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Re-Assessing the Relevance and Efficacy of Yoruba Gods as Agents of Punishment: A Study of Sango and Ogun

Abstract: The general objective of this paper was to investigate the relevance and efficiency of Yoruba gods in the administration of punishment and justices on crime commitment. Two Yoruba gods (Sango and Ogun) were principally chosen. Six hundred (600) participants were conveniently sampled from three localities from three geo-political states in the western part of Nigeria. Univariate and bivariate analyses were used in the description of the samples and frequency distribution tables were employed in the presentation of the data. The results show that Yoruba natives still fear and respect these gods. The gods are still relevant and efficient in the administration of punishment on crime commission. The Yoruba natives show preference for the non-conventional punishments of these gods to modern criminal justice systems. Finally, the paper recommends the opinion survey polls on the inclusion of the invocations of these gods in the criminal justice systems of Nigeria and the likely implementations of the invocations in official swearing in ceremony for political and public office holders and the administration of the invocations in Nigerian courts of law.

Key words: Sango, Ogun, Punishment, Invocation, Criminal Justice System, Yoruba natives

Introduction

The recurring incidence of crime imposes on the society the need to punish offenders. This is also systematized as the mode and types of punishment in the society. Thus, punishment is an innovation with which society wards off the siege of the criminals (Adelola and Atere 2002). Different societies assign varying levels of punishment of types of crimes: the perceived seriousness of the offence being dependent upon the goals of those in charge, who are the pe-

ople who represent their society. The most serious of crimes are sometimes punished with death, although what is considered to be a serious offence is subject to the views of the society in which it occurs (Holmes 1999).

Tacitus (n.d) argues that punishments varied according to the nature of the crime and the penalties annexed to slighter offences are also proportioned to the delinquency. Punishment was not meant merely to serve as revenge for victims or their relatives instead; punishment has long been intended as a means of making life and property more secure by reducing the likelihood of a person committing a crime or a second offence. Punishment brings wisdom; it is the act of healing wickedness (Stark 1994).

There are two forms of punishment (formal and informal) that can be applied to correct crime in the society. Formal punishment is dealt with by simply following the modern institutionalized agencies such as the law court and other criminal justice systems. Such formal punishment can be categorized into capital punishment, corporal punishment, imprisonment and other miscellaneous punishments (Imhonopi 2004). However, in the informal form of punishment, the offender is punished for his or her offences, following strictly the culture specifics and prescriptions. Under this form, offender may be punished by ostracism, flogging, boycott, sacrifice, payment of fine and exile (Imhonopi 2004).

Under informal punishment, crime may be punished supernaturally through non –conventional penal authority. Three main forms of supernatural administration of punishment can be considered here. In the first place, in some belief structures the forbidden act will itself produce the spiritual punishment of the wrongdoer. In such cases no God or ancestral spirits take action and it would appear that the wrong itself directly affects the wrongdoer.

Secondly, other systems rely on outraged ancestral spirits or god's intervention as both authority and /or an agency for the punishment of human wrong. Finally, there is the less – immediate supernatural intervention of the eschatological religions such as Islam and Christianity. Clearly, different faiths may have a different view of the punitive effects of their God or Gods (Harding and Ireland 1989).

In this paper, the second form of supernatural administration was taken into consideration. The research work conducted centered on two Yoruba gods (Sango and Ogun) as supernatural agents of punishment among the Yoruba natives.

In traditional African Society the sacred and the secular are inseparable. There is no compartmentalization of life. What religion forbids or condemns society also forbids and condemns. An offence against God /gods is an offence against man and in like manner an offence against man is an offence against God /gods (Adewale 1994). Criminal acts were said to be affronts to the gods, who might express their anger through plagues, or other desolation. Punishment proportionate to the wrong doing was said to lessen the gods' anger (www.j rank .org)

Among the Yoruba natives of south –western Nigeria, acts perceived as criminal include, witchcraft, incest, divulging secrets of certain religion and political organizations, pronouncing a curse, manslaughter, murder of different forms, malicious wounding, theft, burglary, adultery, lying, speaking evil of elders etc (Oluwabamide 2004).

