

IGORU MUSIC AND ISSUES OF LEADERSHIP IN OKPE

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ABSTRACT

Igoru is one of the oldest music genres in Okpe, performed by both men and women. Its primary roles are to represent the cultural identity of the Okpe, defend the ethos and territorial landmass, and the leadership question. It queries wanton socio-moral attitude, perversion, injustice, cruelty, and unnecessary associations among peoples in the Okpe country. It offers commendation to deserving members and leaders of thought in Okpe as well as counsel and warn against actions and nonchalance that could lead to serious crises in the future. It presents rich oral poetry and manifestation of Okpe cultural heritage; contesting and defending the religious values and philosophical constructs of the Okpe. Although Igoru social critique appeared to be so severe and its subsequent abuse consequently led to sorcery attacks against prominent performers, leading to its diminution and transformation to the Ighopha genre, its warning to Okpe leaders that were not heeded yielded manifestation of unpleasant developments some of which persist to the present day. This paper therefore attempts to examine the concern of Igoru musicians about the land of their fathers and its question of leadership. It investigates the historical development of the music genre and its functions in the issues of cultural identity and defence. It further highlights its roles in checking infringements and invasions in Okpe as well as its counsel and warning to the Okpe leadership and the implications of such.

INTRODUCTION

The term *Igoru*, literally connotes something that is considered to be very precious and of high value. It later became associated with gold. That is, many Okpe call gold *Igoru*, though the commonest name for the ornament is *oro*. This is not to argue that *Igoru* music appeared or came in vogue about the time when the ornament gold flourished in the Okpe country during the sea route trade by batter, which existed between the Portuguese and the Okpe around the Delta tributaries in the 16th century. It simply means that *Igoru* music is a genre the Okpe cherish immensely. To mark out the value of the genre, in accordance with the connotation, however, *Igoru* (gold ornaments) formed part of the costume for the dance. Since the ornament was not part of the dance paraphernalia from the beginning, it is not a strict requirement for the performance, but

permissible to those who have it. *Igoru* music has played very significant roles in the Okpe nation. It has represented the identity of the Okpe, queried unprofitable habits and actions of the masses; offered useful warning and counsel to Okpe leaders and followers. It is against this background that this paper emerges.

The historical development of *Igoru* music in Idamoyibo's (2006: 114) writing was divided into four periods such as first period (c. 1100-1900), second period (1900-1945), third period (1945-1970) and fourth period (1970 – 2005). *Igoru* music from the time the Okpe arrived their present settlement in the 12th century was regarded as daily reporter and the musicians as broadcasters of current affairs in the society. Thus, its original idea focused on how to put wrong attitude into correctitude and to maintain social order. There was proliferation of *Igoru* ensembles around the nation, such that almost every Okpe town and village had *Igoru* ensemble. Members of these ensembles functioned as investigators, taking note of deviant activities in the communities. These discoveries were set to music and performed in public at appropriate occasions.

In the first period *Igoru* themes attempted to defend the Okpe political system particularly linked to the political imbroglio in the reign of the despot king, Ezezi I. Others presented philosophical examination of spiritual encounter associated with the belief on witchcraft activities and critical assessment of the position of a father in the home. Subsequent songs suggested efforts to protect the territorial inheritance of the Okpe from settlers who often laid claims of ownership to the portions of land the Okpe allowed them to inhabit over the years. In the 1930s and 1940s, *Igoru* music became a social tool for fighting corruption, wickedness and moral decadence within and outside the Okpe country. The themes began to centre on individuals who contravene cultural norms. Miserly married women who starved their husbands; traditional and customary court chiefs who were corrupt and sex workers became the main focus. Other themes defended traditional ethos, commended members of the community who maintained moral uprightness and defended the music profession.

IGORU MUSIC AND ISSUES OF OKPE IDENTITY AND DEFENCE

Lara Allen (1993: 1) writes that people living through periods of fundamental social change generally suffer deep crises of identity. "Their search for a way of making

sense of their existence manifests in cultural forms such as musical styles”. Music generally as an aspect of culture, functions in identifying cultural and ethnic groups, and in the spirit of performer-audience participation creates the sense of belonging to an identified group. For a sensitive patriot who truly identifies him/herself with his/her culture, any crisis or unkind remarks against his/her culture would offend him/her and prompt his/her defensive reaction. This is not an exception in *Igoru* music. Indeed the Okpe in Lagos celebrates *Igoru* music as a mark of Okpe ethnic identity. At the time the Uvwie abused the Okpe that they had no songs they could perform in their language, the challenge brought *Igoru* music to foreground in marking and defending the identity of the Okpe people in Lagos.

