

Re-Thinking the *‘aşabiyyah* Sociological Theory of Ibn Khaldūn in the Modern Period: A Case Study of Fūlānī Emirate in Ìlōrin

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Abstract

Formation and sustainability of a state in every human society is a necessary venture as human beings have a great interest in civility and socialization by their natural disposition. The needed vital instrument to achieve this venture is not within the capacity of a single man as this venture requires the solidarity and co-operation of group of people in a society. The study aims at examining the theory of ‘aşabiyyah as propounded by a renowned Muslim scholar, IbnKhaldūn in his introduction to his magnus opus “Kitāb Al-Ibār Wa Diwān’Al-Mabtada’ Wa Al-Khabar Fī Ayām Al-Arabī Wa Al-Ajamī Wa Al-Barbar Wa’Asarahum Min Dhāwī As-Sulṭān Wa Al-Akbar” meaning “The Book of Wisdom and Anthology Concerning the Beginning and Discuss in the Time of Arab and the Non-Arab and the Berber and their Contemporaries who had Great Sultanate and Kingdom” titled Al-Muqaddimah in relation to the formation and sustainability of Fūlānī Emirate in Ìlōrin. The purpose is to see what element of impact does this theory of Aşabiyyah has on the formation and sustainability of Fūlānī Emirate in Ìlōrin since early nineteenth century of Christian era.

Keywords: Re-thinking, ‘aşabiyyah, Theory, Sociological, Fūlānī, Emirate, Ìlōrin.

Introduction

Islam, as a comprehensive way of life, has produced several iconolastic scholars who pioneered some western sciences in the modern world. Their materials served as a reference in the academic disciplines of western world for some centuries. In dismay, these Muslim Scholars are not given their deserved attention in the western world, their names are either omitted in the western intellectual list or their pioneering sciences are attributed to some western scholars who came after them. It became very rare to refer to the materials written by these Muslim intellectuals when discussing about philosophy, politics, sociology, psychology, law, natural sciences and medicine in the western world. Yet, it is these unacknowledged Muslim intellectuals that revived and refined the western thought on various sciences and transmitted them through Spain (Andalūs) to western Europe in the eight century of Christian era.¹ One of these Muslim intellectuals was Ibn Khaldūn who pioneered philosophy of historiography, sociology and theory of state. He was the first in the world socio-political history to theorize the concept of ecology and its political impact in the society in one of his material popularly known as “*Al-Muqaddimah*”. He was four hundred years ahead of Montesquieu whom the west acclaimed to be the teacher of ecological theory.

¹. Abdul-Latif, S (2000), *Early Muslim Political Philosophers*, Nigeria: Islamic Liberation Movement, 10.

Similarly, his theory on environment and evolution came before that of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.² This study aims at examining the theory of 'Aşabiyyah of this icon, Ibn Khaldūn and the impact of this theory on the formation and sustainability of political power and authority in the modern socio-political environment. Fūlānī emirate is taken as a case of study so as to contextualize the study. The purpose is to see how viable the theory of 'Aşabiyyah theorized by Ibn Khaldūn in the fourteenth century of Christian era to the modern day political theory.

Conceptual Clarification of some Terms

The term "Aşabiyyah" is an Arabic word derived from two derivatives 'Aşab which means "to bind" and 'Aşabah which also means "union". 'Aşabiyyah literally means tribalism, ethnicism and partisanship. Technically, it refers to a socio-cultural bond that can be used to measure the strength of social groupings.³ In the context of this study, 'Aşabiyyah can be understood as social solidarity, with emphasis on group consciousness, cohesiveness and unity.

Theory is abstract noun derived from the English verb "theorize" which means "to contemplate, to survey, to construct". By this, the word "Theory" linguistically means a scheme or system of ideas or statements held as an explanation or account of a group of facts or phenomena. By the context of this study, it refers to a hypothesis that has been confirmed or established by observation or experiment, and is propounded or accepted as accounting for the known facts.⁴

