

The globalizing impact of the modern *hajj* can hardly be reduced to a simple story of increasing cultural, religious, and economic homogenization, in which the sacred center of Mecca slowly subsumes the Islamic periphery. In northern Nigeria, pilgrims themselves have shaped and translated their experiences of the *hajj* to unpredictable ends.

Pilgrimage, Power, and Identity: The Role of the *Hajj* in the Lives of Nigerian Hausa *Bori* Adepts

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This article explores the paradoxical popularity of “non-Islamic” healing practices and spirit mediumship in the Muslim heartland of Saudi Arabia by examining the role of the hajj in the lives of contemporary bori practitioners in northern Nigeria. While bori adepts participate in the public acquisition of consumer goods and symbolic capital that makes the hajj such a marker of prestige throughout the Muslim world, their unconventional activities also point to a largely covert form of circulation in which specialized goods, services, and knowledge are carried from Nigeria for consumption by an eager Saudi clientele. Their stories belie dominant interpretations of the hajj as a globalizing force which serves to unify Islamic beliefs and practice and ensure progressive conformity to a “modern” center by a less developed and less Islamically orthodox periphery. In the case of northern Nigeria, access to the hajj for a broader segment of the population has created, on the contrary, the opportunity for some pilgrims to reinforce and strengthen very local Hausa conceptions of Islam in both material and symbolic ways. In so doing, “yan bori transform their own identities and status in subtle but empowering ways, and sustain the dynamic subcultural networks of bori back in Nigeria.” The paper thus demonstrates how the modern hajj has multiplied the available symbolic resources with which Muslims throughout the globe fashion Islamic identities and mold communities of faith.

For several centuries, the Islamic institution of the *hajj* and pilgrimage routes to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina have provided conduits for religious, economic, and intellectual exchange between Hausaland and the Muslim Arab worlds of North Africa and the Middle East. While Hausa historiography clearly documents the transformative impact of these pil-

grimage routes in carrying Islamic reform movements, brotherhoods, law, and medicine into Hausa society, very little scholarly attention has been directed to the simultaneous export of Hausa religious and healing practices along these very same routes. Prominent among these Hausa cultural exports has been the spirit pantheon of *bori* and the curative practice of its devotees, the 'yan *bori*. As A.J.N. Tremearne ([1914]1968) reported early this century, Hausa slave communities in Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers found a ready market for their spirit-based therapeutics among the Arab populations of these North African cities. Hausa pilgrims and slaves in the Sudan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia have similarly brought the *bori* pantheon and the healing practices of its mediums to receptive Muslim populations.

This article explores the paradoxical popularity of "non-Islamic" healing practices and spirit mediumship in the Muslim heartland of Saudi Arabia by examining the role of the *hajj* in the lives of contemporary *bori* practitioners in northern Nigeria. In the last several decades, government-subsidized air travel to Saudi Arabia has enabled a greater number of Nigerian Hausa to make the pilgrimage to Mecca and to capitalize on the commercial trading opportunities involved in travel to oil- and commodity-rich Saudi Arabia. In this same period, Saudi Arabia has become a potent source of cultural influence and the center of political and economic power to which many Hausa look for a model of development. Interviews with *bori* practitioners in northern Nigeria, conducted during thirteen months of ethnographic fieldwork based in Kano, Nigeria, suggest that both short-term travel and longer-term residence in Saudi Arabia have become important components of many *bori* healers' life courses and/or life goals in the last twenty years. The complexities of their experiences in Saudi Arabia suggest the tensions and ambiguities of a Hausa Islamic identity built on the Saudi model: while *bori* adepts often report unprecedented financial gain from wealthy Arab clients, they also suffer the contempt and mistreatment of Saudi officials who view them as an unwanted underclass in their country. Their stories thus suggest that the institution of the *hajj* and travel to the Hejaz involve cultural transmission and economic exchange beyond the export of Islamic scriptural fundamentalism and Saudi cultural hegemony to African populations.

Indeed, the experiences of Hausa *bori* adepts in Saudi Arabia highlight two distinct but dialectically related forms of circulation within the global flow of culture, capital, and power that connects African Muslims to a wider Muslim Arab world. While *bori* adepts participate in the public acquisition of consumer goods and symbolic capital that makes the *hajj* such a marker of prestige throughout the Muslim world, their unconventional activities also point to a largely covert form of circulation in which specialized goods, services, and knowledge are carried from Nigeria for consumption by an eager Saudi clientele. The complex relationship between these forms of circulation emerges quite dramatically in the individual lives of *bori* adepts. Their stories belie dominant interpretations of the *hajj* as a globalizing force which serves to unify Islamic beliefs and

practice and ensure progressive conformity to a "modern" center by a less developed, and less Islamically orthodox periphery.¹ In the case of northern Nigeria, access to the *hajj* for a broader segment of the population has created, on the contrary, the opportunity for some pilgrims to reinforce and strengthen very local Hausa conceptions of Islam in both material and symbolic ways. The article thus considers how Hausa *'yan bori* continue to indigenize Islamic imports through their participation on the modern *hajj*; it also suggests that, in doing so, they both shape and mediate the experience of modernity for their Saudi Arabian clients.

In theorizing about the distinctiveness and intensity of contemporary globalization, Arjun Appadurai has suggested that "The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those which might account for multiple centers and peripheries)" (1990:6). In illuminating a particular instance of the indigenization of global flows, this paper demonstrates the insufficiency of center-periphery models for understanding the complex processes of exchange involved in the modern *hajj*. In the last thirty years, Saudi Arabia and Muslim countries throughout the globe have invested heavily to develop the technological, economic, and transportation infrastructure of the *hajj* into a remarkably sophisticated apparatus, emblematic in many ways of the scale, movement, and integrative potential of contemporary globalization. In the minds of many West African pilgrims, the stunning modernization of Saudi Arabia is associated with greater devotion to Islam and the standardization of ritual practice on the Saudi model (Ferme 1994; Cooper 1999).² While some travellers, including Nigerian politician Ahmadu Bello, return from Mecca with dreams of building a more Islamic social order in their homeland, the impact of the *hajj* on individual aspirations and identities varies greatly and depends on a host of factors, including the status, motives, education, and gender of the pilgrim involved, and the local Islamic context from which he or she departs. Indeed, Muslim travel for religious purposes has historically produced ambiguous effects: while it may lead to a heightened identification with an international community of faith, and a reorientation toward a spiritual center abroad, it can as often produce an "ambivalence of identity," in which awareness of difference and identification with locality are reinforced (Eickelman and Piscatori 1990:xv; El Moudden 1994). As I will show below, rather than experiencing the pilgrimage as a formative event in the construction of more uniform Muslim identities, Hausa *'yan bori* descriptions of their travels to Saudi Arabia point toward the "disjunctures" that Appadurai identifies as constitutive of contemporary globalization. The differential impact of the *hajj* on Muslim travelers reflects the tremendous variation in local histories of Islamization and the relative plasticity of Islamic ritual and belief as it is indigenized by diverse populations. As Aziz Al-Azmeh contends, in arguing against presumptions of Muslim cultural homogeneity and continuity, "There are as many Islams as there are situations that sustain it" (1993:1).