Lara Allen (1996: 54) remarks further on similar roles of South African *kwela* music as follows: ‘For its creators, *kwela* was also an expression of personal and collective identity (P 54)’. Both in the corporate activities of the Okpe Union in Lagos, Sapele and elsewhere, and in individual efforts towards identity, *Igoru* music served as a vessel for expressing the feelings of common quest and interest. The characteristics of the music enabled it function in enhancing assimilation of human relationships and objectified goals.

Robin Wells (1996: 67 and 69) in his investigation of the relationships between styles of music and the notion of identity writes: ‘It is my contention that style is inextricably linked to notions of identity and is mobilised as a means of objectifying values in form or performance. As such, the study of musical style can provide a valuable insight into the aspirations and values of a social group (p 67)’. *Igoru* music does not only seek to identify the people’s culture, it further upholds and checks the socio-moral values that identify the culture and the people. The themes often defended the Okpe territory, traditional ethos, the Orodje’s stool and the music profession.

IGORU COUNSEL, QUERY, WARNING AND IMPLICATIONS

The use of proverbs, anecdotes, parables among others in African songs is also corroborated in Okpe song texts. The song text below captures the foregoing essence:

Whenever an animal that was once caught in a trap, and fought hard to escape sees a stick bent in the likeness of another trap, it must take extra caution – An Okpe adage.

Burton and C.J. Chacksfield (1979: 26) comment that poets use tone and diction to contribute to the implicit and explicit meanings of every word or a group of clustered words they select and put to play in their poems. They argue that: ‘A poet chooses his words within strict disciplines imposed on him by form and length. He cannot waste words. His diction has to work hard, bearing a compressed weight of meaning and suggestion’. Mitchel Strumpf (1999:119 and 120) writes about the function of music in warning members of the society:

Mganda songs generally focus on relationship between men and women of the community... Songs accompanying *chimtali* are frequently directed toward a specific individual. One, for example, talks about a girl named Nasiwelo whose manfriend, the people of the community are warned, is a traitor to the state (p 120).

As in all human cultures, Okpe not an exception, musicians perform prophetically, foretelling future consequences of certain actions taken by men and women in the society. *Igoru* musicians, in their foresight, investigate, evaluate, probe and foretell future events, in order to prompt Okpe leaders to make wise decisions. In traditional Okpe society, life experiences are shared, whether they are sweet or bitter, painful or joyful. Things that are capable of causing pains and grief to families and communities are therefore issues of primary concern to the *Igoru* musicians. It was therefore necessary for them to warn and counsel their audience against some wanton attitude and practices that could result in painful experiences. Some warning and counsel from *Igoru* musicians were directed to individuals, communities and the entire Okpe nation. For instance, the *Igoru* musicians in some of their performances query the unprofitable relationship between the Okpe and the crafty Itsekiri in the 1940s. In a particular song, the musicians queried and warned: Do you associate with the Itsekiri? The water will swallow you, if you do not realize it. See example 1 below.

Example 1: *Otu Irhobo are ateran?* (Do you associate with the Itsekiri?)

$\bullet = 90$
L. Solo:

A me rha me re m'a me 'hao re re,

2 Ch: L. solo:

'rhe rie kpo kpo, a ruo m'a meo vbo rho doa mi kpe; o ro

4 Ch:

mue so tui rho bo ra rea te ran? U ghe, a meo rho roa re reo

6

a ri vbe rhe e; a meo rho so mo r'a re.