The term "Emirate" was coined out of "Emir" which is anglicized from Arabic word "Amir" as an abridged form of 'Amir Al-Mu'minīn which means Commander of the Faithfuls. This term was firstly used by the second caliph of Islam in person of 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭab who reigned between 634 C.E- 644 C.E. By this context, Emirate refers to a socio-religious leadership system in which both religious authority and political authority are combined in one hand. In Emirate system, there is no separation of power between religion and public administration.⁵ Fūlānī are the most widely dispersed and culturally diverse people in African continent. They traced their origin to the Senegambia area of West African region. They adopted a pastoral livelihood and began moving about with herds of cattle. By the eighteenth century, some had migrated as far as Niger and Benue rivers in modern day Nigeria. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some Fūlānī initiated Islamic reformative movement (*Jihād*) in order to spread and purify Islam in some West African nations. There are two types of Fūlānī namely Nomadic or Pastoral Fūlānī popularly called *Mbororo'en* and Town or Settled Fūlānī popularly called *FulbeWuro*. The Nomadic or Pastoral Fūlānī are the one moving about with their cattle while the Town or Settled Fūlānī are the one permanently settled and lived in a particular community. These two types of Fūlānī shared the same language of Fulfude which is their mother tongue. The Nomadic or Pastoral Fūlānī are mostly concerned with their cattle while Town or Settled Fūlānī are mostly concerned with propagation of Islam.⁶ In the context of this study, the Fūlānī group which we are dealing with is Town or Settled Fūlānī who settled at Yorùbá town of Ìlṛin in Nigeria in the earlier eighteenth century.

Who is Ibn Khaldūn ?

Abdur-Raḥmān Abū Zayd Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn was born on 27th May 1332 C.E in Tunis in the modern day Tunisia in North Africa. He was a state man, jurist, historian, sociologist, philosopher and scholar of high repute. He started his political career in his home town in Tunis in 1352. Two years later, he went to Fez in Morocco to enter the service of Sulṭān of Fez, Sulṭān Abū Inān.

². Khalid, S (2002) "From History to Sociology: Ibn Khaldun and the Emergence of Sociology" in the *Journal of Humanities*, Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2002, 112.

³. Esposito, J.L (1995) (ed), *The Oxford of Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, New York: Oxford University Press, Vol. 1, 140.

⁴. Simpson J.A & Weiner, E.S.C (1991), *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd Edition, New York: Oxford University Press, Vol. 17, 902.

⁵. Esposito, *The Oxford of Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* , 85.

⁶. Gall, T.L (1998), *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, Ohio: Eastword Publications Development, Inc., 169.

But this could not last long as he was thrown into prison for political suspicion in 1357.⁷ He was released in 1358 and continued his state service under the successor of Sulṭān Abū Inān called Ḥasan Ibn ‘Umar. When the political tide in Fez became unfavorable to him, he moved to Granada in Spain and Bougie. Due to Ibn Khaldūn’s up and down in his political career, he decided to quit politics for monastic life and scholarly work in 1372 C.E.⁸ It was during this time that he wrote his *magnus opus* “*Kitāb Al-Ibār*” a book on world history. He went back to his home town in Tunis to engage in studying teaching and researching in jurisprudence of Maliki School of law. As a known state man, the government of Tunis did not let him a peace of mind as they forced him to accept the post of minister (*wazīr*) in Tunis. He reluctantly took the post but he later left the Tunis on pretension of going on pilgrimage (*Ḥajj*) in Makkah. He ran away to Cairo where he became a professor and grand-Qādī of Maliki School of law. He died in Cairo on 17th March, 1406.⁹

Theory of *Aṣabiyyah* of Ibn Khaldūn

Ibn Khaldūn was a Muslim socio-political philosopher who observed that the theory of *Aṣabiyyah* usually serves as a determinant factor in the formation and suitability of political power and authority in any given locality.¹⁰ According to Ibn Khaldūn, theory of *Aṣabiyyah* denotes there are some factors and incitements responsible for the strong desire for mutual co-operation which are existing on a larger scale among human beings in a geographical environment.¹¹ This so-called mutual co-operation exists among some human beings than among others. The group to which an individual feels most closely attached is his clan or tribe, the people with whom he shares a common descent.¹² *Aṣabiyyah* is a strong motive and effective mechanism for victory and conquest which can be easily attained by those people who can effectively manipulate the spirit of *Aṣabiyyah* among the people in order to gain their loyalty. Ibn Khaldūn submitted that *Aṣabiyyah* is a fundamental pivot which is much more workable than *Sharī‘ah* in the establishment of a state as many nations had existed and flourished in the world history before the application of *Sharī‘ah* in such environment.¹³ To some scholars, this assertion of Ibn Khaldūn was criticized to be erroneous and misleading. Their argument was that *Sharī‘ah* had been laid down as a divine guidance for human being since the time of the first created man in the world in person of Prophet Ādam. From that time on, all the prophets sent to various nations had been using this *Sharī‘ah* to divinely instruct and guide their people to condone themselves in godly way.