In West African contexts, local models of Islamic authenticity developed syncretically over centuries are often more important than Arab, Middle Eastern referents in establishing Islamic authority and credibility (Launay 1990, 1992). As in much of Sudanic West Africa, Islamization in Hausaland occurred over the course of centuries and involved the complex articulation of local beliefs and practices with Islamic doctrine (Trimingham 1949, 1959; Sanneh 1997). Islamic medicine, as much as trade, was critical in the spread of Islam in this region (Lewis 1983). From an early date, Islamic healing techniques, based primarily on Prophetic medicine and the esoteric sciences (divination, astrology, and numerology), were popularized and blended with Hausa therapeutic practices, which employed herbal remedies, spirit communication, and ritual sacrifice to cure ailments and address social problems (Abdalla 1985, 1997; Stock 1985). In this process, relatively under-theorized Islamic conceptions of *jinn* were integrated with local Hausa belief in *bori* spirits (Hunwick 1997; Greenberg 1946). Although dominant Islamic discourses since the nineteenth century have condemned *bori* practice as contrary to Islam and periodically have targeted it for suppression (Abdalla 1997; Boyd 1989; O'Brien 1999), Islam and *bori* have developed historically as overlapping, mutually constituting sets of practices and beliefs, not as two separate, unrelated healing and religious paradigms. Moreover, the services which *bori* practitioners provide, in mediating emotional and physical distress through communication with the supernatural, are not easily distinguished from those provided by Hausa *mallamai* (Muslim scholars).³

For centuries, then, Islam has provided the primary ideological and cultural resources by which Muslim Hausa have shaped identities and instigated, mediated, and resisted social and political change in northern Nigeria (Last 1967; Paden 1973; Umar 1997). Not surprisingly, Islamic points of reference, rather than Western ones, have been critical in Hausa negotiations and imaginings of modernity.⁴ Indeed, from the mid-1970s, Islamic organizations and movements proliferated in response to the social dislocation which accompanied the rapid urbanization and industrialization of the Nigerian oil-boom years (Barkindo 1993). The "Islamic modernities" which have subsequently emerged range from the virulently anti-Western 'yan tatsine (Lubeck 1987; Watts 1992, 1996) to the influential Wahhabi reformist movement known as the 'yan Izala⁵ (Umar 1993). The transformation of Islamic identities has thus intensified in the last thirty years, sparking debates and even violent conflict about what it means to be a good Muslim in the Hausa context (Ibrahim 1989, 1991). In his discussion of Islamic politics in Mali, Louis Brenner defines identity

as a process of naming: naming of self, naming of others, naming by others. In its most restricted sense, such naming is associated with the attaching of labels such as Muslim/non-Muslim, Wahhabi/traditional, Qadiri/Tijani/Hamallist. Although these identities can be understood to represent specific social, religious and/or political categories at a given mo-

ment in history (or at least they are often analyzed as if this were the case), such conceptualizations are inevitably reifications of more complex and discursive processes. (1993:76)

In the northern Nigerian context, the processes of naming involved in the more recent politicization of Islam have served to push *bori*, as a named category, off the map of public discourse. In fact, several people I spoke with during the course of my research in Kano asserted that *bori* no longer exists because it is un-Islamic and was condemned by the nineteenth century Fulani *jihadists* who founded the Sokoto Caliphate. Izala attacks on the hitherto dominant Sufi orders have shifted definitions of "orthodoxy" closer to Wahhabi scripturalist ideals; accusations of *bida* (innovation) and *shirk* (associating others with God) that formerly marked *bori* practice as heretical and outside the Muslim mainstream are now commonly leveled at Sufi adherents. Nonetheless, self-identified Muslims continue to swell the ranks of *bori* membership in northern Nigeria, and the blurred boundaries between "orthodox" Islamic healing and *bori* therapeutics are further obscured as *mallamai* respond to escalating caseloads of possession illness (O'Brien 1997; Casey 1997). Much as in the Sudan and neighboring Niger, the *bori* possession idiom thus demonstrates its vitality as a counterpoint to heightened Islamic conservatism (Masquelier 1994; Kenyon 1995) and as a valued cultural resource for those enduring the strained social and economic circumstances of rapid modernization (Hodgson 1997; Ong 1987; Sharp 1993). This paper looks past the reifying discourses of contemporary Islamic identity politics to the gray areas that typically fall outside of scholarly view and public discourse. Examining the travel narratives of Muslim 'yan *bori* reveals the historical interdependence of Islam and *bori* in shaping Muslim Hausa identity.

Through their participation on the modern *hajj*, 'yan *bori* transform their own identities and status in subtle but empowering ways: marginalized members of the *al-umma* in their Hausa homeland, *bori* practitioners nonetheless parlay the symbolic, economic, and social capital acquired through their illicit trade in Saudi Arabia into positions as respected patrons and patronesses of *bori* networks back in Nigeria. As actors on a transnational Islamic stage, these unconventional pilgrims further confound dismissive characterizations of *bori* as a powerless, marginal subculture with little relevance in modern Nigeria. The asymmetrical interdependence which complicates their relationship to both mainstream Hausa society and the larger Arab world sustains the existence of a dynamic subculture. Interestingly, women *masu bori* more frequently capitalize on the accessibility of the *hajj* and of travel to Saudi Arabia to buttress their own status vis-à-vis both the larger Islamic mainstream and the smaller social world of *bori* members. Their stories caution against conceptions of Muslim Hausa women as a dependent, invisible, and undifferentiated population.⁶ In their accounts of the *hajj* and of sojourns in Saudi Arabia, they differentiate themselves from other Muslim Hausa women and express their own sense of power and mobility.

For generations scholars have noted the particular importance of spirit possession cults for women throughout the Muslim world (Lewis 1966, 1971; Constantinides 1972; Monfougas-Nicholas 1972). In the last ten years, scholarly discussions of the gendered dimension of possession activity in these Muslim contexts have gained greater theoretical subtlety (Boddy 1989; Kenyon 1991, 1995; Lewis, Al-Safi, and Hurreiz 1991). These studies have elaborated how possession performance, healing, and discourse provide a separate realm of opportunity for women to negotiate and re-work their over-determined gender identities and subordinate social status, and suggested that most female participants do not conceive of their participation in possession activities as compromising their Muslim faith and practice. In my own work, I build on this literature but take a slightly different approach to the question of gender, perhaps reflecting the specific ethnographic context of northern Nigeria (see O'Brien 2000). Unlike the *zar/bori* or *tumbura* in the Sudan, contemporary *bori* in northern Nigeria is not an exclusive, or even primarily a female domain: membership in *bori* organizations is nearly evenly divided between men and women, and both men and women hold positions of leadership within the cult. Nonetheless, the clientele is disproportionately female, and for successful women *bori* healers, married or unmarried, the leadership and ritual authority they wield through *bori* still sanctions an alternative discourse and lifestyle at odds with normative gender expectations, particularly with regard to female seclusion and public visibility. However, while many women frequent *bori* adepts seeking healing or advice, *bori* is not central to the lives of most Hausa women; and while some *bori* women benefit materially and socially from their success as *bori* mediums, it is misleading and analytically imprecise to describe *bori* as primarily a vehicle of female resistance to the domination of Islamic patriarchy. Belief in the *bori* spirit pantheon and healing discourse articulates more broadly with the Hausa social world than a narrow focus on female resistance allows. While *bori* adepts themselves are often disparaged as illiterate, uneducated, and morally transgressive, they nonetheless provide critical services to those in distress; this reality is attested to by the everyday practice, if not the everyday discourse, of the majority of Muslim Hausa. In this paper, however, my central concern is not with the gendered dimensions of 'yan *bori* participation on the *hajj* (which I nonetheless remark upon), but with elucidating the ambiguous nature of the *hajj* as a ritual which simultaneously encodes a normalizing project and enables the subversive activities of the marginalized faithful.

Traders, Slaves, and Pilgrims: Religion and the Hausa Diaspora

From their homeland in what is today southern Niger and northern Nigeria, the Hausa have historically distinguished themselves through the extent of their cultural and linguistic expansion in vibrant diaspora communities from Ghana to North Africa to the Sudan. While being Muslim has

clearly been an important resource for the Hausa in these diaspora settings, host populations have consistently attributed to them otherworldly powers that have marked them as different from the local Muslim populace. These waves of Hausa emigration are responses to both push and pull factors: whereas trading opportunities have provoked most Hausa expansion in West Africa, fulfillment of the *hijra* (emigration for religious reasons, such as persecution) and the pilgrimage to Mecca have impelled migration eastward. The close relationship between trade and pilgrimage in Hausa experience from as early as the seventeenth century accounts in part for the diaspora of formerly enslaved Hausa in North Africa, the Sudan, Egypt, and the Middle East: as Hausa pilgrims journeyed to Mecca, they sold slaves as they went to finance their travel. The remarkable strength and resilience of Hausa identity in these diaspora communities has long been recognized by Africanist scholars (Adamu 1978; Cohen 1969; Wilks 1966). One of the most striking similarities between these diverse communities is the central role religion has played in preserving their unity and distinctiveness and in shaping the nature of Hausa relations with host populations. In the Hausa trading communities, or *zongos* (strangers' communities), which sprang up along the kola trade routes to Ghana, a common Islamic identity served to extend commercial frontiers from the Hausa heartland, providing the basis for confidence among traders that allowed the extension of credit and other financial services (Lovejoy 1980). Further, Islamic *turuq* (Sufi orders) and *mallamai* provided the leadership and organization for *zongo* political and social life.

