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**Zangbeto: The Traditional Way of Policing and Securing
the Community among
the Ogu (Egun) People in Badagry, Nigeria**

Abstract: This paper is an ethnological and anthropological study of Zangbeto among the Ogu (Egun) people of Badagry, in Nigeria. The study utilized survey design approach with emphasis on qualitative method: interview, focus group discussion and key informant investigation. Purposive and convenience sampling procedures under non-probability sampling were used in selecting the study area and respondents who participated in the study (n=40). The data gathered from the field of study were analyzed, using content analysis method. The findings in the study revealed that Zangbeto still remains an effective social machinery of policing and securing the lives and properties in the Badagry community. It also played a prominent role in making peace among the feuding parties in the community and still remains an avenue of social entertainment and cultural display. The study called for the legal backing of Zangbeto as a traditional way of policing and security the lives and properties in this community and the continuous researches of African societies to uncover ways through which African societies can help themselves where westernization has failed them.

Key words: Badagry, policing, securing, cultural, traditional way, Zangbeto

Introduction

Every society has ways of ensuring that members keep to the norms of the society. This is to avoid normlessness which may bring chaotic situation to the society, and ensure that peace and orderliness prevail. Hence, every society has its own means of controlling the social behaviours of its citizens in order to reach these desired goals (Oraegbunam 2010).

Before the colonialists pumped their way into the land later named Nigeria, there had been effective traditional systems of arbitration and crime control in every community. There were institutions for doing these. These institutions entailed both formal and informal constraints. Informal constraints involved sanctions, denial of speech, taboos, customs and mores. The formal ways involved laws, property rights and unwritten traditional constitutions (Okunola and Ikuomola 2012)

However, with the introduction of modern system of government, the function of guiding and controlling interpersonal relationships in the society have been taken over by the modern system of government through the law makers, judiciary, executive arms of government and some established law enforcement agencies, especially, the police.

Unfortunately, the Nigeria police has been highly criticized by various human rights agencies, community based organizations, the press and the academia for its inability to stem the rising tide of crimes in Nigeria (Okunola and Ikuomola 2012). As a result of this, various alternative means such as the use of vigilante, Oodua People's Congress, Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys and Arewa Youth Vanguard, developed and are still being agitated for to serve as means of preventing and controlling crime. For cities without militant groups, other traditional means of crime control exist (Okunola and Ikuomola 2012). However, these alternative means to modern police have been characterized with violence (Hunsu 2012).

Zangbeto is one of the traditional ways of crime control among the Ogu (Egun) people of Badagry, Nigeria. Zangbeto does not make use of violence in preventing and controlling crime. Zangbeto is a masquerade which serves the purpose of cultural entertainment in the day but a powerful mechanism of policing and securing the community at night.

This paper is an outcome of research conducted on Zangbeto as a traditional way of policing and securing the community among the ogu (Egun) people in Badagry, Nigeria. It looks at the possible ways of incorporating the Zangbeto into a legal system of crime control in Nigeria, especially, among the Ogu (Egun) people in Badagry community to compliment the efforts of the Nigeria Police in stemming down the crime rate in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the traditional function of Zangbeto, in policing and securing the community in Badagry, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigates the processes of policing and securing the community to prevent and control crime. It also examines the possible way of giving legal back up to Zangbeto in controlling crime in the community. The study also identifies other functions of Zangbeto apart from crime control fun-

ction. Lastly, the summary objective is to present Zangbeto as an ethnological and anthropological issue among Ogu (Egun) people.

Significance of the Study

Crime is a colossal problem in Nigeria. Lives and property are unsafe. The well being of the country is at stake. The peaceful coexistences of Nigerians are under crime siege. The Nigeria Police have failed woefully in preventing and controlling crime in Nigeria. The Police, which is supposed to be law enforcers, have turned to be law breakers as a result of corruption, brutality and unfriendliness to the citizens of Nigeria. Hence, Nigeria police is not living up to the expectation of the people. Therefore, there is a need to embrace the traditional ways of preventing and controlling crime in the community, more also, that vigilante and other neighborhood security operatives have been characterized with violence. Zangbeto as traditional way of crime control is brought into focus in this study. This will enrich the literature in area of traditional crime control social mechanisms and the ways through which traditional crime control measures can be complimentarily incorporated into the modern ways of crime prevention and control. Lastly, the study shows that not all the traditional ways of crime prevention and control are violent.

