined other culture and traditional elite.

Christianity entailed more than religious conversion with exposure to western cultures. African gods were regarded as satanic and paganistic, only the Christian god was authentic and was regarded as a tool for worship and the only legitimate Holy Book. Even creative aspects of African culture like singing, dancing and drumming were criticized. Converts ducked taking part in rituals, ceremonies and other activities which they thought spelt doom for their future salvation. Africans took western or names of some favorite Christian characters, wore western style of attires, eat western food, use western languages and slangs, and travel to western countries in Europe. With the ready assistance of the colonial government, missionaries caused drastic changes to many facets of the customs and lives of the people which were regarded and taught by the missionaries as sinful. Certain practices were banned and abolished, like female circumcision. Powerful kings and chiefs were rendered toothless bulldogs and were reduced as subordinate officers of the European powers. These erstwhile kings and chiefs accepted junior roles created for them.



An area of the culture of the people that was greatly affected was the traditional medical practices. Western medicine reduced the number of clients that patronized the herbalists and other traditional healers. Even till the present era, Africans and the Igbo people most particularly still despise traditional medicine and others assume them as diabolic, and hence worthy of avoidance.

Urbanization played a crucial role in transforming these cultural practices. New cities emerged. Christianity was an agent of modernization, the cities enabled them to reach multitudes of individuals through communication and transportation. After the World War II, new cultural practices favoured the spread of western cultures and Christianity. It is no novel news that Africa today imitates the Western tradition and culture.

Thus colonialism became a dynamic tool in the overall transformation of the customs, lives and peoples of the Africa. It should be noted however, that some of these cultures have endured overtime, but not without some degree of modifications which could allow Christian freely take active part in the same.

Could we then assume that the African Traditional Religions were displaced or modified? To what extent were the modifications and displacement?

For instance, the playing of the piano while singing the African traditional songs in churches seemed like blending or a mixture the old wine and the new wine together. The song leaders often switch from African languages to European languages. Thus, could one say the use of European music instruments to play Africa songs and rhythms was a modification or a displacement?

## Conclusion

An examination of the life of the Igbo people before colonialism and after colonialism reveals a deep contrast and a remarkable shift in the lives of the people in the different historical epochs. As already noted, the Berlin Conference was a major landmark in the Africa and Europe relations and up to the present century it has remained evident.

The paper has revealed that the conquest and occupation of the Igbo society and the use of Christianity and education as tools for colonialism were not without a superior military expeditions, force and coercion or fear of the British torments for refusal. The various military expeditions after that of the Aro are clear illustrations of this. It was also pointed out that the spread of Christianity was a major transformation at the root of other changes that the Igbo underwent during the colonial era; ranging from economic, religious, social, ideological and other changes.

It is quite obvious colonialism never left Africa people the same way it met them or the resilience of the African peoples were not strong enough to ward off the flooding forces of colonial changes witnessed in Africa, but they were transformed every way to a new and unfamiliar way of life which have ultimately endured and have come to stay.

Thus Christianity and education injected into the African blood the thought that a Christian convert and adherent was superior to every other person. With western education, the minds of the people were captivated especially in schools into despising their own culture, throwing some into the garbage and picking up another which they assume is superior to their cultures, customs and religious beliefs.

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