The increasing importance of the *haji* from the nineteenth century and of *hijra* as a response to British and French colonization at the turn of the twentieth century led to large-scale migrations of Hausa eastward toward the expected *mahdi* and the Hejaz. In places like Chad and the Sudan, permanent Hausa communities were established which continue to attract Hausa migrants to this day. Pioneering studies of these communities by John Works (1976) in Chad and C. Bawa Yamba (1995) in the Sudan suggest that the ideology of the pilgrimage itself, as a heightened sense of religious mission and ascetism, has shaped a Hausa communal identity in these places that has differentiated them from local populations and promoted a pronounced insularity of Hausa communities. Works explains how Hausa pilgrims in Chad developed a sense of superiority vis-à-vis their non-Islamic or less orthodox Islamic Chadian neighbors: "Identifying themselves with the aspects of purification and the emphasis upon the cultural unity of Islam found in the *haji*, they eschewed many of the aspects of local Islamic practice which they considered *bida* (heretical) or, at least, questionable" (1976:136). Nonetheless, the cohesion and distinctiveness of these Hausa enclaves did not prevent their influence on local populations; Hausa communities in Chad acted as important agents of Islamization, particularly in the twentieth century. Hausa pilgrims, merchants, and *mallamai* facilitated conversion to Islam through contact and example, as they earned local "admiration for their literacy, prosperity, and piety, most visible in their performance of the daily prayers and in the pilgrims cara-

vans themselves" (Works 1976:161). While Hausa *mallamai* became popular in their roles as educators, it was through their perceived abilities to explain or affect the supernatural that they gained particular notoriety. In their roles as fortune-tellers or "wonder-workers," they cast horoscopes, interpreted dreams, and provided amulets or "medicine" for protection and healing (Works 1976:154). In a similar way, Islamic religious specialists among Hausa pilgrims in the Sudan became popular in their use of Quranic knowledge for mystical purposes. Yamba devotes special attention to the popularity of these specialists, called *faqis* in the Sudan, with clients from the dominant Sudanese Arab culture. Hence while the Sudanese routinely denigrate or stigmatize Hausa pilgrims as an underclass, and derogatorily refer to them as *fellata*,⁷ at the same time they credit them with supernatural capabilities that they highly value.

The experiences of the many Hausa people who were forcibly taken from their homeland and sold as slaves in the distant lands of North Africa, the Sudan, and the Middle East undoubtedly differed dramatically from those who chose to migrate in pursuit of trading opportunities or the fulfillment of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Nonetheless, communities of slave and ex-slave Hausa similarly preserved a distinctive identity through the assertion of religious beliefs and practices that marked them as different from their host population. For enslaved Hausa, these religious beliefs focused on devotion to the spirit pantheon called *bori* and the possession rites which enabled communication between the spirits and their human hosts. Although these practices and the spirit pantheon itself were transformed in diverse ways in response to the changed circumstances and cultural milieu of the enslaved, *bori* organization and practice survived in a recognizable form in lands as distant as Turkey (Hunwick 1997:12–15). The organization of *bori* devotees around spirit "temples" or houses provided the basis for the internal organization and leadership of slave communities, and accorded women a particularly prominent role as priestesses. As John Hunwick suggests, African religions in the Mediterranean world have served many of the same purposes as they have for enslaved populations in the western hemisphere:

African religious practices in the Mediterranean diaspora provided mechanisms through which enslaved Africans coped with the psychological crisis brought about by enslavement, transportation, and transplantation into an alien cultural environment. . . . Above all, religious rites have given enslaved Africans an opportunity to assume control over an important aspect of their lives, and to organize themselves along communal and hierarchical lines. (Hunwick 1997:1)

Moreover, much like Hausa *mallamai* in Chad or *faqis* in the Sudan, the religious expertise and healing techniques of Hausa possession adepts were much sought after by local Arab and Berber populations, who attrib-

uted to black populations great powers to manipulate the spirit world and perform feats of magic.⁸ A.J. N. Tremearne testifies to this popularity in his 1914 description of *bori* practices in North Africa:

It is somewhat strange to find that whereas in Nigeria we have forbidden the practice of the *bori* rites in consideration of the Filani protests, here in North Africa (which is surely more Mohammedan) the negroes are encouraged to continue them, because their magic is acknowledged to be much more powerful than that of the pure and undefiled True-Believers. In fact, in Tunis, one of the cousins of the Bey has a private *bori* temple, and in Tripoli several members of the Karamanli encouraged the rites. ([1914]1968:23)

Indeed, a measure of the popularity that Hausa possession cults have enjoyed in North Africa is the extent to which they have attracted local adherents and the ways that possession rites have influenced local religious life, fusing in some cases with Berber spirit cults and inflecting the devotional life of Sufi orders (Tristram 1860; Andrews 1903; Dermenghem 1954; Ferchou 1991).

Available evidence for the persistence of possession activities among enslaved Africans and their descendants in the Middle East is much more fragmentary than that for North Africa. Descriptions of black African possession cults in nineteenth-century Saudi Arabia and twentieth-century Iraq do not identify particular Hausa *bori* features, although this silence can be attributed as much to the paucity of research in this area as the absence of Hausa healing in the Middle East. Dutch Orientalist C. Snouck Hurgronje, who was in Mecca in the 1880s, describes a weekly performance of song and dance by enslaved Africans that bears resemblance, in terms of instruments used and the actions of the dancers, to the Sudanese possession cult of *tumbura* ([1931]1970:11). He further details the prevalence of *zar* activities in most Saudi Arabian women's lives and alludes to the importance of slave girls in *zar* ceremonies (Hurgronje [1931] 1970:100–103). Drawing on fieldwork conducted in the 1980s, Zubaydah Ashkanani (1991) describes the importance of *zar* healing networks and the leadership of black African women of slave descent in them, in remedying the emotional distress and social isolation of many middle-class, middle-aged Kuwaiti women. Clearly much needed research remains to be done on the development of Hausa diaspora communities in Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Middle East. What is clear from the information we do have about the Hausa diaspora, however, is that the particular relationships that Hausa *bori* adepts maintain today with their Saudi clients invoke a very long history of contact and exchange between Hausaland and the Islamic Arab world. Indeed, it is the cultural and religious similarities between Hausaland and Saudi Arabia that enable the type of reciprocal influence and unpredictable outcomes of the *hajj* described by *bori* adepts.

The Politics of Pilgrimage in Northern Nigeria: Twentieth-Century Developments

Since the time of Mansa Musa's famous overland pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324, the *hajj* has served as a central means of economic and religious exchange between West Africa and the Muslim Arab worlds of North Africa and the Middle East. In the early centuries of Islamization in Hausaland, fulfillment of the *hajj* remained the privileged preserve of an elite class of aristocratic leaders and scholars. Nineteenth-century religious reform and *jihad*, however, dramatically increased Islamic literacy in the region, and pilgrimage gradually became a key symbol of the religious aspirations of commoner and aristocrat alike (Al-Naqar 1972). By 1903, the reality of violent conquest by the Christian forces of Britain, coupled with the popularity of millenarian beliefs in the coming of the Mahdi, provoked thousands of Hausa-Fulani to commit to *hijra*, a mass eastward migration toward the Hejaz. Yamba emphasizes the peculiar extent to which recollections of the *hijra* by some of its Hausa-Fulani participants, now settled in the Sudan, came to be understood in terms of the symbolism of the *hajj* and the movement toward its fulfillment (1995:52–64).