The Yoruba believe that every criminal act committed in the society makes the gods of the land angry. If the offender is not quickly detected and punished, the gods may punish the entire community with pestilence or death. Oluwabamide (2004) argues that prior to the influence of Western Culture, the Yoruba mostly avoided criminal acts because of the fear of being destroyed by the gods. Such fear deterred most of them from engaging in criminal acts. Sometimes the gods strike offender with madness, death or any other evil, even before such offender is known and brought before the traditional court.

In carrying out punishment against criminals in Yoruba society, Sango (god of thunder) and Ogun (god of Iron)) are known to be prominent gods. Both gods are well acquitted with emission of fear to the hearts of every Yoruba man or woman. However, with modernization and westernization these people had experienced, less emphasis has been placed on these two gods as agents of supernatural punishment. Yet, the ironical fact is that Yoruba culture, particularly the non-material aspects, the humane, moralistic, humanistic and spiritual values are seen as superior, more meaningful, and more therapeutically beneficial, in terms of salvaging the twentieth century world of man inhumanity to man, greed, avarice heartless acquisitiveness and materialism (Sofola 1994).

Hence, the issues of non –conventional supernatural punishment of offender through the invocation of god of thunder (Sango) and god of iron (Ogun) is considered here to determine if they are still relevant and efficient in administration of punishment among these people as a way of punishing the offenders and deterring others in the society.

Statement of Problem

Sofola (1994) argues that Africans are now in the habit of cultural self debasement which was engineered through culture – contact with the colonialists and the missionaries which oriented the Africans towards westernization; the western form of education both at home and abroad; the western technology with its materialistic and individualistic outlook, the Western Criminal Justice Systems, and the colonial conscious propaganda to justify colonialism and civilizing mission.

These westernization and civilization have destroyed most of the important and core African values, norms and traditions even in the area of criminal justice systems of the people. Despite, the fact that modern policing, court

system and penal system have replaced the traditional ones among the African people, yet the African modern societies are experiencing more heinous crimes and offences that were not part of the pre-colonial African societies. The reason was not farfetched: The Criminal Justice Systems of the pre-colonial era which they feared and respected had been eroded through westernization and civilization. Such erosion had created a continuous rise in crime statistics and high rate of recidivism among the offenders, for the great fear of punishment from the gods and the societies are no longer in operation.

Objective of the Research

The main or general objective of the study was to determine if Sango (god of thunder) and Ogun (god of iron) among the Yoruba natives of western part of Nigeria are still effective in punishing criminals when they are invoked. However, the followings are the sub-objectives of the research work.

- 1) To determine if the Yoruba natives still fear the two gods (Sango and Ogun) as agents of punishment.
- 2) To investigate if the two gods (Sango and Ogun) are still relevant in administration of punishment to the criminals in these modern days
- 3) To determine if the two gods (Sango and Ogun) are still efficient in carrying out punishment when invoked.
- 4) To investigate if the Yoruba natives still prefer the punishment of the offenders by these gods (Sango and Ogun) to the modern judiciary and penal systems.

Research Questions

The following are the research question:

- 1) Do people still fear the two gods as agents of punishment?
- 2) Are these two gods still relevant in administering punishment on the criminals?
- 3) Are these two gods still efficient in punishing offenders when invoked?
- 4) Do Yoruba natives prefer the punishment of the two gods to modern judiciary and penal systems?

Scope of the Study

The Yoruba tribe in Nigeria occupies the south-western part of the country. The tribe consists of eight geopolitical states namely: Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti Kogi and Kwara. However, out of the

eight states, only three states were covered – Ogun, Oyo and Osun states and three towns were selected (one from each state) as our researching settings. Igbesa was selected from Ogun state, Ibadan from Oyo state and Ikire from Osun state.

Literature Review

The nonconventional penal authority and agency and hard or severe punishments are not peculiar to the African societies alone. They were practices common to the other ancient societies like Greece, Egypt, Aztec, Germany and India.

Dargie (2007) argues that the ancient Greeks took crime seriously and the citizens were expected to know the laws of the city. The Greeks believed in the punishment of the offenders by their gods and goddesses. Atsma (2011) argues that Erinyes were three underworld goddesses who avenged crimes against the natural order. They were particularly concerned with homicide, indecent conduct, crimes against the god and perjury. The wrath of the Erinyes manifested itself in a number of ways. The most severe of these was the tormenting matricide and patricide. Murderers might suffer illness or disease; and a nation harbouring such a criminal could suffer death, hunger and disease (Atsma 2011).