This assertion of Ibn Khaldūn may not be totally wrong because some of the Prophet Muḥammad’s closest companions in Madinah were the Muhājirūn who migrated with him from Makkah to Madinah during the *Hijrah* in 622 C.E, majority of whom were Qurayshī tribe of Makkah like Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W) himself. In the same way, it was also designed after the death of Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W) that one of the factors for the eligibility to the caliphate post was that such a person should come from the Qurayshī tribe of Makkah. This was done out of fear that the Qurayshiyūn may not want to be under any leader if such a leader is not coming from their tribe as rightly pointed out by Abū Bakr himself in the meeting of some notable companions from Muhājirūn and Anṣār in the Saqifah Banī Sa’idah to elect a Caliph after the death of Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W).¹⁴ This was what brought Abū Bakr to be the first Caliph after the death of the Prophet. By this, it is not out of tune to point out at this juncture that this factor was strictly put into consideration in the appointment of the first four rightly-guided caliphs of Islam in persons of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān and ‘Ali Ibn Abī Ṭālib.¹⁵ In short, theory of *Aṣabiyyah* simply signifies a group solidarity feeling and consciousness. Ibn

⁷. Rosenthal, F (1978), *Ibn Khaldūn: An Introduction to History, The Muqaddimah*,vii.

⁸. Rosenthal, F (1978), *Ibn Khaldūn: An Introduction to History, The Muqaddimah*.....,viii.

⁹. Abdul, M.O.A (1988), *The Classical Caliphate*, Nigeria: Islamic Publication Bureau, 152.

¹⁰. Abdul-Latif, S (2001), *Early Muslim Political*65.

¹¹. Khalid, S (2002) “From History to Sociology: Ibn Khaldun and the Emergence of Sociology” 112.

¹². Sharuqi, A (2001) An Appraisal of Ibn Khaldun’s Contentions in His Muqaddimah concerning some issues in Islamic History, a paper presented at Postgraduate Seminar of Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1.

¹³. Lenn, E.G (1972) “Ibn Khaldun and Thucydidas” in *Journal of Amercian Oriental Society*, Vol. 92, No. 2, April-June Issue, 260-261.

¹⁴. Khan, M.A (nd), *The Pious Caliph*, New Delhi: Taj Company Ltd, 25.

¹⁵. Rahim, A (nd), *Islamic History*, Nigeria: Islamic Publication Bureau, 52-111.

Khaldūn further expatiated that the ‘*Aşabiyyah* could be shared politically by people not related by blood ties, but by long and close contact as member of a group. He concluded that the leader who enjoys the support of a sufficiently effective *Aşabiyyah* may be successful in establishing a dynasty or kingdom and thereby gaining royal authority for himself and his family.¹⁶

Ìlṛin Before the Advent of Fūlānī

Ìlṛin as a Yorùbá environ claim a descent from Láderin who was connected on his mother’s side with Aláàfin Òrànmíyàn, one of the sons of Odùduwà who was a progenitor and ancestor of Yorùbá race, Láderin was said to have left old Òyó Empire popularly known as Òyó-Ilé and settled in Òyó North in the geographical boundary called Ìlṛin. This Òyó-Ilé was also called Kátùnga in the suburb area of modern day Ìgbòho and it situated about half-way between Kishí town and Jebba, very close to Nupe town in the contemporary time.¹⁷The name “Ìlṛin” was coined out of “*Ìlo-irin*” which means a place in which there is a large stone which is used to sharpen ironed tools. Another thing that serves as a derivation of the name is “*Ìlú Erin*” which means a town of elephant. According to one Yorùbá historical version, it was said that there were so many elephants which were inhabited the area. By this historical version, it was reported that Ìlṛin was founded by an elephant hunter called Òjó Ìsekúse who was report to have eventually driven out of the town by a group of new settler.¹⁸