In stark contrast to their embrace of the rehabilitative potential of the *hajj* for criminals in colonial Malaysia,⁹ the British actively discouraged Hausa pilgrimage to Mecca as part of their larger efforts to limit the influence of Islamic radicalism on local leaders (Paden 1986:280). In particular, they were fearful that northern Nigerian contact with the Sudan would provoke further Mahdist-inspired resistance to colonialism. With a few notable exceptions, the Hausa-Fulani political leadership was thus denied the opportunity to perform the *hajj*,¹⁰ although a steady stream of Hausa migration eastward nonetheless continued throughout the colonial era, particularly after 1925 when the inauguration of the Gezira Scheme in the Sudan created new economic opportunities for migrants (Yamba 1995: 68–70). By the 1950s, the British had established confidence in their successful appropriation and containment of Islam in northern Nigeria and began to relax their opposition to Nigerian performance of the *hajj*. In fact, Paden suggests, the *hajj* came to be used by the British as “a major incentive or reward for ‘good behavior,’ with the northern Emirs” (Paden 1986: 280).

During the same period of impending decolonization, Ahmadu Bello, a northern politician and the Sardauna of Sokoto, began to take a keen interest in forging closer diplomatic, economic, and spiritual ties with the international Islamic community, in particular the Sudan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Bello's overtures to the international Islamic power centers were part of his larger project of “northernization”: expanding and unifying the Islamic community within Nigeria in an effort to secure northern hegemony in an independent Nigerian federation. From 1955, when Bello performed his first pilgrimage to Mecca, the *hajj* became the central vehicle by which he and his entourage of Nigerian advisors established close

personal and diplomatic ties with the Saudi authorities and royal family. From that point on, Bello was committed to increasing Nigerian participation on the *hajj* and to resolving the many diplomatic and organizational problems which accompanied it. Bello sought to systematize the pilgrimage and establish goodwill and cooperation between the three countries in negotiating the thorny questions of Nigerian pilgrims and expatriates in the Sudan and Saudi Arabia. Diplomatic tensions had emerged over the problems caused by large numbers of often destitute Nigerian pilgrims without proper documentation arriving in the Sudan after the 1957 Saudi decision to prevent West Africans from living and working in their country.¹¹ In 1956 Bello appointed the young scholar Abubakr Gumi as the first Nigerian Pilgrims' Officer in Jidda, and entrusted him with assessing the conditions of the pilgrimage for Nigerian participants (Lomeier 1997:154–55). Through their efforts, the management of the *hajj* was nationalized in 1958 and came under tighter government control. In his autobiography, Gumi describes an embarrassing demonstration of the ignorance of Nigerian pilgrims about the ritual precepts of their faith which he witnessed while he was accompanying the *Sardauna* of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello, on the *hajj* in 1962. The incident involved the rite of casting seven pieces of rock on the *Jamarats* (three pillars at Mina) against the devil, a symbolic act performed to remind the pilgrim of how Prophet Ishmael, son of Prophet Abraham, fought against the machinations of Satan at the same spot. Gumi explains:

One day, the *Sardauna* was resting in our lodge in Mina in the afternoon when I decided to go out for a short walk in the direction of the *Jamarats*, where the symbolic stones were cast. I was shocked to observe some Nigerian pilgrims who still had to cast their stones throwing huge pieces of rock, shoes or whatever they could find around in the name of stoning the devil. A few others had even mounted a small mould at the *Jamarats*, hitting it with sticks and shouting insults against Satan at the same time. I quickly came back and invited the *Sardauna* to follow me so that he could see for himself what his own people were doing. He was speechless when he saw them.

"What are we to do, Malam Abubakr?" he asked me.

"Nothing other than to educate them," I answered. "This behaviour is shameful, especially that it is in front of the international community. But they are ignorant, and the only way to stop others repeating it again is by teaching them the right thing." (Gumi 1992:102)

In an attempt to avoid such embarrassing incidents in the future, and to bring Muslim Nigerians into the fold of international Islamic orthodoxy, Shaykh Gumi lobbied to institute administrative procedures which

would guarantee that Nigerians who took part in the pilgrimage could demonstrate their *istitaa* (preparedness) and a certain basic knowledge of their religion.¹² In addition to his efforts to standardize the beliefs and practices of Nigerian pilgrims through education, Gumi also used his position to attack Sufi orders by limiting their access to the *hajj*. In the late 1960s, for example, Gumi capitalized on his close connections with the Saudi religious and political leadership to campaign successfully against and discredit the Ahmadiyya movement, then popular in western Nigeria and slowly spreading to the North. As a result of his efforts, in 1970 the Muslim League declared the Ahmadiyya heretical, and in 1973 Saudi Arabia banned all members of the Ahmadiyya from performing the *hajj* (Balogun 1977). Under the tutelage of Shaykh Gumi, then, the administration of the *hajj* became a highly politicized affair, and one explicitly linked to the broader political agenda of the Saudi-backed Izala movement. From its founding in 1978 to his death in 1992, Gumi served as the leader of the movement as it waged a militant struggle against the authority of the Sufi orders and sought to bring the beliefs and practices of Nigerian Muslims into conformity with the Wahhabi model of scriptural fundamentalism dominant in Saudi Arabia (Umar 1993).

Official measures by the Nigerian government have thus attempted to restrict the *hajj* to a particular type of Muslim and to control their activities once in Saudi Arabia. Both the Nigerian and Saudi governments have tried to discourage pilgrims from exploiting the *hajj* as a commercial opportunity. Yet the widespread availability of airplane travel from northern Nigeria to Saudi Arabia, fueled by government subsidies for pilgrims, has opened the door for Muslim Nigerians with diverse goals and relationships to their faith to travel to Saudi Arabia for the *hajj*. Often, after performing the *hajj*, Nigerian pilgrims remain in Saudi Arabia illegally, pursuing their own economic agendas until they are caught by Saudi authorities and unceremoniously deported back to Nigeria. As Tangban (1991) points out, instances of drug peddling and currency trafficking by Nigerians in the holy land were the source of tension between Saudi and Nigerian governments in the years between 1960 and 1980; and often these tensions spilled over to affect the reception of legitimate pilgrims and entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. The 1996 Saudi ban on Nigerian pilgrims in response to the meningitis and cholera epidemics, for example, was perceived by many Nigerians as an effort to forestall a further Nigerian presence in Saudi Arabia, rather than as an honest effort to prevent the spread of disease (Ejembi, Renne, and Adamu 1998).

As Rudolf Gaudio has pointed out, the new opportunities created by the accessibility of the *hajj* have even led to the emergence of a new category of individuals in Nigeria known as “*yan Kano-Jiddah*, literally ‘children of/ones who do Kano-Jiddah,’ so-called because most northern Nigerian travelers to Saudi Arabia fly out of Kano’s international airport and land in the Saudi port city of Jiddah” (1996:111–112). The term refers primarily to wealthy Hausa businessmen who travel between Nigeria and

Saudi Arabia on a regular basis, but *'yan Kano-Jiddah* also include a large number of *'yan daudu* (woman-like and homosexual men) and *karuwai* (female courtesans/prostitutes or independent women) in their ranks. Although their transgression of Hausa gender norms earns them a stigmatized position in Hausa society, through their travels to Saudi Arabia, many *'yan daudu* and *karuwai* attain significant wealth and a degree of cultural and religious sophistication that complicates their degraded status as gender deviants.¹³ For some of these travelers, prostitution, drug trafficking, and even thieving may provide a percentage of their earnings while in Saudi Arabia. The opportunity to engage in licit trade in gold, cloth, electronics, and other consumer goods also enables many *'yan Kano-Jiddah* to realize substantial, legitimate profits. On their return to Nigeria, however, the source of their earnings is often less important than their more visible affluence and worldly demeanor and affectations. As Gaudio suggests, "the contradictory positions that Kano-Jiddah *'yan daudu* assume in Hausa society confound the rigid ideologies of conservative religious and political leaders . . . [and] expose the inadequacy of Western observers' attempts to characterize Islamic identity and practice as monolithic" (1996:112).