According to Wikipedia (2011), Hubris is another crime that was severely punished by Greek gods. Hubris in ancient Greek referred to actions that shamed and humiliated the victim for the pleasure or gratification of the abuser. These include mutilation of corpse, humiliation of defeated foe or irreverent outrageous treatment in general. It often resulted in fatal retribution or nemesis.

Greek gods in the history had been known to be severe agents of punishment. Pontikis (1999) wrote on the punishment of Tantalus for stealing divine food of the gods, exposing their sacrilegious secrets and for murdering his son. He was sentenced to reside forever in the underworld hanging from the bough of a fruit tree, perennially consumed by hunger and thirst yet he is unable to quench his needs.

Niobe, the daughter of Tantalus was equally punished by Leto (a goddess who was a mother of Apollo and Artemis) for her arrogance against the goddess. All the twelve children of Niobe were killed in the same day and this created everlasting sorrow for her. In the same vein, her brother Broteas, who was another child of Tantalus, was driven mad by goddess Artemis for refusing to honour her.¹ The Greeks brought to the world a number of awesome things. Most importantly; the Greek gods and goddesses were known to be severe executors of punishment, even for little and insignificant offences in the

¹ www.greekmyths-greekmythology.com/the-myth-of-tantalus-3124.

Greek mythology. For instance, Actaeon was turned to deer and later turned to stag and ripped to pieces by his dogs for gazing at the nakedness of goddess Artemis in his hunting expedition.

Arachne – a waiver boasted that she could out weave Athena the goddess and for insulting this goddess she was sent to depression and she later hanged herself. In the same manner, Sisyphus, Narkissos, Ixio, Tiresias and Prometheus suffered great punishments from Greek gods and goddesses for one trivial offence to another.²

Ancient Egypt believed in the eternal justice and punishment of their gods. The souls of the offenders after life were weighed and justice and punishment were meted out accordingly. In the same way, the Egyptian dealt quite pitilessly with criminals in this life. Officials who had been found wanting in performing their duties were outrightly removed. Other crime were punished with restitution of stolen property, fines, confiscation, imprisonment, forced labour, beatings, mutilation and banishment.³

The Aztecs had similar hard punishment. Adultery was punishable by death, commoner wearing cotton, cutting down living trees, moving a field boundary were also punishable by death, and in the same way major theft and treason against the state. Kidnappers and the children of the traitors were sold into slavery (Max and Jailan 1999) Tacitus (n.d) also enunciated great punishment against offenders in ancient Germany. For instance, traitors and deserters were suffocated in mud under a hurdle. However, in some trivial offences, convicts were fined in horses and cattle, some of which were given to the kings and victims or relatives of the victims.

In India, there was a strong link between law of karma and punishment. Under the law of karma, with sin comes divine punishment. Men rapidly began to lose their human status. This can lead to transformation of humans into animals of the lower order. For the transformation of souls, it is this principle which works as ongoing circle of cause and effects, crime and punishment, goodness and reward. Contrary to the rest of the world's religions; they see the earth as a place of punishment and reward (Ahmad 2011)

In traditional African societies, punishing deviants is one of the acts controlled by supernatural powers that inflict severe punishment on those who negate the positive sanctions as well as religious sanctions of the community (Oluwabamidele 2004). The gods in Yoruba land formed these supernatural powers. There are two prominent gods in Yoruba land which featured in the punishment of the offenders among these natives. One is Sango (the god of thunder) and the other one is Ogun (the god of iron). These two gods are still being worshiped among the Yoruba people and occupied important place in the lives of the worshipers.

² www.regretfulmorning.com.

³ www.reshafim.org

Very common to these gods were their abilities to search out and punish offenders among the natives. The work of the gods involved both searching out and punishing at the same time. Sango was a powerful man before he transitioned into a god. His father was called Oranmiyan and his mother was called Anumi Torosi Iyagbodo.

He was the third Alaafin of Oyo (the king over Oyo kingdom) when he was alive (Ojuade 1994). His deeds and speeches were full of terror and fear. He was very powerful and very bold. He loved to display his power through emission of fire from mouth (Daramola and Jeje 1975). However, he was forced to abdicate the throne for his overbearing and wickedness against his people; these were the factors which led to an insurrection that ousted him from power. Sango is now a powerful god among the Yoruba natives of western part of Nigeria. He disliked crime and offences of various kinds, especially the art of theft. A victim of theft can consult the god for the punishment of the offender, through the invocation of this god.