As soon as Láderin settled in Ìlṛin, he became a successful person as he was given moral and social acceptance by the Ìgbómìnà settler of Ìlṛin who were related to Aláàfin royal lineage of Òyó-Ilé. Láderin established a quarter or semi-palace at Ìdí-Àpé area of Ìlṛin from where he exercised his authority on the people.¹⁹Àfònjá, a great grandson of Láderin was a brave warrior that his name became a terror in the whole Ìlṛin. His fame and bravery extended to Òyó-Ilé. In recognition of Àfònjá’s fame and bravery, the then Aláàfin of Òyó-Ilé, Aólè by name, gave him the highest warlord chieftaincy title of Ààre-Ònà Kakanfò of Yorùbá land. Ààre-Ònà Kakanfò is a warlord title of commander-in-chief and generalissimo of Yorùbá army.²⁰According to the Yorùbá tradition, Ààre-Ònà Kakanfò should not reside in the capital of the empire with Aláàfin in order to prevent him from interfering in the central authority of Aláàfin. He had to reside in a strategic frontier province in order to prevent foreign attack on Òyó-Ilé, the capital of Yorùbá kingdom.²¹Thus, Àfònjá chose Ìlṛin as his war base to prevent and protect the kingdom from foreign attack. By virtue of this post, Àfònjá was expected to lead a war against any town at the order of the reigning Aláàfin within maximum period of forty days. In this kind of war, the Ààre-Ònà Kakanfò should either win the war or commit suicide. Under Aláàfin Aólè, Àfònjá conquered some opposition towns and brought them under the hegemony of Òyó-Ilé. These Àfònjá’s victories fetched him more honour, fame and power as a successful and charismatic warrior. As a result of this development, Aláàfin Aólè started nursing unnecessary fear out of envy on the rapid fame and power of Àfònjá as successful Ààre-Ònà Kakanfò.

By this, he planned for his downfall and death by ordering him to lead the war against the Apòmù and Ìwéré-Ilé which were traditionally war-taboo towns according to Yorùbá chronicle.²²This was traditionally erroneous on the part of Aláàfin Aólè because Apòmù was a town under the hegemony of Ilé-Ifè the cradle of Yorùbá race from where any installed Aláàfin must receive the staff of office from the reigning Oòni of Ilé-Ifè, and take an oath that he would never lead war against Ilé-Ifè and its vassal towns. The same tradition also applies to Ìwéré-Ilé which happened to be the maternal home town of Aláàfin Àjàgbó.²³Àfònjá convinced the army of old Òyó Empire about the erroneous order and suspicion of Aláàfin Aólè to wage a war against the two brotherly Yorùbá towns of Apòmù and Ìwéré-Ilé.

¹⁶.Khalid, S (2002), “From History to Sociology: Ibn Khaldun and the Emergence of Sociology” in the *Journal of Humanities*, Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano, Vol. 2, No. 1, 112.

¹⁷.Johnson, S (1956), *History of the Yorùbás*, Great Britain: Lowe and Brydone Printer Limited, 189.

¹⁸. Olatunbosun, P.O. (1981), *History of West Africa*, Ilesha: Fatiregun Press and Publishing Company, 102.

¹⁹. Hoghen S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*, Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 284.

²⁰.Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1943); *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*....., 286.

²¹. Johnson, S (1956), *History of the Yorùbás*,192.

²².Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*,286.

²³.Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*,287.

As a result of this development, Àfònjá, Yorùbá army with the collaboration of Òyómèsì (Òyó kingmakers) lost trust and confidence in the authority of Aláàfin Aólè and passed the vote of no confidence on him by sending him an empty covered calabash. In Yorùbá tradition, this symbolise that Aláàfin Aólè should commit suicide. Aláàfin Aólè reacted bitterly to this sad development by raining curse of disunity among Yorùbá descendants and thereby committed suicide.²⁴

Ìlọrin and the Advent of Fūlānī

Aláàfin Aólè was succeeded by Aláàfin Maku. In line with Yorùbá tradition, as soon as new Aláàfin mounted the throne, all the appointed chiefs heading the provinces under Òyó kingdom are obliged to pay homage and pledge oath of allegiance with him. Àfònjá faulted this tradition as he refused to pay homage and pledge oath of allegiance with the newly appointed king, Aláàfin Maku. He went ahead to declare independence for Ìlọrin from old Òyó Empire. In order to defend Ìlọrin against the Òyó forces to annex it back to old Òyó Empire, Àfònjá requested for the assistance of Fūlānī head who was a Muslim cleric, Mallam Şāliḥ Janta popularly called Alimi (meaning “Muslim cleric”) who had previously embarked on Islamic propagation mission (*Da^cwah*) in form of teaching and preaching in the Òyó Empire before he came down to Ìlọrin suburb, an area which was later named as Garin-Alimi (meaning “Muslim Cleric town”) and settled there in 1817 C.E.²⁵ In response to the Àfònjá’s request, Alimi invited bands of Hausa and Fūlānī from the North and some of his ex-students to Ìlọrin to render their military support to Àfònjá against Òyó forces. As soon as they came to Ìlọrin, they formed a religious community named “*Jamā^cah*”. This *Jamā^cah* under the command of Alimi actually render their full military support to Àfònjá forces against Òyó forces and they finally won the war. After the success of Àfònjá-Òyò war, Fūlānī group under the umbrella of *Jamā^cah* embarked on Islamic propagation mission (*Da^cwah*) in Ìlọrin which was not going down well with Àfònjá who was a paganist. All the effort of Àfònjá to put an end to Fūlānī’s Islamic mission in Ìlọrin proved abortive as he could not control them as a result of their different religious and ethnic dispositions.²⁶ Àfònjá resolved to take bull by horns to deal ruthlessly with Fūlānī by evacuating them Ìlọrin and its environs. In order to do this, he invited some Yorùbá powerful warriors to assist him in getting rid of Fūlānī from Ìlọrin. They did not answer him out of reaction to his disobedience and disregard to the old Òyó tradition *ab initio*. Out of this struggle with Fūlānī *Jamā^cah*, Àfònjá lost his life in 1825 C.E.²⁷