Gaudio's discussion of the paradoxical participation of Hausa *'yan daudu* on the *hajj* is particularly relevant to a consideration of *bori* in the Saudi context, since *bori* has historically been associated with both prostitution (*karuwanci*) and *'yan daudu* in Hausaland (Palmer 1914; Smith [1954] 1981; Besmer 1983). While *'yan daudu* and *karuwai* are often visible participants or spectators at public performances of *bori* possession, there is a tendency in both scholarly writing and popular Hausa discourse to overstate this relationship and thus conflate several categories of perceived deviance or criminality. While this tendency is ethnographically imprecise and misleading,¹⁴ it nonetheless indicates the structural similarities which characterize the relationship of these three categories to mainstream Hausa society. *'yan bori*, *'yan daudu* and *karuwai* share a profoundly ambivalent relationship to a Hausa political and economic order predicated on the observance of particular Islamic norms of conduct, which include gender segregation and the seclusion (*kulle*) of married women. While members of all three groups are the objects of social scorn, ridicule, and sometimes violence for their transgressions of these norms, they are also rewarded for the valued services they provide to the larger society, even to those who revile and disparage them most (Gaudio 1996:117). Both *karuwai* and *'yan daudu* are thus often very successful as food-sellers and restaurateurs, and both provide sexual services to men at all levels of Hausa society, as well as Saudi clients. Many elite men prevail upon *karuwai*, especially those who have a secondary school education, to provide sophisticated companionship and a relaxed, joking social atmosphere which they could not enjoy at home with their wives because of the respect and shame (*kunya*) which characterizes the matrimonial relationship. Finally, many Muslim Hausa rely on *'yan bori* to communicate with and sacrifice to a

familiar world of spirits in their search for either greater control over their social and economic lives or relief from emotional and physical ills.

The assumption that *bori* is inevitably related to both '*yan daudu*' and *karuwai* requires some clarification. The late-night public performances of *bori* possession often do provide the opportunity for Hausa men to solicit the services of some *karuwai*, who regularly attend these entertainment venues much as they might frequent a drinking establishment or nightclub in Sabon Gari (the predominantly Christian quarter of Kano which is well-known for its vibrant nightlife). And while there are certainly many '*yan daudu*' who have achieved prominence as *bori* performers and healers, more often '*yan daudu*' are drawn to the public performances of *bori* because of the permissive atmosphere which prevails and the opportunity it affords them to dance to popular *garaya* (two-stringed lute) music. Relationships between members of these three social categories are the result of overlapping social worlds and bonds of friendship, but are nonetheless riven by differences of social background and economic status. Shared social marginality does not necessarily ensure solidarity: many more affluent or well-educated *karuwai* would never venture near the site of a *bori* performance, which they disparagingly associate with an uneducated underclass.

In a society where political and economic power is associated with a particular interpretation and observance of Islam, those most intimately connected with transgressions of "orthodox" ideals bear the burden of social opprobrium. Although these transgressors are socially marginalized in dominant discourses about appropriate gendered behavior and religious practice, their existence on the margins is nonetheless central to the perpetuation of the mainstream.¹⁵ The ambiguous status of '*yan daudu*', *karuwai*, and '*yan bori*' in Hausa society reveals not only the heterogeneity of Islamic identities in Hausaland, but also illuminates the process by which "orthodoxy" is established and maintained.

In the last forty years, the performance of the *hajj* has been transformed by modern transport from an arduous overland journey pursued by a handful of devoted pilgrims to a convenient excursion by air travel available to the masses of Muslim Nigerians. While the British administration of Nigeria recognized the incendiary political potential of the *hajj* and sought to control it, thus limiting Hausa-Fulani contact with the larger Islamic world, northern religious and political leaders since independence have similarly identified the *hajj* as an important tool for shaping Islamic identity in Nigeria. In particular, Wahhabi reformers like Abubakr Gumi worked to bring the administration of the *hajj* under greater governmental regulation and used their government posts to control access to the *hajj* and mold the pilgrimage experience of Nigerian travelers. In spite of these state-directed efforts at control, however, the democratizing impact of technology has produced opportunities for the most unorthodox of pilgrims to build careers and fashion their own Islamic identities.

Pilgrimage, Power, and Social Identity

Much like the paradox of *'yan daudu* and *karuwai* among the successful entrepreneurs on the Kano-Jiddah trading circuit, the fact that many *bori* adepts travel regularly to Saudi Arabia and practice *bori* healing there reveals that the *hajj* as an institution simultaneously operates as an instrument of Islamic standardization and provides ample opportunities for the subversion of dominant Islamic norms. As we have seen, the position of *bori* within contemporary Hausa society is precarious and pushes at the limits of mainstream Hausa religious and social tolerance. Yet it is inherently difficult to discuss *bori* practice because the term refers to a dynamic, historically contingent set of practices and beliefs. First, the term includes the belief in a supernatural world of active spirits and their troubling impact on human lives, a belief not inconsistent with orthodox Islamic recognition of and attention to the realm of *aljannu*. Second, *bori* includes a mostly private realm in which individual *bori* practitioners, in their capacity as spirit mediums, dispense herbal medicine, advice, and predictions about the future. Third, *bori* refers to a form of public entertainment including music, dance, and dramatic possession performance which can accompany weddings, naming ceremonies, and even the yearly Islamic celebrations of Id al-Fitr and Id al-Kabir at the Kano Emir's palace. Finally, *bori* refers to local organizations of *bori* adepts that have their own leadership structures, membership regulations, initiation ceremonies, and weekly performances to raise capital for individual members. Condemnations of *bori* practice in northern Nigeria tend to focus on the more public, socially transgressive performances and the lifestyle of *bori* adepts in their capacity as bawdy entertainers. The practice of Hausa *bori* in Saudi Arabia, however, is much more circumscribed. Given the secrecy in which they must work, adepts insist that the *garaya* music and praise-singing for the spirits that accompany public performances of *bori* and initiation ceremonies in northern Nigeria are unimaginable in the Saudi context. Rather, *bori* healers report that they work in secrecy and provide only private consultations with clients. Further, while the healers I spoke with insisted that while in Saudi Arabia they worked with spirits from the Hausa *bori* pantheon, they added that it was almost entirely spirits classified as Muslim who affected their patients there.

Many *bori* adepts punctuate their life histories with proud declarations such as this one by sixty-year-old Abdullahi: "Today it is forty years since I started doing this job, and in this forty years I bought a house and some houses for my children and I also went to Mecca on a pilgrimage" (1996). Similarly, Hajiya Aisha sums up the benefits of her career as a *bori* healer: "I am very happy now in my job because through this work I have gotten many things. I bought a house and I went to Mecca for pilgrimage" (1996). And finally, Alhaji Haruna suggests how success as a *bori* healer enabled him to make the pilgrimage to Mecca:

Well after my initiation I slowly started treating people, until it became my way of food, and I left the job at the factory . . . and I have benefited from this work a lot. I even went to Mecca on pilgrimage. The reason why I went to Mecca is that God showed me in my dream how to cure one man who was suffering from a long-term illness. I prepared the medicine and treated him, and he promised to pay me the money to go for the pilgrimage, and he fulfilled his promise. (1996)

The frequency with which *bori* adepts in Kano claimed to have financed their pilgrimage to Mecca through their earnings as healers certainly indicates the continuing popularity and remunerative importance of the profession. In fact, a favorite complaint of older *bori* adepts is that the swelling ranks of young *bori* practitioners are simply in it for the money and are not serious or knowledgeable about their craft. They claim that many younger ‘*yan bori*’ go through initiation simply because they have no other livelihood, and perhaps a mild interest in the spirits, not because they inherited spirits from their parents or suffered through the kind of severe spirit-caused illness which only initiation can relieve. These internal *bori* debates about authenticity aside, it is clear that the number of *bori* adepts in Kano has increased dramatically in the last thirty years. Take, for example, the case of one local government area on the periphery of Kano’s vast urban sprawl. When Hajiya Rabi moved to Ungogo from Katsina forty years ago, she was the only *bori* practitioner in the whole town. Today, the Sarkin *bori* of this area reports that there are over a hundred members in the local *bori* association. Although social and spiritual factors are obviously important for understanding the extent of this cultural revival, the mushrooming of *bori* in this period is also clearly related to the grueling economic hardships and inequalities which have characterized Nigeria’s postindependence reality and the resulting desperation of the majority of its citizens.