Such offender is expected to die through hauling of 'edun ara' (thunder bolt) at the offender. Such offender would be brought out into public place where every member of the community would gaze at his dead body. Such dead body of the criminal can only be buried by Sango worshippers after series of rituals had been performed, such rituals must be paid for by the relatives of the dead criminals (Daramola and Jeje 1975). Hence, Sango is a dreadful god, feared by the Yoruba natives. According to Abraham (1981), Ogun is a national god of the Yoruba. He is the god of iron and of war and therefore, the god of hunters and soldiers. Soldiers, blacksmiths and other who use iron implements also worship him. Ogun is worshipped only by men not women. Ogun is worshipped at the foot of an Odan tree, Akoko tree or Araba tree where iron had been embedded in the ground. According to Daramola and Jeje (1975), Ogun loves righteousness and truthfulness. He loves people having clean hearts towards their neighbors. Ogun cannot be cajoled or betrayed, that is why iron (his symbol) is an instrument of oath taking. Swearing by him is regarded as very strict, perjury in this case, is punishable by death (Abraham 1981). Ogun is a god that Yoruba natives fear. Ogun will never allow himself to be insulted and sanctity is embedded in his personality.

Suspects of crimes or offences can be brought before Ogun's shrine for swearing to prove their innocence. However, if such suspects were actually the perpetrators of the crimes, the penalty is sure. Such penalty is death through accidents e.g. motor accident gunshot accident and cutlass wound. This is the reason why Ogun is attributed with bloodshed. But for the fear of punishment by the god, some suspects may confess the crimes or offences they have committed and the penalties are awarded accordingly without swearing (Babalola *et al.* 1991).

Method / Methodology

The researchers used pure scientific method in investigating the questions posed in the research work. Science relies on logical and systematic methods to answer questions, and it does so in a way that allows others inspect and evaluate its method (Schutt 2004). Sociologists use scientific methods to investigate individuals, societies and social processes.

Research Design

The type of the research carried out in this study was evaluation research. Evaluation research seeks to determine the effects of a social program. The research considers the implementation and effects of social policies and programs (Schutt 2004). Survey design was used. In survey design, all members cannot participate. Therefore, a representative sample is constituted within a representative sample, and generalization is valid (Awwoke 2010).

Survey design involves the process of conducting a study of specific groups or populations. There is a variety of styles such as close – ended questionnaires, structured interview and observation, using data recording sheets (Fawole *et al.* 2001). Qualitative method was equally used. Soft data in form of impressions, words, sentences and photos served as part of the data gathered for the study (Adler and Clark 1999).

Sampling Technique and Sampling Size

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used. Probability samples are based on taking a given number of units of analysis from a list which represents some population under study. However, under non – probability sampling, the probability that a person will be chosen is not known, the investigator generally cannot claim that his sample is representative of the larger population (Ogunbameru 2003).

Simple random sampling under probability sampling technique was used to select three states out of the eight Yoruba geo-political states. A random sample is a sample selected in such a way that every item in the population has an equal chance of being included (Loto *et al.* 2008).

However, purposive or judgmental sampling method was used to select each of the three towns which formed the research settings of this work. In purposive sampling, the researcher selects sampling units based on his or her judgment of what units will facilitate an investigation (Adler and Clark 1999). Purposive sampling method was also used to select the man who participated

in the in-depth interview schedule. Convenience sampling was used in selecting the sample units (people) that participated in the filling of the questionnaire. Convenience sampling which is sometimes called an available – subjects are a group of elements (often people) that is readily accessible to, and therefore convenient for the researcher (Adler and Clark 1999, Neumann 2003).

A total number of six hundred people (600 subjects) form the ample size. Two hundred (200) subjects were selected from Igbesa in Ogun State, two hundred (200) subjects from Ibadan in Oyo State and another two hundred (200) subjects from Ikire, in Osun State.

Method of Data Collection

In methodology, this research was a quantitative and qualitative one. Quantitative research addresses the issues of integrity by relying on an objective technology such as precise statements, standard techniques, numerical measures, statistics and replication (Neumann 2003).