8 L. solo: Ch:

A mi rhoe mro hu a ghe ni Bo bo, o to rhi ne hwe rio 'ha rie tan rao,

10 L. solo:

'ka ro rh'O kpe eo. E mo 'kpe ra rie kpo kpo, e mroe

12 Ch: L. solo:

m'O kp'o rho rhe no, u ghe, a re re na ko ba roe; 'mre M

14 Ch: L. solo:

re jeo rho rhe no, u ghe, a re re na ko ba roe; e mr'E

16 Ch: L. solo:

ko ko rho se no, mo me, a re re na ko ba roe; 'mr'E gbo

18 Ch: L. solo:

ro deo rho rhe no, u ghe, a re re na ko ba roe; 'rhe ri

20 Ch:

ku ta ra wa ko, u ghe, a re re na ko ba roe; a ri

22 R. solo:

rhe le lu sui rhe rio vru rhe kpa rao, o rhie mro wa a. E,

24 L. solo:

i ne neo, 'kpe rii go ruo kpa meu rho mu reo. A me

26

rha me re m'a me 'hao re re, 'rhe rie kpokpo, a ruo m'ameo

28

vbo rho doa mi kpe; o ro mue so tui rho bo ra rea te ran? U

30

ghe, a meo rho roa re reo a ri vbe rhe e; a meo

32

rho so mo r'a re. A mi rhoemro hu a ghe ni Bo bo, o

34

to rhi ne hwe rio 'ha rie tan rao, 'ka ro rh'Okpe eo. E mo

36

'kpe ra rie kpokpo, e mroe m'Okp'o rho rhe no, u ghe, a re

38

re na ko ba roe; 'mre M re jeo rho rhe no, u ghe, a re

40

re na ko ba roe; e mr'E ko ko rho se no, mo me, a re

42

re na ko ba roe; 'mr'Egbo ro deo rho rhe no, u ghe, a re

44

re na ko ba roe; 'rhe ri ku ta ra wa ko, u ghe, a re

46

re na ko ba roe; a ri rhe le lu sui rhe rio vru rhe kpa rao

48

o rhie mro wa a.

In another song, the musicians figuratively express that: we shall pour out sand from the sack that we filled, which turned to insult us, so that it falls and rot. This was a call on the leadership of Okpe to order that the Itsekiri be dispossessed of all Okpe land they inhabit before they come back in warfare to contest the ownership as they did contend Sapele land in the 1940s. The song refers to both the Uvwie and the Itsekiri to whom the Okpe gave land to occupy, who now contend the ownership.

NEED FOR THE WARNING

In a particular *Igoru* song, the writer observed the careful use of figurative words with powerful associative meaning. It refers indirectly to the Itsekiri who between 1941 and 1943 had land dispute with Okpe in Sapele. The Itsekiri, in the history of their migration, came from Benin through the waterways to their present settlements, thus they occupy mainly the riversides. In the course of time, they migrated to the various parts of Okpe like Sapele, Elume, Amwokpokpo – Elume, Ikeresan (Orhorhomu), Ugbukurusu (Ugbikurusu) and Obotie, which are bounded by rivers. The Okpe in their usual magnanimity, allowed them to co-habit in these communities. But alas, the composer of the song presents the subsequent developments figuratively that *Havbaren* called on Oloku to give it a place to occupy in the river, and when its roots became strong, it began to contend lordship with Oloku. See example 2 below.

Example 2: *Havwaren* (Specie of mangrove tree)

♩ = 90

E, a kpu ha vba ren ne fa rhien fa rhien

e be me de nya ye te d'u hue. E vba

vba ro rho s'O lo ku, o jao, O lo ku ye mi bie ke te re mi ne rhi rhie

o to re na; a ghwu ha vba rio mwo to re no rh'O lo kue

9
re gba vba vb'u rhie. O ni vbie, I ri mi ri dea

11
re na cho ja na. A kp'o yi bo ro rhe re o le rhi me ba

13
nya fi gi da

Havbaren is specie of mangrove tree that grows on the riverside. It is known to spread its root wide to occupy a large space on the riverbank, even into the water. It is also remarkable that as it roots spread, it could grow new stems over time. The Okpe, on the other hand believe on a masculine deity who possesses the river and controls most of the things that happen therein. The deity is known as Oloku. The musicians suggest that the Itsekiri came to these Okpe communities as aliens and neighbours who needed, requested and probably acquired some pieces of land where they built, leased, rented, and lived. In procreation, they gave birth and grew in number. Not only so, they had a son who worked closely with the colonial administration. They began to contend the ownership of the land of Sapele.

Since according to historical facts, the Okpe, Urhobo and other Ethnic groups in Nigeria resented sending their children to school in the colonial era, assuming the children would be mentally and morally enslaved by the colonial masters, the Itsekiri who did not mind such considerations had advantage receiving Western education early. This advantage also gave them the opportunity to be appointed leaders of some sort by the colonial leaders. Obaro Ikime (2005; [www. Urhobo.kinsfolk.com](http://www.Urhobo.kinsfolk.com)), in his writing, intimates that the British began penetration into he Urhobo (and Okpe) region from 1896 and sought for assistance of persons who knew about the people and the land. They found some of these among the Itsekiri who live at the coast, and who have had early contact

with European explorers. It was in this way that a few Itsekiri British- appointed political agents found their way into Urhobo land (and Okpe land) during the establishment of British colonial rule.