Literature Review: The Institution of Zangbeto

The Ogu (Egun) people prefer in their quantum culture, zangbeto. Zangbeto is highly regarded and respected in Badagry and its neighbouring communities (Ajiboye *et al* 2012; Ajiboye and Adebayo, 2012). Zangbeto is a group, an institution and a way of life that is represented in physical form by the mask (Hunsu, 2011). Zangbeto is a deity, a masquerade, used in sustaining the law and order of the society (Ajiboye *et al* 2012, Ajiboye and Adebayo 2012). Zangbeto are the traditional voodoo guardians of the night (Encyclopedia, 2012; Jane 2011).

Zangbeto dates back to several centuries when an Egun man was said to have been pursued by his enemies and needed to flee from his hometown unnoticed in the night. Using supernatural powers he disguised himself by covering his body with dried leaves and raffia and by making scary sounds with the horns of an animal. Thus, he was eventually able to leave the town unharmed and undetected by his enemies. He later founded a settlement, which he named Hugbonu and subsequently had the men with him dressed in a similar manner and keep watch over the new settlement by night to ensure that his enemies did not at-

tack him in his new home. Since then, zangbeto has been used to keep watch over settlements and towns of the Egun Community (Hunsu 2011).

Another view holds that zangbeto first emerged as a group to protect the coastal township against external incursions. Neighbouring kingdoms and states in the mid 19th century were interested in gaining control of Badagry, because, with its seaport, it was both a strategic link in the trans-atlantics trade and a terminus for trade routes from the interior. Given Badagry's history and strategic location, it was logical that a group such as zangbeto would be formed to protect the town from its powerful neighbours (Hunsu 2011).

Zangbeto at a certain point expanded its scope to include entertainment. Hence, Zangbeto becomes synonymous with cultural entertainment and the group was encouraged to perform at state functions. The mystical oeuvre of night watching, gives way to a more pervasive promotion of cultural values and heritage. The audience is treated to the entertaining sight and sound of Egun dance, music and spectacular masquerade performance (Hunsu 2011).

Zangbeto provides entertainment during ceremonies. He dances by spinning around fast, shrinking and growing in height as he turns. There are public displays of power. Zangbeto drives motor cycles, crosses rivers by walking on water, and transforms buckets of water unto palm wine. Zangbeto can also become tiny and dance inside a bottle (Jane 2011, Ekah 2012).

Zangbeto is a reformer of a weak life style. In the early history of the Egun natives, children, who were not physically fit, or who lacked physical courage, skills and stamina were open or prone to dangers and were burden to the society. In order to reform and improve their life styles, the society encouraged children to develop all rigors of outdoor life through physical activities and dances like Zangbeto, Sato, Pasha, Hungan and Akoto (Ajiboye *et al*, 2012).

Children were taught how to develop their muscles, through physical exercises so that they can cope with their daily activities without getting fatigued easily. It is a process of coping with their wants and a fear to the visible forces and the invisible ones that affects their life styles (Ajiboye *et al* 2012).

Hunsu (2011) argues that Zangbeto acts as peacemaker. Zangbeto acts as peacemaker. Zangbeto can act as mediator in a conflict. The mediating of Zangbeto cuts across ethnic and religious persuasions. Whenever there is a lingering crisis between members of the community and it is brought to the king, the zanga (the head of zangbeto group) is sent to intervene and settle it. But if after this, the parties refuse to settle the quarrel amicably, the king or chief then directs Zanga to take the Gbeto to the homes of those concerned, who are automatically forbidden from entering their homes without first reporting at the king's palace where the quarrel would be eventually settled.