Questionnaire was used in the data collection. Questionnaires are appropriate methods of data collection for a range of topics. Question can be used to measure a person's level of knowledge about topic (Adler and Clark 1999). The kind of questionnaires that was used is individually administered questionnaire. It was implemented by hand delivering and picking it up after completion. Although very expensive but it yielded a better response rate. The questionnaires were both open ended and close ended ones. In addition to questionnaire, in –depth interview schedule was also used to complement the information from the questionnaires. The Respondent was given the opportunity to elaborate and clarify his answers through open ended questions.

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data that were generated from questionnaire were subjected to elementary quantitative analyses. The main characteristic of quantitative analyses is to summarize data by using statistics (Adler and Clark 1999). Univariate and bivariate analyses were used in the description of the samples. Frequency distribution tables were employed in the presentation of the data.

The interpretations of the data were done within the socio-cultural belief system of Yoruba natives regarding Sango and Ogun as agents of punishment. However, the photographs taken and information extracted from the interview schedules were subjected to content analyses.

Ethical Issues

No discussion of research on human beings can be complete without considering the ethical aspects of the process (Storer 1980). This research followed the rules of ethics. The informed consent was sought from the subjects and the purpose of the research was disclosed to them. The information gathered from the data were presented and interpreted in an aggregate form. Hence, the opinions of individual subject did not reflect or link to identity of such individual.

The Discussion of the Findings

The analyses from the quantitative data generated from questionnaires revealed that our male respondents were 180 (30%) of the total respondents. The female respondents were 420 (70%) of the entire respondents. In age analyses, 35% per cent of our respondents fall within the age bracket of 20-40, while 65% per cent falls within the age bracket 41-60.

The breakdown of religion shows that 20 (3%) of our respondents were traditionalists, 190 of our respondents (32%) were Muslims; while 390 of them (65%) were Christians. The analyses clearly show that the opinions of the three major religions in Nigeria were represented in our study. 76 per cent of the respondents questioned testified that they have the knowledge of the names and personalities of some major Yoruba gods and goddesses. The respondents included Sango, Ogun, Oya, Obatala, Esu, Saponna, Yemoja, Ifa, Egungun, Osun, Osanyin and Ayelala as major Yoruba deities they were familiar with. However, 24 per cent of the respondents declined having knowledge of names and personalities of the Yoruba deities.

Out of the major deities mentioned by the respondents, 83 per cent of the respondents agreed that Sango and Ogun are very prominent and cut across all the Yoruba cities towns and villages. However, 17 per cent did not agree to this fact. The overwhelming majority who subscribed to the fact that the two gods are very prominent and cut across every Yoruba city, town and village shows that the two gods are very popular and highly recognized by the Yoruba natives.

The survey conducted for this study clearly revealed that Sango and Ogun are gods that Yoruba natives still fear greatly irrespective of the religious belief systems. Table 1 (See the table 1) shows that 290 respondents (48%) of the total respondents strongly agreed that the two gods are still feared and highly respected by the Yoruba natives; 280 respondents (47%) of the total respondents agreed to this statement too. The total per cent of the people who either strongly agreed or agreed totaled 95%. It clearly shows that despite westernization, civilization, and practices of foreign religions, the two Yoruba gods

are still feared and respected by the Yoruba natives in Nigeria. These fear and respect were mostly recorded in the areas they administer punishments on those who break laws in the society.

The interview conducted for the 'otun mogba' (lieutenant to the Sango chief priest) complemented the statement that the two gods are still being feared and respected by the Yoruba natives. The content analyses of the statements made during the course of the interview testified that Yoruba natives still fear and respect these gods. The Yoruba natives still fear the thunder and lightning attributed to Sango and horrible accidents attributed to the consequential actions of Ogun.

The study also involved the determination of the relevance of these gods in the punishment of the offenders. Table 2 (see table 2) shows that 240 of our respondents (40%) strongly agreed that the gods are still being consulted to punish offenders; 320 of our respondents (53%) agreed in affirmation to this statement. In aggregate, 93 per cent strongly agreed and agreed to the statement that the two gods are still being consulted, therefore, relevant in the administration of punishments on law breakers. The interview conducted also testified that Yoruba natives are still consulting the two gods to punish offenders in the society. Available data from the field revealed that Yoruba natives still consult either of these two gods when they fall victims of stealing, and when cases of adultery are suspected or acts of fornication or incest are alleged. The gods can also be consulted for cases of lying, kidnapping, cheating, robbery, injustice, false witnessing etc. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the gods are still relevant in punishing the purported offenders among the Yoruba natives.