Ikime intimates that Chief Dogho, an influential Itsekiri assisted the British who 'mounted combined naval and military expedition' against the opposition of the famous Chief Nana of Itsekiri and defeated him in August 1894, for which he (Dogho) was given several appointments in appreciation. He was appointed as the president of Benin River Native Court in 1896, British political agent in c1897, permanent president of the Warri native Courts of appeal in 1914, and Native Authority for the Warri Divisional Province, which included most of the Urhobo, Okpe, Isoko, Ijaw, Ukwani and Aboh. Ikime adds the following vital information:

In 1908, the British Colonial government acquired 510 acres of Sapele land. The lease, which gave the land to the British, was signed by Chief Dogho 'acting for and on behalf of the chiefs and people of Sapele'. He signed Similar lease for land acquired by the British in Warri. We do not know exactly why the British asked Dogho to sign these leases, especially that of Sapele, Sapele being decidedly Okpe land. The most obvious guess is that because Dogho was the British political agent, he was made to sign for the people. The British Government paid an annual rent of £100 for the Sapele land. The Sapele land owners took £60 and gave Dogho £40... evidence of the way in which Dogho and indeed all those who held office for the colonial regime in those early days flagrantly abused their offices and enriched themselves. Even if Dogho was the Orodje of Okpe and had signed the lease as such, he could not expect 40% of the annual rent for himself.

In the 1920s, Dogho began to collect full rents for land plots in Agbassah (Urhobo). And by 1925, the Urhobo of Agbassah in Warri took Dogho to court, challenging his rights for collecting rents in their own land, but lost the case. By extension of the same act, chief Dogho instructed the Itsekiri in Sapele to stop paying rents to their landlords, arguing that Sapele land belonged to the Olu of Itsekiri whom he claimed to represent. Although Dogho died in 1932, the Sapele land case went to court in

1941 and the Okpe won. The Itsekiri appealed to the West Africa Court of Appeal, where the Okpe again won the Sapele land case in 1943.

This was exactly what the *Igoru* musician meant to imply with the figurative expression that the mangrove tree requested a small portion of the river from the Deity, and when its roots were strong, it began to contend lordship with him. These figurative impressions created about the crafty attitude of the Itsekiri by *Igoru* musicians in the 1940s have remained true observation about their use of political powers in achieving selfish aims; the reason why they have consistently fought wars with their hosts and neighbors, the Okpe, Urhobo and Ijaw who in the past gave them permission to co-habit in their territories within the Niger Delta region.

For instance, Peter Ekeh (1999) writes that Urhobo and Itsekiri youths in Okere, Warri had a fight on June 4, 1999, which was flashed on the cyberspace that evening as a joint operation between Ijaw and Urhobo in an effort to wipe out the Itsekiri. The Itsekiri Survival Movement directly accused the Urhobo of engaging in “genocide” and “ethnic cleansing” while the Ugbajo Itsekiri, an aristocratic club of the Itsekiri in the United States, released in the internet and cyberspace the text of a letter it presented at a meeting at the State Department, inviting the United States to intervene in the crisis of the Western Niger Delta of Nigeria.

The Itsekiri had often incited government against its neighbouring ethnic groups, thus again attempted to incite the US government against the Urhobo with the accusation on genocide – an unforgivable offence of the 21st Century. This is why the composers of the above-cited songs conclude that it was the colonial administration, which in the present day includes the European pattern of administration that gives the Itsekiri much liberty and boldness to contend for land that does not belong to them. Reference to the colonial administration became an important issue to the *Igoru* musicians, because the Itsekiri unduly use such political powers against their opponents whenever they have the advantage. Even in recent times, we could see how they have tried to incite the Delta State Government against the Okpe immediately after the grave attack against Ugbukurusu and in their most recent attempt to cede Okpe land to them.