After the death of Àfònjá, one report says that the eldest son of Alimi, Abdul-Salami after the death of his father, Alimi who also died later, declared himself Emir of Ìlọrin while other report maintains that Abdul-Salami, after the death of his father, Alimi, adopted a reconciliatory measure with indigenes of Ìlọrin people (Yorùbás) in prevention of civil and internal strife in Ìlọri out of reaction to the death of Àfònjá and this was going on for another six years. In 1831 C.E, Ìlọrin was declared a Fūlānī Emirate under the hegemony of Sokoto Caliphate and Abdul-Salami, the eldest son of Alimi, became as the first Emir.²⁸ In order to sustain the successful existence of this newly-established Emirate, Abdul-Salami took initiative step by launching attack on Òyó Empire in 1835 and sacked the Òyó kingdom and this led to the latter’s relocation from modern day Ìgbòhò to Àgò-Ojà popularly called Àgòdòyò where Aláàfin Àtìbà became their new king in 1835.²⁹

Ibn Khaldūn’s Theory of ‘Aşabiyyah in Relation to Fūlānī Emirate in Ìlọrin

Ìlọrin was a Yorùbá town before the advent of Fūlānī and Hausa in the kingdom. The town was built by Àfònjá’s great grandfather, Láderin whose posterity ruled Ìlọrin in succession to the fourth generation. Láderin was the first ruler of Ìlọrin, he was succeeded by his son, Pasin as a second ruler. After the assassination of Pasin by the notorious BasòrunGàà, one of the previous Ààre-Ònà Kakanfò of old Òyó Empire, Pasin was succeeded by his son Alágbìn as a third ruler, and in turn handed the government over to his son.

²⁴. Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*, 287.

²⁵. Olatunbosun, P.O (1981), *History of West Africa*, 103.

²⁶. Olatunbosun, P.O (1981), *History of West Africa*, 103.

²⁷. Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria* , 306.

²⁸. Johnson, S (1956), *History of the Yorùbás*, 199-200.

²⁹. Johnson, S (1956), *History of the Yorùbás*, 200.

Àfònjá as the fourth ruler of Ìlòrin, on whom the royal line ended.³⁰ Ìlòrin is often referring to as Ìlòrin-Àfònjá (Ìlòrin, the Àfònjá's town) because Àfònjá was the most powerful and capable ruler of Ìlòrin who rapidly developed the town. They used to have “*Ibaàmú*” tribal facial mark which is regard as Òyó royal family identification tribal facial mark. This was so because some of Láderin's descendants were brought up among the children of royal family in old Òyó Empire.³¹

Since the beginning of nineteenth century of Christian era, 1831 to be precise, Ìlòrin, a Yorùbá town, had been traditionally ruled by Fūlānī settlers who came and settled at remote part of Ìlòrin outskirts popularly referred to as *Garin Alimi* (Alimi town) for the Islamic propagation mission (*Daw'ah*). The Fūlānī occupancy was not without the knowledge of Àfònjá who invited them to Ìlòrin main town as a response to his request for assistance and support which he received from Alimi against the Aláàfin attack from old Òyó Empire as earlier stated.