Morality appears to be a major concern of Zangbeto, for there is always a continuous reminder sounded in the songs to make sure that the members of the Egun community perform their family obligations or responsibilities. For exam-

ple, Zangbeto considers that a man is not a man at all if he cannot fulfill his obligations to his family members, and such behaviour cannot be condoned by the society. Therefore, Zangbeto promotes social values that protect women and children from being abused and oppressed by the family adult men (Hunsu 2001).

Religious groups are fond of warning their members against taking part in traditional occult practices either as performers or audience onlookers. A plausible reason why Zangbeto survives among the Egun natives may be as a result of the claim that Zangbeto is not a religion or cult. All the members have their religious separate from Zangbeto and see Zangbeto membership as a call to serve their community. Zangbeto is not a god and is not to be worshipped. Hence, there is a religious syncretism. By syncretism, they mean that Badagry indigenes subscribe to religious or cult practice other than Christianity or Islam which most of them profess (Hunsu 2011). Jean Price Mars has done a lot of work on religion syncretism. He has contributed to the disciplines of religion, religious pluralism cultural studies and the religious tolerance (Celucien 2012). In Zangbeto membership, there is religious syncretism and tolerance. Zangbeto festival is celebrated in April every year and usually last for one week. Zangbeto festival brings the people of Badagry at home and abroad together to promote their cultural values.

Zangbeto: A Traditional Way of Crime Prevention and Control

All prohibited acts or taboos are crimes in African societies and any person committing any of them is regarded as a criminal and is punishable. Abnormal behavior which is not in conformity with the norms of society is a criminal act (Adewale 1994). According to Oraegbunam (2010), crime and criminal activities are co-eval with man, breeding disharmony in his society and the natural order in general.

Okafo (2006) was of the opinion that native African ideas and models of law and justice are best suited for social control in African societies. Africans should, therefore, prefer the ideas and models for many reasons, including the fact that Native African system of law and justice derive fundamentally from African societies, rather than from foreign cultures. Under the African Justice systems, attempts to restore the emotional and material losses of the victim were made, unlike the European law which relies on the offenders and their illegal actions against the government and its laws, rather than focusing on restoration and reinstatement for the victims and their communities (Onwudiwe and West 2007). In African societies, all the people were involved in the social and political administration of the land especially in area of social or crime control (Elechi 2006)

African societies had the institutions they used in crime prevention and control before they came in contact with colonial masters. They may be in form of rituals which promised security (Nevadomsky 1993). Protective symbol placed on a property to forbid theft and trespass (Okunola and Ojo 2011) or well established institutions or cults which were used in political and criminal Justice systems. For instance, there was Oro cult, among the pre-colonial political system of Yoruba natives, which performed these functions (Okunola and Ojo 2012)

Among Ogu (Egun) people of Badagry, in Nigeria, Zangbeto is an institution which performs the function of crime control and disputes arbitration. The Zangbeto is believed to have supernatural power. It is seen and generally regarded as a cultural emblem of the Egun people, whose visibility is enhanced in contemporary times by the security functions it performs within Badagry and surrounding villages (Hunsu 2011)

Zangbetos are the traditional voodoo guardians of the night. The Zangbetos are highly revered and act as an unofficial police force patrolling the streets and watching over people and tracking down criminals and presenting them to the community to punish. They wander around to detect thieves and dispense justice (Encyclopedia 2011). Although, Zangbeto does make appearances during the day, his main work takes place at night in keeping watch over the community. He is followed by a group of drummers and makes an eerie humming noise to announce his arrival. Zangbeto is a supernatural living being, which can see and perform wonderful acts. During the night watch, the horn is sounded to announce the beginning of the watch and to alert people that the group is about coming out (Jane 2011; Hunsu 2011).

Zangbeto could notice anyone loitering within a radius of 500 metres and thieves and other criminals can be arrested by Zangbeto. As serious as the traditional community policing and mediation of conflict are, the Zangbeto explore and adopt various avenues for the effective performance of these functions (Hunsu 2011).