THE ITSEKIRI AND UGBUKURUSU WARS AS IMPLICATION

In the early 1990s, farmland dispute ensued between some members of the Ugbukurusu and Obotie communities. Both communities are in Okpe land by the riverside, in Sapele Local Government Area of Delta State. By 1997 the land dispute degenerated and an Itsekiri inhabitant of Obotie killed an Okpe of Ugbukurusu in the farm. The Okpe regarded this to be mere land dispute between families and allowed it to be treated as such. By 2001, the land dispute degenerated further and enlarged into community clashes. The Itsekiri of Obotie attacked the Ugbukurusu, killing and burning houses of the Okpe. And the Okpe launched a reprisal attack that leveled Obotie community that year.

The recent crisis in Warri and environs, principally between the Ijaw and Itsekiri, reaching its heights from 1997-2003, with massive killing and burning of Itsekiri settlements by their warring opponents, the Itsekiri shifted their attention to the Okpe. To capitalize upon the 2001 conflict, the Itsekiri planned a fresh attack to seize, not only Ugbukurusu from the Okpe, but to invade all Okpe communities around the riversides. On January 17, 2004 the Itsekiri invaded Ugbukurusu during a night burial, at about 4.00am and carried out massive killing and burning of houses. Their plan being to capture all Okpe communities around the riverside and take possession of them, because the Ijaw had rendered many of them homeless, they invaded Ugborhen, Ikeresan and Igbeku by the following day, January 18, 2004 with their weapons of warfare and fuel to burn the communities to ashes. Although the Ugborhen youths mounted a very strong resistance and defence that delivered the Okpe communities, the musicians' prophecies contained in their warning songs became fulfilled in these events.

WARNING TO THE OKPE TO PROTECT THE KING

The supreme authority in the Okpe political system is the Orodje (king). The Orodje and his Chiefs constitute the Udogu Okpe (Okpe Supreme Council). When major decisions are to be taken and decrees are to be promulgated, the Orodje and his Chiefs meet with community representatives at a forum known as Okpe Assembly. Being a culture without written tradition, no chronicles exist on the early periods in Okpe until European influences surfaced. The reign of Ehwerhi, or Ekperhi in most correct Okpe version, one of the descendants of Esezi, was the first to be recorded by the British

government and was gazetted Esezi I. His reign between 1450 and 1480 attracted much attention because he was a despot, autocrat, dictator, and powerful tyrant, for which his subjects assassinated him. According to oral accounts, his *Ilotu* (*olotu*, singular), messengers on his instructions used to climb to the top of coconut trees to beat *Ozu* (a big mother drum) to announce his summons and decrees so that no one could claim ignorance. He often asked communities to present powerful representatives to break iron bars before him in order to examine the strength of his army. He decreed death sentences on those who failed the exercise.

He once invited the Ọkọkporo, now Ozue Division (communities) to present a representative for this exercise and the candidate was able to break the iron bar, for which the Division is christened *Ọsia* (Gorilla) to this day. Some oral sources claim that this great feat was performed successfully by aid of traditional medicine or spiritual powers possessed by the Okokporo. Other oral accounts claim that one of the king's attendants who lived in the palace hailed from Okokporo and attempted to save his people by secretly sawing the iron bar and covering it with grease before the event. Oral tradition states further that the king often invited a group of people according to community quarters or Divisions and decreed that they should tie a rope on a palm tree at its top and pull it toward themselves to fell it. Many died in this process, and these led to the assassination of the king.

The theme of the song in example 3 below suggests a warning to the Okpẹ on the plan to assassinate the king. The text reads that:

Umogu (the king) was peacefully at home,
And the witches and wizards sought for his trouble;
Oh King, if I am a witch, kill me,
But if I'm not, grant me peace.
People run away from death,
But you (subjects) are seeking your death,
The head pays for the evil of the hand.

Sadly enough the Okpẹ public did not take heed to the warning of the *Igoru* musicians. They assassinated the king, Esezi I (Ekperhi) and darkness fell upon the land. According to oral accounts, the king had some strange feelings by which his clairvoyance

informed him that an evil was in place against him. But the omen was not as specific in his discernment as to what would happen to him. When he arrived at the scene of the Okpe assembly where the evil plan was to be executed against him, he attempted to withdraw because of the strange feelings. But his second in command, the then *Unu* – misrepresented as *Otota* – of Okpe, the chief who was the spokesman of the king and the Okpe, persuaded the king to chairman the meeting. And as he attempted to take up his seat, he fell into the pit where the tragedy finally took place (hot oil was poured on him in the pit). As soon as he fell into the pit, he knew his end had come, and he cursed the Okpe people that they would never have a king after him. See below the *igoru* song that suggested a warning to the Okpe concerning the assassination of the king.