Now, at this juncture, the germane question here is this; How did Fūlānī successfully establish their emirate traditional ruling in a Yorùbá town of Ìlòrin despite their differences in culture, custom, religion and language ? it is not out of tune to say that both Yorùbá and Fūlānī descents are culturally, customarily, religiously and linguistically differed. Each of them has its own culture, custom, traditional faith and language which they cherished. For instance, Yorùbá' mother tongue is Yorùbá language while the Fūlānī's mother tongue is Fulfude. Despite all of these sharp differences, Fūlānī emirate traditional council emerged in a Yorùbá environment. This is where the effectiveness and viability of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *Aşabiyyah* which he theorized in fourteenth century of Christian era comes in as a realistic and praticable theory. The success of establishment of Fūlānī emirate in Ìlòrin could be attributed to *Aşabiyyah* group solidarity which could be divided into to two types namely tribal group solidarity and religious group solidarity as theorized by Ibn Khaldūn

Tribal Group Solidarity Form of 'Aşabiyyah

Tribal group solidarity could be defined as a bond of unity existed among the people of the same language, culture, custom, tradition and race, and which serves as a strong unifying factor bonding them together for the pursuance of a common goal in their geographical boundary. On tribal group solidarity, Ibn Khaldūn theorizes in his theory of *'Aşabiyyah* that tribal group solidarity *ab initio* begins from blood relationship and later extends to race, culture, custom, language and shared common interest of some people or other feelings corresponding to any of these.²⁴ Respect for one's blood ties, pride of one's racial, cultural and language affiliations are naturally in-built in man with rare exceptions. It leads to strong spirit of affection and sympathy for one's blood relatives and racial group, a kind of spirit that no harm or destruction should befall them. Man as a social animal feels ashamed when his tribal group sharing the same interest is unjustly embarrassed. In his supposed reaction, the naturally-endowed instinct in him would make him wishing to take away such embarrassment from them. If the direct relationship between persons who help each other is very close through some strong factors such as race, culture, custom, language and shared common interest that it leads to close social contact and unity, these bonding factors ties are obvious and they require the existence of a feeling of solidarity without any external interference.³²

It was this tribal group solidarity that Àfònjá lost with his fellow Yorùbás under the hegemony of old Òyó Empire while he cut-off Ìlòrin from other Yorùbá towns out of his own personal interest. In reaction to this development, the Yorùbás also responded negatively by deserting him when he also seriously needed their solidarity support and mutual co-operation to rescue Ìlòrin from Fūlānī Islamic propagation mission which finally led to the establishment of emirate. What we are saying in essence was that due to the absence of tribal group solidarity from the other Yorùbá kinsfolks, Àfònjá lost his life and the dynasty established by his great grandfathers was also lost to the Fūlānī. Having seen the weakness of the tribal group solidarity among Yorùbás in Ìlòrin and outside, Fūlānī strengthened their own tribal group solidarity so as to out-sit Àfònjá and his few Yorùbá allies in the town and finally subjugated the whole Ìlòrin under the hegemony of Sokoto Caliphate which its capital seat was a bit far away. Other Yorùbá kingdom under old Òyó Empire later realized their mistake as they embarked on several attempts to recover back Ìlòrin from Fūlānī for several years.

³⁰.Johnson, S (1956), *History of the Yorùbás*

³¹.Rosenthal, F (1978) *Ibn Khaldūn: an Introduction to History*, viii.

³².Johnson, S (1956), *History of the Yorùbás*, 200-202

All of their attempts were to no avail as it was already late because Fūlanī tribal group solidarity had become stronger in Ìlōrin as a result of their strong tribal group solidarity.³³ It should be rightly mentioned here that Alimi himself had no personal ambition for the position of leadership in Ìlōrin. There was a time that Àfònjá wanted to make a chief in the town out of appreciation of his assistance and support for him in the war between the former and Aláàfin attack. Alimi refused to honour the chieftaincy post Àfònjá because his primary concern was religious propagation (*Daw'ah*). Even after the Fūlanī imbroglio with Àfònjá which led to his death, Alimi did not come out to proclaim the position of leadership.³⁴ Fūlanī solidarity group in Ìlōrin regarded Alimi as their main leader not only because he was their religious mentor but because he was the one that brought them down to Ìlōrin from their different home towns in the modern day Northern Nigeria. As soon as he died in 1831, out of appreciation and recognition shown to the Alimi's family, this Fūlanī solidarity group we were discussing became effective here as they appointed Abdul-Salami, the first child of Alimi as the '*Amiru'l-Mu'minin*' (Commander of faithfuls) of Ìlōrin which was later corruptly shortened and pronounced as Emir. With this development, Abdul-Salami became the first Emir of Ìlōrin and this was confirmed by the then Sultan of Sokoto caliphate.³⁵

This development is also in line with the saying of Ibn Khaldūn in his theory of '*Aṣabiyyah*' which goes: *Only there who share in group feeling can have a "House" and nobility in the basic sense and in reality.....*³⁶ Abdul-Salami was counted noble and famous man among his equals and fellows among the Fūlanīs in Ìlōrin because of his direct lineage to Alimi, who was seen as their mentor scholar and highly respected among them in Ìlōrin. A "**House**" as used by Ibn Khaldūn in his saying means a kingdom with independent royal authority, power and sovereignty. This quality gives Abdul-Salami a great standing among other Fūlanīs in Ìlōrin. Since then, the progeny of Alimi have become the only authorized heir to the emirate throne in Ìlōrin up till the present.