African societies believed in the activities of witches and witchcraft. A number of measures can be taken to deal with the power of witches. There are medicines prescribed by the diviners and there is membership of one of the cults explicitly opposed to witches such as Oro, Egungun, Gelede and of course Zangbeto (CSAC 2012). Zangbeto can detect witches and evil doers during the night watches. When they are in trance, they have magical abilities to detect and scare away witches (Encyclopedia 2011).

Zangbeto is recognized by the Nigeria police who accept alleged criminal offenders handed over to it by zangbeto groups, and there is a cooperative relationship between Zangbeto groups and the police. Zangbeto is beneficiary to all adherents of every religion. They enjoyed the activities of Zangbeto as a traditional security group (Hunsu 2011).

Zangbeto as a traditional vigilante institution has survived and maintained its integrity and relevance in Badagry and the other Egun communities as traditional military – cum-police outfit that defended the people and maintained law and order in the communities. From the foregoing, we can infer that Zangbeto functions as a night watcher, cultural and community group, and has survived and adapted to change in the face of the coming of Christianity, Islam, changing socio-economic conditions and rapid urbanization (Hunsu 2011).

Research Methodology Applied

This study was purely empirical. We used scientific methods in the study. 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). We cannot contact all the indigenes of Badagry on this study. Hence, we employed survey design in our study. It involves the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions (Schutt 2004).

Qualitative method was used in this study. Qualitative researches emphasize detailed examinations of cases that arise in the natural flow of social life (Neuman 2003). Qualitative data were generated from the form of impressions, words, sentences and photos (Adler and Clark 1999).

Multi stage sampling was employed in this study. We used purposive sampling in the selection of Badagry town for this study. Badagry is selected because it is a unique case that is especially informative (Neuman 2003). It is the only community where Zangbeto is being practiced in Nigeria. Secondly, we used the same purposive sampling in selecting the High Chief who was our key informant in this study. We purposely selected him because he was in the position to provide in–depth investigation that the nature of this research work demanded.

Convenience sampling was used in selecting the respondents that participated in the interviews and the focus group discussion conducted for this study. They were the samples that were readily accessible to us and therefore convenient for us (Adler and Clark 1999).

In the research of this topic, qualitative approach was purely used. We employed in depth interview, focus group discussion and the key informant investigation as the methods or instruments of our data collection. Thirty-seven (37) in depth interviews were conducted. One (1) focus group discussion was arranged (with two participants in attendance) and one (1) key informant investigation was done. Our key informant was a high chief in charge of traditional religions and culture in Badagry (Aplogan of Badagry). He was seventy – two years of age. The key informant investigation was conducted in his palace (Wheta palace) in Poskoh quarters of Badagry. We equally used photograph data in this study.

For the analyses of our qualitative data we got from the interviews, focus group discussion and key informant investigation conducted, we used content analysis. The interpretations of the data were done, within the socio-cultural belief system of Ogu (Egun) natives, on Zangbeto masquerade cult as social instrument of policing, securing and entertaining the community of Badagry.

No discussion of research on human beings can be complete without considering the ethical part of the research (Storer 1980). We took into cognizance, the ethics in research. We sought for the consents of the participants before the commencement of the research. We told them what the research was all about and the purpose for conducting it. Some people that were sampled for the interview declined on the ground that the discussion of the topic would violate their religions and consciences. Hence, we did not include them among our participants (thirteen of them) for the in- depth interviews conducted. When we visited our key informant, we were very careful not to break the traditional taboo related to the entry of the palace. We were asked to put off our shoes before entry, which we obliged to, to avoid breaking the research ethical issue. Moreover, answers were not provided to some question which the key informant taught were not meant for the consumption of uninitiated members. We tried not to press him further. The anonymity of our respondents was guaranteed, except the key informant who said his identity may be revealed. The information gathered was only used for the purpose of this study.

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The data presented were got from Badagry Township. Badagry consists of eight (8) quarters, namely: Jegba , Poskoh , Wharakoh , Ganho, Awhanjikoh, Boekoh, Ahovikoh and Asagoh. Our key informant was from poskoh quarters and one of our participants in focus group discussion. Others were from Boekoh. Our interviewees cut across other quarters in Badagry Township.