Example 3: Umogu Osiye Ogwa (Umogu is at Home)

♩ = 90

1 solo ch.
Ba U mo guo si yeo ghwa, o tue rie da rha o bo ghwo lie;

2 solo ch. solo
U mo gu mi rhe vb'e da gbe me kpe me, e jo

4 ch.
mi rhe vbo o, gba nya ji me vbo, e, a mei me ba 'me t'o na na,

6 solo ch.
u hu ra wa me re ze, a reo voa h'o bo ghwo l'u hu;

8 solo ch.
o ke r'u hu n'o rho rhe neo ghwu so moe ne kpe ri se?

10 solo ch.
i tio bo ro bo so ro, ghwu so ra nao y'u rho muo le le.

12 R-solo
O she we reo, i ne neo, a me rha t'o nao a ri ne se yie fian.

14 L-solo ch.
Ba U mo guo si yeo ghwa, o tue rie da rha o bo ghwo lie;

16 solo ch. solo
U mo gu mi rhe vbe da, gbe me kpe me; e jo

18 ch.
mi rhe vbo o, gba nya ji me vbo, e a mei me ba me t'o na na,

20 solo ch.
u hu ra wa me re ze, a reo voa h'o bo ghwo l'u hu,

22 solo ch.
o ke r'u hu n'o rho rhe neo, ghwu s'o ro moe ne kpe ri se?

24 solo ch.
i tio bo ro bo so ro ghwu s'o ra nao y'u rho muo le leo.

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It is believed that traditional rulers are ordained and honoured by God. The sanction of the king upon the Okpe at the time of his assassination became a curse that had serious effects on the land for a very long time. The period of interregnum between his death and succession was extremely long that the Okpe felt ashamed for their inability to crown another king, particularly as their Itsekiri neighbours scorned them for not having a king during the period. Although the Okpe came together to confess and ask forgiveness from God, performed some rituals to enable them crown another king in the 1940s, the effects of the curse from Ezezi I are still felt in the royal institution till this day. Ezezi II (Mebitaghan, popularly known as Osakpa) was successfully crowned in 1945. He died in March 26, 1966 and until December 30, 1972 Orhoro I could not be crowned (another six years of interregnum). Two of the songs available in our collection

narrate the events that surrounded the coronation of Orhoro I and his mutual relationships with his brother, Julius and the chiefs.

In the present era, Orhoro I died in May 2004 and elections for the succession to the throne was conducted in January 2005. According to the election results, Gen, Felix Mujakperuo and Air vice Marshall Frank Adjobena had a tie in the votes, and the chairman of the electoral committee, as a result, cast his vote to decide the winner. By this approach Gen. Mujakperuo emerged winner, while his opponent disputed the results, attempting to take the matter to court. Several efforts were made by Okpe leaders to appease Air Marshal Adjobena, appealing that he should accept the results to ensure peaceful transition. Subsequently, Gen. Mujakperuo was crowned King as Orhue I on July 29, 2006. Although this seems to be the shortest interregnum of only two years, we look forward to when the effects of the curse would completely wipe off to enable the Okpe have a smooth transition within few months or one year in the future. *Igoru* musicians composed several songs depicting the extremely long interregnum and the scolding from the Itsekiri, as well as the lamentation of the death of Esezi II and the joy of his succession after six years interregnum.

CONCLUSION

This study observed that *Igoru* musicians warned and counseled their audiences against some wanton attitude and practices that could result in painful experiences. They made efforts through their compositions and performances to criticize and correct some excesses of some community members in the belief that everything any human being does requires moderation, even if it is permissible in the society. In performances, the musicians defended their political system, their territorial land mass, traditional religion, the music profession and themselves from various attacks. Many *Igoru* songs make reference to the political institution, where the issue of the traditional ruler, the Orodje (King) of Okpe was central. In fact, the Okpe in Lagos took *Igoru* music as a mark of Okpe ethnic identity, thus it was selected amongst other music genres of the culture to represent it, both in social and political-oriented activities. The author notes that the warning and counsel of the *Igoru* musicians, if heeded earlier, would have averted the recent warfare between the Itsekiri and the Okpe of Ugbukurusu, Ugborhen, etc.

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