Religious Group Solidarity Form of '*Aṣabiyyah*'

Religious group solidarity could be defined as a bond of unity existed among the people of the same religious faith, belief and creed. Alimi was a renowned learned Muslim cleric in Ìlōrin and her suburb, hence, he was popularly referred to as Alimi which is a corrupted term for Islamic titled "*Ālim*" which "the Learned". His real name was Ṣāliḥ Janta as already mentioned, his main purpose of coming to Yorùbáland *ab initio* was purely religious, that is to spread the message of Islam in Yorùbá land through Islamic propagation mission. He started his missionary activities at Òyó-Ilé *ab initio* until he later left the place for Ìlōrin when he realized that the place was not favourable for his mission as a result of excess power of Aláàfin who was pagan and promoter of paganism in the empire.

Even, the main reason of Alimi's agreement to assist and support Àfònjá against Aláàfin's force was also religious, as he thought that the soul of Àfònjá who was then pagan might be won for Islam as a token of appreciation for former's support. The invited Hausa-Fūlanī groups from the North were all Muslims who also viewed their invitation to Ìlōrin by Alimi as a religious motivated migration popularly known in Islamic history as a call for *hijrah* which is a clarion call for *Jihād*.³⁷ This was the reason why these Hausa-Fūlanī religious group who came to Ìlōrin from their different towns for the common mission and thereby form a single strong solidarity group under the name of "*Jamā'ah*". *Jamā'ah* is an Arabic word for "a community of people" based on the Islamic tradition that claim that all Muslims are brethren. The *Jamā'ah ab initio* assisted Àfònjá in supporting him against Aláàfin forces, but when it was discovered that Àfònjá refused to accept Islam and continued persisting in his paganism, they decided to put an end to their assistance and support. As a result of this religious difference, the *Jamā'ah* openly defied request of Àfònjá for another military assistance and support on the ground of not sharing the same religious belief. *Jamā'ah* put up an argument that they were not religiously obliged to render military assistance and support to Àfònjá, a pagan, in fighting his enemies who were also pagans like him. This disagreement between them led to a war through which Àfònjá lost his life.³⁸

³³. Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene, A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*, 287

³⁴. Rosenthal, F(1978), *Ibn Khaldūn: an Introduction to History*, 102

³⁵. Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*, 317.

³⁶. Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*

³⁷. Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*

³⁸. Rosenthal, F (1978), *Ibn Khaldūn: an Introduction to History*,126.

This episode is also in line with the *locus standi* of Ibn Khaldūn on the effectiveness of religious solidarity group; *Religious propaganda gives a dynasty at its beginning another power in addition to that of the group feeling it possessed as the result of the number of its supporters.*³⁹

The Fūlanī group viewed their action as a struggle to save Islam in Ìlṛin which is known as *Jihād* in Islam. To them Islam would be phased out of Ìlṛin if they were allowed to be expelled from Ìlṛin as Àfònjá ordered. With the religious spirit, the Fūlanī solidarity group under the umbrella of *Jamā'ah* fought Àfònjá and his forces tirelessly to retain their freedom of domicile and religion in Ìlṛin which later culminated into the establishment of Fūlanī emirate in Ìlṛin in 1831 C.E under the hegemony the Sokoto caliphate of Nigeria.

The following is the list of Emirs of Ìlṛin;⁴⁰

1. Abdul-Salami, the son of Alimi:1831-1842
2. Shitta, the second son Alimi:1842-1860
3. Zubayr, the son of Abdul-Salami:1860-1868
4. Shitta Aliyu, son of Shitta:1868-1891
5. Moma, the son of Zubayr:1891-1895
6. Sulayman, the son of Shitta Aliyu:1896-1915
7. Shuayb, the son of Zubayr:1915-1919
8. Abdul-Qadri, the son of Shuayb:1919-1959
9. Sulu Gambari, the son of Muhammad Laofe:1959-1992
10. Abdul-Qadri (Baba Agba):1992-1993
11. Ibrahim Gambari, son of Sulu Gambari: 1993 till date.