Apart from relevance of the gods in punishing the offenders, this study also sought for the efficiency of the gods in the punishment of the offenders. The interviewee consulted on this study agreed without any reservation with the efficacy of the gods in punishing the offenders of law. The interviewee was of the opinion that the two gods are still active and effective in punishing evil doers. Table 3 (see table 3) also confirmed this statement, 490 out of the 600 respondents (82%) confirmed that the two gods are still efficient in the punishment of the offenders when invoked. Only 110 out of the total respondents of 600 (18%) said no to the statement.

However, from the interview conducted, the efficiency or efficacy of the gods in punishing the offenders was confirmed. The interviewee confirmed that before the gods can be effective in punishing the offenders, they must be invoked by some ritual processes. For the invocation of Sango to punish the offenders, the ritual material things include: ram, cock, tortoise, palm oil, bitter kola and some amount of money. In the process of sending the god to avenge and punish the offender(s), a cock is slaughtered and the blood sprinkle on the image of the god. The ram is meant to be slaughtered after accomplishment of the mission of revenge and punishments. The other materials are presented to the god as sacrificial offerings.

Sango had never and can never punish innocent natives. Every person involved in the crime will be fetched out and punished accordingly. The god can never punish an innocent person but any living being that had the hand in the offence he had be consulted to punish. The god will strike thunder and lightning in the process of his mission, hauling 'edun ara' (thunder bolt) at the offender(s) (see figure 1 for the sample of the thunder bolt). Such offender(s) will be carried out supernaturally to an open place and if the case is a theft, the stolen object will be placed on the chest of the offender.

A story was told of a man in earliest 18th century at Ikire, Osun State Nigeria (one of the settings for this research work), who consulted Sango to avenge and punish a purported thief who stole his cowries wrapped in a rag and kept at a corner of his room. The god was invoked. However, when the "thief" was struck down and brought to the open place (it was a big house rat with the cowries wrapped in a rag, placed beside it). The rat had dragged the cowries wrapped in a rag into one of the holes inside the room. The inference that can be drawn here is that the god can punish any offender either human or non human.

An offender killed by the god cannot be buried by people who are not members of Sango cult. The Sango worshippers will be consulted and some sacrificial offerings presented by the family members of the dead offender. The Sango worshippers who will perform the burial service must be in a special cloth meant for this purpose (aso oyo orisa); a traditional pincer (emu) will be used to grip the hot thunder bolt which will be dropped inside an earthen vessel containing palm oil. After this, 'ero' (concoction of propitiation) will be sprinkled around the house where the incidence occurred. After further rituals (these were not disclosed to the researchers being uninitiated), then the Sango worshippers can proceed for the interment of the dead offender.

The invocation of Ogun can be done in these ways:

- 1) By gun washing: This involves washing the barrel of gun with water, after invoking some incantation in the water. The suspect of crime or offence will be asked to drink the water. If the suspect is actually guilty of the offence alleged, the punishment in form of motor accident, accidental gunshot or mysterious cutlass wound is a sure punishment. However, if the suspect is innocent, the god cannot inflict any punishment.

2. By crossing over gun or cutlass or by touching them with fore head: An invocation of Ogun can also be made by requesting the suspect to cross over a gun or cutlass or asking the suspect to touch the objects with forehead after incantation has been made.

3. By appearing before the shrine: a suspect can be summoned before the Ogun shrine to swear before the god to claim innocence of the crime or offence. If the suspect is actually guilty of the offence, the punishment is believed to come over

The person interviewed in this study strongly preferred the invocations of the gods in punishing the offenders to the modern criminal justice system. He claimed that modern ways are very slow and take time, unlike those of the two gods that are immediate. According to him, justice can be perverted in the modern criminal justice system. The judges can be bribed, but gods cannot be bribed and the punishments do not take months or years to be implemented. Furthermore, the cost of the administration of punishment through the modern criminal justice system is very high compared with the cost of the traditional ways of implementing the punishments through these gods.

One of the objectives of this research study is to find the means of incorporating the invocation of Sango and Ogun as agents of punishment in the modern criminal justice systems of the country, especially among the Yoruba geo-political states. In responding to the ways through which the invocation can be recognized in the modern criminal justice system, our respondents advocated that such invocations should first and foremost be recognized by the constitution of the country. According to the respondents, bills must be passed into law to accommodate such invocations, at least among the Yoruba geo-political states. In doing this, the worshippers and the recognized leaders of the traditional religion in these areas should be carried along.