In a similar way, economic considerations, as well as religious imperatives, factor into Nigerian enthusiasm for sojourns in Saudi Arabia. Material benefits aside, many ‘*yan bori*’ exhibit a piety and seriousness about their Islamic faith which seems at odds with their unconventional lifestyles. Certainly fulfilling the pilgrimage itself is as important in many of their plans as staying on to sell medicine; several women distinguished their trips to Saudi Arabia to perform the *hajj* or *umra* from longer work-related trips. And from a material perspective, visas to America or Europe are extremely difficult to acquire, and life in Saudi Arabia provides a pleasant and attainable world of opportunity. Stories abound of rich Arabs squeezing envelopes stuffed with dollars or *riyals* into the hands of strangers passing by, their anonymity following the Quranic injunction “to give with your right hand so your left hand won’t know.” In contrast to this image of impoverished Nigerians powerlessly awaiting Saudi largesse, however, many *bori* adepts adopt a triumphant tone in narrating their suc-

cesses as competent and sought-after healers in Saudi Arabia. Their accounts highlight the significant power that *bori* adepts exert in their interactions with Saudi clients. In a summary of his accomplishments as a popular *bori* healer in Kano, for example, Alhaji Bashiru (1996) describes his success in treating a Saudi client, and the gratitude of her desperate family, as the ultimate endorsement of his work:

I used to treat about seven hundred patients a week. People used to come from different places in this country—for example Lagos, Calabar, etc. . . . I was even called from Mecca to treat a lady who had suffered from an illness for about seven years. She was taken to many countries for treatment but she didn't recover. At that time Dan Wasa was a leader of our Muslims in Saudi. So he used to tell them about the '*yan bori* in Nigeria. This man whose daughter was suffering from an illness that they could not treat, he heard him, and he asked Dan Wasa to call me. So they came here and met me and they arranged everything for me to travel, they got me a passport and everything, and so I followed them to Jidda. From the airport we went straight to the house where the patient was, and I saw the condition she was in—her name was Amina, an Arab girl. I started calling the Muslim spirits to come and help me. I fumigated her with some herbs; when she inhaled it she sneezed and said *alhamdulillah*. Then she started to sweat, and I watched her carefully. I assured her family that she would get better, and I continued the treatment. On the following day the woman was able to perform the dawn prayer. For seven years she had not been able to pray, but on that day she prayed five times. I informed them that there was one treatment that I needed to go home and get, and they said I should take the woman with me. I refused and assured them I could go and come back myself. On that day the woman was able to get up and bathe herself, although before she had been paralyzed for seven years. So they gave me some money and I came home to Ungogo to collect some herbs, and then I returned. By the grace of God, when I returned to Saudi after three months she was still in good health. Her parents were very happy and gave me some money and asked me to stay there, but I refused because I was treating patients at home. And after that I went to Mecca during each pilgrimage; I have performed the pilgrimage nine times now.

Thirty-seven-year-old Hajiya Fatima similarly described Saudi demand for *bori* expertise and medicine and proudly professed her expertise in evading Saudi officials, a skill that enabled her to stay in Saudi Arabia for extended periods without the requisite work permit. In a conversation with her a

few days after her most recent return from Saudi Arabia, Hajiya Fatima explains how she came to be involved with the spirits through a childhood illness, and how they have helped her to regularly travel to Saudi Arabia:

HF: I was then affected with their [the spirits'] illness, and I recovered and now they are helping me. Today I am involved with them, and through them I went to Mecca four times, and I want to go there again for the fifth time. There are many who are practicing *bori* in Saudi, both Arabs and our own people. And the *bori* people there, they are always hoping to buy medicine from us.

SO: So you bring medicine from Nigeria to sell in Saudi?

HF: Of course! Many times. And whenever I decide to carry medicine with me, they don't check my bag at the airport, though they might check everyone else's bag but my own!! The spirits protect my bag. I have carried a lot of herbal medicine from Nigeria to Saudi!

SO: It is the power of your medicine then that helped you at the airport?

HF: It is the power of God, and also the protection of my spirits. And when I reached there I practiced *bori* secretly, because if they find you practicing *bori*, they will catch you. You know it is illegal there. Whenever someone there had a problem, they would call me, and if I could do the job, I would tell them, but if I couldn't I would advise them to go to the hospital for treatment. They come with many problems: the men especially come to increase their manhood, others have marital problems, or want to increase their wealth, or others the spirits have paralyzed their bodies. . . . And life is sweet there. Our problem there is that if you are a stranger, if you go out they will catch you and they will send you back to Nigeria, even if you aren't Nigerian!! This is the problem we face there, the problem of a permit. If you don't have that permit and your visa expires they will send you back home unprepared, without the chance to collect your things. So whenever we see the police we run away and hide somewhere until they pass. I stayed for about six months this last time, and I really enjoyed. Life is sweet there, and the food is cheap and very good. Nothing ever disturbed me. Though many efforts were made to catch me and bring me back, by the grace of God each time I escaped them. And during pilgrimage I would pray for all of those who hadn't had the chance to go there yet. I prayed for my mother, and I prayed also for my husband.

Hajiya Fatima's account of her sojourn confounds expectations both about the vulnerability of Nigerians at the mercy of increasingly intoler-

ant and racist Saudi authorities and about the circumscribed world of married Hausa women. It is Hajiya Fatima who performs special prayers while in Saudi so that her husband, who has never completed the *hajj*, might someday be similarly blessed. In the meantime, however, she uses her own resources to travel to Saudi Arabia, successfully avoid deportation, and enjoy the pleasures of a more modern, developed, and liveable country. Hajiya Maryam's description of her work in Saudi Arabia reveals a similar degree of confidence about her work there, despite her recent deportation. She also proffers an explanation for the heavy Saudi demand for *bori* healing in suggesting that modernization has caused Saudi Arabians to lose the ability to treat spirit-caused illnesses effectively. Lacking the requisite knowledge of herbal medicine and spirit communication, they resort to often ineffective hospital treatment when they fall sick. Hence *bori* healers, as practitioners of "traditional" medicine, are prevailed upon to mediate Saudi difficulties in negotiating modernization, a process which Ashkanani similarly describes for Kuwait.¹⁶ At the end of describing her thirty years of work as a *bori* practitioner, Hajiya Maryam proudly proclaims:

HM: And through this job I went to Saudi five times. And in Saudi I went to Riyadh because of this work. I left Riyadh last year. I went there and worked for the Arabs.

SO: Traditional medicine?

HM: Of course! I stayed there and unfortunately we were caught and taken back home but I am hoping to go back there very soon and continue my job there. I worked in Riyadh and also in Ta'if, and I treated all kinds of illness.

SO: Hajiya, is there any difference between the problems affecting people in Saudi as compared to the problems facing people here in Nigeria?

HM: Well, we have almost the same problems, but I can say that the spirits worry people in Saudi much more than they worry our people here, because here whenever we are touched by the spirits we know the herbs which we are going to use in order to stop them. But people in Saudi don't know how to use all of these herbs—that is why they are suffering. In Saudi you will find some people with partial or complete paralysis, or unable to speak—some have already become dumb. But instead of calling us to treat them, they go to hospitals. And in the hospitals sometimes they call us.

Hajiya Maryam thus suggests the extent to which Nigerian *bori* adepts penetrate Saudi society at the most intimate levels, bringing relief from spirit-caused ailments that modern hospitals prove unable to address. Hajiya reported treating a number of sensitive problems with severe social implications, including cases of mental illness caused by smoking Indian hemp, mature women who were unable to menstruate, and women in their thirties who had still not succeeded in marrying.