Fūlanī Emirate in Ìlṛin in the Contemporary Period

Despite the tribal, cultural, racial and language differences between Fūlanī and Yorùbá indigenes of Ìlṛin, the Fūlanī were able to sustain that emirate up till today. Cultural assimilation among Yorùbá and Fūlanī indeed takes place in Ìlṛin emirate as the local lingua franca in the emirate is Yorùbá language which is the language of the environment, not Hausa nor Fulfulde language which are the first language of Fūlanī tribes in the today Northern Nigeria. It is not a costly joke that majority of Fūlanī in Ìlṛin emirate today could not speak, write and understand neither Hausa nor Fulfulde languages which are their mother tongue due to the influence of linguistical assimilation of Yorùbá language. There are inter-marriage between Yorùbá and Fūlanī indigenes of Ìlṛin in the contemporary period and that is the reason why there are so many Fūlanī descendants in Ìlṛin bearing Yorùbá names and cognomen (*Oríki*). As a result of this development, the indigenes of Ìlṛin are not referring to themselves as either Yorùbá or Fūlanī again, but as Yorùbá-Fūlanī. The nearest example is their present Emir of Ìlṛin, who was formerly bearing Kṛlapṛ Gambari until he decided to drop the name for his Islamic name “Ibrāhīm” when he became the eleventh Emir of Ìlṛin Emirate in 1993. Some Yorùbá indigenes of Ìlṛin politicized this and bitterly reacted to this development until the matter was amicably resolved when Yorùbá community of Ìlṛin were convinced that the Emir’s step was not taken out of his hatred for Yorùbás but for the love he had for Islam as a leader of Islamic emirate of Ìlṛin.

Apart from this, there was also a recent move to revive back Àfònjá royal line in 2003 by one-timed governor of Kwara state (1999-2003), Muḥammad Alabi Lawal, who happened to be one of the great grand-children of Àfònjá. This move did not come to the light of the day because the people of Ìlṛin saw themselves as one single Muslim community. By this, they cannot give room to any form of sentiment to divide them. It could be rightly pointed out at this juncture that majority of Yorùbá indigenes of Ìlṛin were not even in support of this unpopular move of this governor on the argument that such move could not bring any benefit to neither Yorùbá nor Fūlanī communities of Ìlṛin. This move would only bring back to Ìlṛin the pagan and cultic practices that were flourished during the life time of Àfònjá in the nineteenth century. This was the reason why the Odua People Congress supported this idea of reviving Àfònjá-Yorùbá royal family in Ìlṛin at Àfònjá Quarters of Idi-Ape area of Oja-Oba in Ìlṛin.

³⁹. Rosenthal, F (1978), *Ibn Khaldūn: an Introduction to History*

⁴⁰. Hoghen, S.J and Kirk-Greene A.H.M (1993), *The Emirate of Northern Nigeria*, 217.

Both Yorùbá and Fūlānī fought this move together as a single community strongly bonded with the spirit of religious form of 'Asabiyyah solidarity. This development shows that tribal solidarity sentiment is less functioning in the sustenance of modern day Ìlōrin emirate. The Ìlōrin emirate is still sustaining her existence up till today by religious solidarity group solidarity heavily Islamic spirit which is the core faith of the indigenes of Ìlōrin.

Conclusion

The study examined the sociological theory of 'Aṣabiyyah of a renowned Islamic scholar, Ibn Khaldūn as explored in his Arabic text titled "Al-Muqaddimah" which is an introduction to a text on world Islamic history titled "Kitāb Al-Ībār Wa Diwān 'Al-Mabtada' Wa Al-Khabar Fī Ayām Al-Arabī Wa Al-Ajamī Wa Al-Barbar Wa 'Asarahum Min Dhāwī As-Sulṭān Wa Al-Akbar" (The Book of Wisdom and Anthology Concerning the Beginning and Discuss in the Time of Arab and the Non-Arab and the Berber and their Contemporaries who had Great Sultanate and Kingdom). In view of what has been examined in the study, it should be pointed out at this juncture that the theory of 'Aṣabiyyah theorized by Ibn Khaldūn in the fourteenth century of Christian era is still workable and functionable in this modern day socio-political set-up. The study revealed the effectiveness of this Ibn Khaldūn theory of 'Aṣabiyyah in the modern period by showing-case the establishment and sustainability of Fūlānī Emirate in Ìlōrin. The study also discovered that religious solidarity and sentiment is stronger than that of solidarity and sentiment based on tribe, culture, race and language.

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