Almost all the respondents gave their opinions in area of swearing-in-ceremony for the political and non-political office holders. The respondents advocated that every political office holder and other non-political office holders should be sworn-in into offices with the symbols of these gods. Such symbols are thunder bolt (edun-ara) and waden (Ose Sango) for Sango and cutlass for Ogun as god of iron. These objects should be used instead of Holy Bible and Holy Quran. Such swearing in ceremony should be performed at the presence of the priests corresponding to each of the gods. According to the respondents, this is the only way the public can be rest assured that the political and public office holders would not steal public fund to enrich themselves.

In law courts, suspects can be brought before the priests of these gods for invocations during the oath taking. Application of this method, according to some of our respondents, will lessen the burden of the law courts in administration of justice. Apart from courts of law, the suspects can be presented before the shrines of these gods for swearing and invocation to determine their innocence or otherwise, their guilt which may attract punishment afterward.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The two gods under our penological study still command fear and respect from Yoruba natives. Many are still their adherents throughout Yoruba land. There are many shrines (see figures 2, 3 and 4) of these gods among the Yoru-

ba natives. Such fear and respect that Yoruba natives still have for them make them remain agents of punishment that are still fearful and respected by these natives. This is the reason, why some Yoruba natives are still consulting them whenever they fall victims of crimes and offences in the society.

Our findings revealed that these gods are still ever efficient in the punishment of offenders or criminals if invoked. The belief of the people is that, these gods cannot fail in their responsibility of doing justice between the victim and the offender. The supernatural powers of the gods to punish still remain relevant and effective when consulted and invoked. Many offences and crimes can be punished by them if called to intervene. The natives still hold the belief despite being adherent embracement of the foreign religions. Therefore, the relevance and efficacy of these gods to punish offenders is a clear indication that they can serve as an alternative way or complementary way in the administration of criminal justice system in Nigeria, especially among the Yoruba geo-political states where these gods are feared and respected.

This paper, therefore, recommends that:

1. The matter of invocation of the two gods in the modern criminal justice systems should be looked into without prejudice and sentiment.
2. Opinion surveys on this matter should be conducted to know the feelings of the people on the issue, especially among the Yoruba natives.
3. If there are supporters for the invocation of these gods, a bill should be sponsored to cater for the enactment of the law that will back up the invocations legally within the society.
4. If it is eventually allowed constitutionally, political office holders and public office holders should assume offices, swearing under the invocations of these gods
5. Invocation should be allowed during the court proceedings

The implementation of these recommendations will go a long way in curbing mismanagement by offices holders who are entrusted with the resources of the entire society. These office holders would keep themselves under check in discharging their duties and responsibilities accordingly with good accountability of public fund and resources. The looting of public treasury will stop or at least reduce drastically, for no political or public office holder can afford to stand the wraths of these fearful gods. Finally, if the invocations are allowed constitutionally, it is expected that the rate of crime will reduce among the populace and the law enforcement agents burdens will reduce.

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FIGURE 1

A sample of edu ara (thunder bolt). This bolt will turn red and hot when Sango accomplishes his mission of punishment on the offender. Source: Researchers survey (02/04/2012.1.09pm, Nigerian time) at Lusada, Igbesa, Ogun State, Nigeria.



FIGURE 2

An entrance to hall which housed Sango' shrine at Kabiyesi' compound, Ikire, Osun State, Nigeria. Source: Researchers' survey (28/02/2012.10.09am, Nigerian time).



FIGURE 3

A "peregun" tree which housed Ogun shrine at Lusada, Igbesa, Ogun State, Nigeria. Source: Researchers' survey (05/03/2012.11.29am, Nigeria time).