For many married *bori* women, regular travel to Saudi Arabia appears to be a particularly important component of their social identity, an identity which integrates Islamic respectability with the freedom and autonomy of a *bori* lifestyle. Barbara Cooper (1999) suggests that access to the *hajj* is of exceptional value to married Hausa women in Maradi because it is the one public Islamic ritual available to women which is identical in its performance for both men and women. By performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, Maradi women thus transcend their identification with the local, "traditional" observance of Islam (Bernal 1994), which is less highly valued in the Hausa religious economy, and participate in the more prestigious public realm of Islamic worship: "the uniformity of the performance of the *hajj* has the effect, for women, of providing one place where their practice of Islam is unassailable" (Cooper 1999:14). Cooper underlines the importance of the *hajj* for Maradi women by pointing to the emergence of a new oral genre in which women detail their experiences of the *hajj* in accounts framed by formulaic descriptions of the pilgrimage's ritual progression. In publicizing the narrator's piety, and emphasizing her inclusion in and conformity to a larger Islamic community of faith, these accounts provide a vehicle for Maradi women to participate in the public sphere and make social claims upon their audience.

For *bori* women, performance of the *hajj* provides a similar opportunity to acquire valuable social capital. The ends to which they deploy this capital, however, and the aspects of their travels to which they draw attention differ quite dramatically from those of Cooper's Maradi informants. As we have seen, descriptions of Saudi Arabia by *bori* adepts are hardly constrained by the parameters of the *hajj*'s ritual progression. In fact, in *bori* accounts of Saudi Arabia an entirely different kind of "sacred geography" of Mecca reveals itself (Tapper 1990). These accounts focus on encounters with spirits that seem to hold greater portent or value because they took place in the holy city of Mecca, and even at sacred sites. Yet in their narration they differ very little from similar encounters with spirits in Nigeria that served as the central framing device in many of the life histories I collected from *bori* adepts. Hajiya Fatima explains:

There are many spirits in Saudi. You will see them mixing with people and if you know them you can differentiate them from human beings by looking into their eyes. One day when I was sitting in the mosque of the Prophet, I saw one old woman who I didn't know. She came over to me and embraced me. She called me by name and she greeted me: "Fatima, hello. How is Nigeria? How is Kano? How is Jos?" She asked after my family and friends, and I replied that they were all fine. Then she asked me about the stomach problem I was having at that time, and I told her that it had improved. We talked for a while and then she took out a book and inside the book she showed me a verse. She said that I must

not play with this book, but was to read from it every Friday. And if I ever needed something important I should recite the verse and, by the grace of God, I would get it. And then this woman she disappeared, and I never saw her again. The spirits are numerous in Taif. You will see them mixing with people whenever they "open your eyes." There are also many spirits in Mecca. They like to visit the mosque of the Prophet and pray inside it. There was another time I was in the mosque and I saw one old woman near me. Suddenly another woman next to me fell and I caught her. But when the old woman went away the woman felt better and she left the mosque. I discovered that the old woman was a spirit and when she approached me the other woman was affected.

Bori narratives such as these do not emphasize the universal aspects of the *hajj* that link pilgrims to a larger community of faith. Rather, *bori* adepts highlight the source of both their difference and their power as connection to the spirit world, their ability to "see" and converse with spirits in human form. Furthermore, *bori* women use the symbolic and material capital with which they return from Saudi Arabia to enhance their prestige as *bori* healers, expand their client base, and thus sustain the alternative lifestyle for women possible in *bori*'s unique subcultural domain. Though pressure to meet the Islamic ideal of marriage and seclusion for adult women has intensified in the twentieth century, the tradition of female leadership and ritual authority in *bori* persists. Membership in *bori* links rural and urban participants to a supportive social and economic network that cuts across the strict gender segregation of dominant Islamic society. Adepts develop networks of fictive kin which diverge from the Hausa norm—the person who initiated you becomes your mother (*uwar girka*) or father (*uban girka*), to whom you owe both deference and respect, as well as a percentage of your earnings in your initial years as a performer. Moreover, *bori* households are commonly headed by women and filled with their subordinate apprentices of both sexes. *Bori* women use the huge bundles of goods they bring back from Saudi Arabia—which include assortments of clothing, perfumes, televisions, VCRs, carpets, wall hangings, etc.—to cement and extend their patronage ties within their established *bori* networks. They also employ the goods they bring back from Saudi Arabia to transform subtly their identities, to reconcile their self-presentation as devout and respectable Muslims with the reality of their *bori* lifestyle. To this end they transform their domestic space and their personal adornment with prestige goods from Saudi Arabia that mark them as both more worldly and more devout than their compatriots who have never been to Mecca. They sport gold caps on their teeth, wear gold jewelry and coveted Saudi dresses with distinctive brocade, and hang enormous photos of themselves taken in Mecca on the walls of their sitting rooms and bedrooms. On her return from Saudi Arabia, for example, Ha-

jiya Fatima presented me with literally hundreds of photos of herself taken there from which I was to choose several as a gift. In addition she insisted that I choose one of the dozens of dresses she had brought back as a token of her friendship. In distributing photos and luxury goods in this way to friends and clients, *bori* women enhance their status and prestige within their own social world.

Generally, *bori* women, even those who are married, do not live their lives within the narrow physical confines of *purdah* (female seclusion), like so many Hausa women in Kano today. Nonetheless, their mobility vis-à-vis their male *bori* counterparts is more circumscribed—"independent" Hausa women still suffer greater insecurity and social approbation because of prevailing normative expectations about female modesty. This is particularly true for younger, unmarried *bori* women and accounts for the relative scarcity of women among the traveling ensembles of *bori* performers in the Kano area.¹⁷ Many *bori* men described their travels to areas both within and outside of Nigeria (including lands as distant as India) in order to study under specialists of various kinds of traditional medicine, witchcraft, and *bori*. This practice by *bori* men mirrors in many ways the Islamic emphasis on the concept of *rihla* (travel in search of knowledge). In fact, in the narration of their travels, the extent of their Quranic education is always seamlessly included in the list of important studies. This is perhaps not surprising, given that Quranic education is a fundamental aspect of socialization in Hausa society; but for *bori* healers, especially men, knowledge of the Quran is also cited as a foundational element of their command of the supernatural. Garba begins his life history with a description of thirty years of travel doing "research" in traditional medicine. Although both his father, a popular hunter, and his mother, a popular *yar bori*, taught him the fundamentals of herbal medicine, treating snakebites, and escaping from the charms of animals, Garba left his village at an early age in pursuit of more specialized training in the healing arts, witchcraft, and magic. Choosing his destinations by the reputations of the specialists under whom he sought to study, his travels took him to Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Togo, Cameroon, and Benue province in Nigeria to study witchcraft with Tiv practitioners.

No *bori* women, however, recounted similar journeys to improve their knowledge of traditional medicine, magic, or spirit communication. This difference perhaps explains why travel to and extended residence in Saudi Arabia seems much more important and common in the lives of *bori* women as opposed to men. As Cooper suggests, female marginality and subordination within Muslim Hausa society accentuate the importance of the *hajj* for women. Both the journey to Mecca and Medina and their accounts of their experiences once home provide women with a rare opportunity to be seen and heard in the public domain. For *bori* women, whose exclusion from the Hausa mainstream is that much more pronounced, travel to Saudi Arabia provides even more dramatic possibilities for social and economic advancement. Saudi Arabia is both an acceptable

destination for married *bori* women to visit alone and a place where unmarried *bori* women might find a husband or the protection and patronage of a wealthy client. Hajiya Khatime, a fifty-one-year-old *yar bori* who has traveled to Saudi Arabia four times—on one trip staying for two years, on another for one year—described her own situation in Mecca as very fortunate, since she stayed in the house of an influential person (*daurin gindi*), a Saudi government official whose daughter she had successfully treated for paralysis. She thus stayed in Saudi Arabia for extended periods without harassment from Saudi authorities. Several prominent female *bori* leaders in Kano also acquired husbands while in Saudi Arabia: one married a Hausa resident of Saudi Arabia, while another married a Sudanese man she met while on the *hajj*. In both of these cases, marriage provided increased status and respectability for the women involved, but did not limit their accustomed mobility in travelling between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia.

Conclusions

As these stories make clear, the globalizing impact of the modern *hajj* can hardly be reduced to a simple story of increasing cultural, religious, and economic homogenization, in which the sacred center of Mecca slowly subsumes the Islamic periphery through education, example, and sheer cultural and economic power. In northern Nigeria, despite the express efforts of Islamic reformists to harness the increased accessibility of the *hajj* to their own political and religious agendas, pilgrims themselves have shaped and translated their experiences of the *hajj* to unpredictable ends. In their accounts of travel to Saudi Arabia, *bori* healers demonstrate the unlikely influence and marketability of local, “non-Islamic” Hausa culture in modern Saudi society, and the importance of the *hajj* in building and maintaining a dynamic *bori* subculture in Nigeria. While new technologies enable faster, cheaper movement between Arab and African worlds, the contours of globalization are nonetheless shaped as much by centuries of contact, in which dynamic exchange and interdependence have characterized Arab/Hausa relations, as by the apparent dominance of contemporary Saudi oil wealth and Islamic orthodoxy. The modern *hajj* thus facilitates the circulation of both licit and illicit goods, services, and knowledge which connects the Arab residents of the Muslim holy land in intimate ways with their marginalized brethren from Nigeria’s Islamic heartland.

Reflecting the fundamental bifurcation of male and female lives in northern Nigeria, *bori* women in particular have capitalized on their marginality within both local and transnational arenas to build unique Islamic identities with the resources provided by increased access to the *hajj*. Their experiences suggest that structural constraints on female lives in contemporary Hausa society are far from uniform. Just as *bori* women narrate their experiences of Saudi Arabia in radically different ways than their non-*bori*

counterparts, the social marginality of *bori* within Hausa society alters the meaning and contours of access to the public sphere, marriage as a social institution, and economic autonomy for *bori* women. Greater access to the *hajj*, then, has simply multiplied the available symbolic resources with which Muslims throughout the globe fashion Islamic identities and mold communities of faith. Rather than enjoining more uniform conduct according to a set of universal and authoritative beliefs, increased travel to Mecca in this case has served to authorize and perpetuate very local practices and beliefs which have long been condemned as un-Islamic.

NOTES

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- 1 Mervyn Hiskett (1984) emphasizes, for example, the spread of Islamic literacy and the pilgrimage to Mecca as the two critical factors which historically promoted a sense of Islamic universalism in West Africa. Ahmed Beita Yusuf (1975) has argued that Mecca and Medina are equivalent to the centers of the "great traditions," from which religious practices and material goods are carried to the homelands of most pilgrims, which constitute the centers of the "little traditions." And Mary Byrne McDonnell suggests how greater access to the *hajj* for Malaysians has created "a more uniform Islamic dimension to Malay identity" (1990:126).
- 2 In her description of the transformation of a rural Mende *imam* into "Alhaji Airplane," for example, Mariane Ferme makes this link explicit: "Alhaji's dream of modernization going hand in hand with religious piety was shaped by his own spiritual and physical pilgrimage, but was also consistent with the rest of the community's perception that material wealth and 'advancement' were aspects of the integration in a more cosmopolitan Muslim community" (1994:28–29).
- 3 For a masterful ethnographic elaboration of how seemingly distinct strands of medical and cultural knowledge are unified through people's therapeutic choices and through the eclectic methods offered by practitioners, see Michael Lambek (1993). For an anthropological analysis of the causes and manifestations of psychic distress and emotional suffering among Muslim Hausa in Kano, and a comparative examination of the range of treatments available (including psychiatric care on the western model and *bori* practice) see Casey (1997).

- 4 This paper suggests that modernity and globalization in the Hausa context have little to do with Westernization. It thus resonates with recent work by Brian Larkin (1997) on the popularity of Indian films in Kano, and Barbara Cooper (1999) on the *hajj* narratives of women from Maradi, Niger, who suggest in different ways that modern Hausa subjectivities are created from decidedly non-Western cultural resources and referents.
- 5 The full name of this group is Jamaatu Izalat Al-Bidah Wa Iqamat Al-Sunnah (roughly translated as the Removal of False Innovations and the Establishment of Orthodox Tradition).
- 6 The growing body of scholarship on Hausa women has elucidated the ideological and institutional ways that women are excluded from public life (Callaway 1987; Imam 1994), but also draws attention to the variability of women's positions within Hausa society depending on age, marriage status, and social standing (Pittin 1979; Schildkrout 1986; Coles and Mack 1991), and to the ways that women employ dominant ideologies of motherhood and domestic space to wield power and transform social institutions from within (Schildkrout 1983; Hutson 1997; Cooper 1997).
- 7 As Umar Al-Naqar explains, *fellata* is a Kanuri term for Fulani which has been adopted by both Arabs and Sudanese to refer to West Africans (1972:3).
- 8 As Hunwick points out, the perception that black Africans are particularly powerful agents of the supernatural world is very common throughout North Africa and the Middle East (1997:12).
- 9 Mary Byrne McDonnell writes that in Malaysia "The *hajj* was also associated with atonement, a linkage strong enough to have been transformed into a legal precedent and accepted by British courts. To sentence a criminal to perform the *hajj* was seen to serve the same purpose as a prison term" (1990:120).
- 10 The two pilgrimages conducted by the Emir of Katsina, Muhammadu Dikko, in 1921 and 1933, indicate, above all, his unusually close relationship with the British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria, to which, as Muhammad Sani Umar points out, he "owed his position, power, and influence" (1997:279). Dikko's unquestioned loyalty to the British and the fact that both his travels to Mecca were combined with visits to England marked his performances of the *hajj* as politically innocuous events from the British perspective.
- 11 Paden writes on this matter: "In July 1957, the Saudis proposed to deport 20,000 West Africans (mainly Nigerians) and indicated that they were no longer willing for West Africans to reside and work in Saudi Arabia. A number of the Nigerians in Saudi Arabia are beginning to migrate back to Sudan, but the Sudanese refuse to take them. Also, the Saudis give notice to the Sudanese government that no pilgrims would be able to leave Sudan for Saudi Arabia in 1958 without a national passport. The Nigerian pilgrims in Saudi Arabia complain bitterly about the *mutawif* fee and facilities. Also, the Saudis have prohibited entry by means of the Red Sea, and hence Nigerian pilgrims who cross the Red Sea become illegal immigrants and are imprisoned" (1986:288).
- 12 Lomeier explains that "*Istitaa* in the context of the *hajj* means that the prospective pilgrim should not only be a free, responsible, mature person, but also be able to finance the *hajj* without ruining himself or his family by undertaking this costly journey to the hijaz" (1997: 161). By 1982, all prospective Nigerian pilgrims were thus required to register officially at their respective Local Government Pilgrimage Boards.
- 13 This is not to suggest that the status ambiguity of *karuwai* or *'yan daudu* derives solely from their participation on the modern *hajj*. On the contrary, the peculiar position of *karuwai* in Hausa society has long been noted by scholars (Smith [1954]1981; Pittin 1979). What I am suggesting here is that through their participation on the modern *hajj*, both

- '*yan daudu* and *karuwai* rather dramatically demonstrate this ambiguity and further complicate their own standing in contemporary Hausa society.
- 14 In his richly detailed ethnography of contemporary '*yan daudu*, Gaudio (1996:4–6) effectively debunks, for example, the scholarly assumption that '*yan daudu* serve as pimps for the *karuwai* whose homes they frequent and live in (Besmer 1983; Pittin 1979; Yusuf 1975).
 - 15 As Steven Pierce (1999) suggests about '*yan daudu* and *karuwai*: "At once disdained and central to the boundaries that maintain social order, such groups continually enact this contradiction by being socially marginal and socially involved."
 - 16 Zubaydah Ashkanani describes the increased importance of *zar* healing and community for middle-aged, middle-class Kuwaiti women who were unable to adapt to the radical social and economic changes brought about by the oil boom and the rapid Westernization which followed it from the 1950s. As the ritual specialists and leaders of *zar* ceremonies in Kuwait, non-Arab (black African) women of slave descent, called *Mamas* in local parlance, achieve important social positions and considerable respect through their healing practice.
 - 17 This is similar to the way that Robin Kelley (1997:69–75) describes African-American women's exclusion from the lucrative realm provided by the commodification of forms of "play-labor," including basketball and hip hop cultural practices (break-dancing, rapping, etc).

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