FIGURE 4

An Ogun shrine (stone and cutlass) , at Agbegi's compound Ikire, Osun State, Nigeria. Source: Researchers' survey (28/02/2012.10.15am, Nigeria time)

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Table 1: Table showing the level of agreement on whether the two gods are still feared and respected by Yoruba natives

Religion	Strongly Agreed		Agreed		Strongly Disagreed		Disagreed	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional	20	(3%)						
Islam	60	(10%)	110	(19%)	20	(3%)	0	0
Christianity	210	(35%)	170	(28%)	10	(2%)	0	0
Total	290	(48%)	280	(47%)	30	(5%)	0	0

source: Researchers survey 2012

Table 2: Table showing the level of agreement on whether the two gods are still being consulted to punish offenders

Religion	Strongly Agreed		Agreed		Strongly Disagreed		Disagreed	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional	20	(3%)						
Islam	60	(10%)	110	(18%)			20	(3%)
Christianity	160	(35%)	210	(35%)	10	(2%)	10	(2%)
Total	240	(40%)	320	(53%)	10	(2%)	30	(5%)

source: Researchers survey 2012

Table 3: Table showing whether the two gods are still efficient in carrying out punishments on offenders

Religion	YES		NO	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional	20	(3%)		
Islam	130	(22%)	60	(10%)
Christianity	340	(57%)	50	(8%)
Total	490	(82%)	110	(18%)

source: Researchers survey 2012

Table 4: Table showing whether the people prefer the punishments of the gods to modern criminal justice system

Religion	Strongly Preferred		Preferred		Strongly Not Preferred		Not Preferred	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional	20	(3%)						
Islam	40	(7%)	50	(8%)	20	(3%)	80	(13%)
Christianity	130	(22%)	120	(20%)	40	(7%)	100	(17%)
Total	190	(32%)	170	(28%)	60	(10%)	180	(30%)

source: Researchers survey 2012

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Procena relevantnosti i efikasnosti Joruba bogova kao agenata kažnjavanja: studija o Sangu i Ogunu

Osnovni cilj ovog rada je bio da istraži relevantnost i efikasnost Joruba bogova prilikom administriranja kazne i pravde po izvršenju zločina. Dva Joruba božanstva su izabrana za istraživanje (Sango i Ogun). Uzorak je činilo šest stotina učesnika sa tri lokaliteta iz tri geopolitičke države u zapadnom delu Nigerije.

Univarijantne i bivarijantne analize su korišćene u deskripciji uzoraka, a tabele distribucije frekventnosti su upotrebljene za prezentaciju podataka. Rezultati pokazuju da Joruba stanovništvo još uvek gaji strah i poštovanje prema bogovima. Bogovi su i dalje relevantni i efikasni u primeni kazne nakon izvršenog zločina. Joruba stanovništvo pokazuje preferencije ka nekonvencionalnim kaznama koje ova božanstva sprovode spram kazni modernih pravnih sistema. Na kraju, ovaj rad preporučuje sprovođenje istraživanja javnog mnjenja na temu uključivanja invokacija ovih bogova u pravni sistem Nigerije i moguće implementacije invokacija u zvanične ceremonije polaganja zakletvi za političare i druge javne službenike i njihovu primenu u nigerijskim sudovima.

Ključne reči: Sango, Ogun, kazna, invokacija, pravni sistem, Joruba nativno stanovništvo

Re-évaluation la pertinence et l'efficacité des dieux Yoruba comme agents du châtement: une étude sur Sango et Ogun

L'objectif general de cet article a été d'examiner la pertinence et l'efficacité des dieux Yoruba dans l'administration de la justice autrement dit des châtements pour des délits commis. Deux dieux Yoruba (Sango et Ogun) ont notamment été choisis. Six cents (600) participants ont été convenablement sélectionnés venant de trois endroits des trois régions géopolitiques dans la partie occidentale du Nigeria. Des analyses à une et à deux variables ont été utilisées dans la description des échantillons et des tableaux de distribution de fréquences ont été utilisés dans la présentation des données. Les résultats révèlent que les autochtones Yoruba craignent et respectent encore leurs dieux. Les dieux continuent à être pertinents et efficaces dans l'administration du châtement pour les délits commis. Les autochtones Yoruba montrent leur préférence pour les châtements non conventionnels venant de ces dieux plutôt que pour le système de justice pénale moderne. Enfin, l'article préconise les sondages d'opinion sur l'inclusion des invocations de ces dieux dans les systèmes de justice pénale du Nigeria et les probables applications des invocations dans le serment officiel prêté lors des cérémonies par des fonctionnaires d'état et les politiques et enfin l'administration des invocations dans les cours de justice nigériennes.

Mots clés: Sango, Ogun, châtement, invocation, système de justice pénale, autochtones Yoruba

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