Table 1: Table Showing the Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respdents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	24	60.0
Female	16	40.0
Total	40	100.0
Age		
20 years below	2	5.0
20-30 years	11	27.5

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
31-40 years	7	17.5
40 years above	20	50.0
Total	40	100.0
Religion		
Christianity	30	75.0
Islam	9	22.5
Traditional Religion	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0
Indigenosity		
Indigenes	19	47.5
Non-indigenes	21	52.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2012.

Zangbeto is a popular masquerade cult in Badagry and its environs. Thirty-two of our respondents admitted that they were very familiar with the Zangbeto as a masquerade cult. Their familiarities with Zangbeto came as a result of being indigenes of Badagry, non-indigenes that have been living for long in the Badagry Township and as a custodian of traditional religions and culture (as claimed by our key informant).

Majority of our respondent considered Zangbeto as an important and indispensable culture of Ogu (Egun) people, of Badagry. Asking questions on its origin and its importance, our key informant says:

"Zangbeto is as old as the community itself. The Zangbeto was invented by our fore fathers to protect and guide their community against intruders. It is an important part of our culture and way of our community that we cannot do without". (Key Informant /High Chief Ayeni, Possu /18/10/12).

Most of our respondents strongly agreed that Zangbeto still remain very relevant in the ogu (Egun) community of Badagry. Thirty-one respondents out of forty people who participated in our study agreed without any reservation that the zangbeto still remain relevant and vibrant part of the cultural life in Badagry community. Our Key Informant had this to say:

"Zangbeto is still active and very relevant in spite of westernization in our community" (Key Informant /High Chief/Ayeni, Possu/ 18/10/12).

The key informant explained further that Zangbeto, Oro, Egungun and other religious activities were under his supervision as the high chief in charge of traditional religions and culture in Badagry Township. Those religious acti-

vities were carried out when necessary with his permission and coordination. Truly, during the course of our investigation, our discussion were interrupted by his Olori (his wife and queen) who came to deliver the message of Igunuko group (a masquerade group) who came to seek for the permission to carry out their masquerade activities in the town. Hence, religious and cultural activities (Zangbeto included) were still relevant and vibrant in this community. Our key informant claimed:

"Zangbeto will continue to be relevant as long as crime exists in the society and as long as evil doers and conflicts remain in our society". (Key Informant/High Chief /Ayeni, Possu/18/10/12)

We requested our respondents to say whether Zangbeto performs some special functions in the community. Virtually, all our respondents agreed that Zangbeto performs some special and important functions in the Badagry community. They admitted that they were of, aware and felt the positive functions of Zangbeto in the community. Those functions were performed in the night as well as in the day. The operations that were carried out by the group in the night itself is termed "Zangbeto" and their operation in the day is termed "Klegbeto" as explained by our key informant. This shall be explained later in this study.

Zangbeto and Crime Prevention and Control

Zangbeto means night watchman. "Zan" in Egun language means night. Hence, Zangbeto mean 'the man that watches over night'. Most of the crimes in the community, especially the crimes affecting property were usually committed in the night. Hence, most of the functions of zangbeto in fighting crime were performed in the night.

According to our key informant, there are eight quarters in Badagry community. Each quarter has its own Zangbeto group headed by a Zanga. Each Zanga coordinates the activities of the Zangbeto group under his jurisdiction. However, there exist networks among the Zangbeto groups in all the quarters in their modus operandi. They all worked together in fighting crime in the night. For instance, Zangbeto group in poskoh can signal to the group in Aw-hanjikoh, for assistance and reinforcement during the night operation.

Most of the criminals that were usually arrested by Zangbeto were petty thieves, burglars and on some occasions, armed robbers. One of our interviewees said:

"The Zangbeto groups were very helpful to us in this community. One of the areas we enjoyed their communal crime prevention and control is in area of arresting the thieves, especially in the night". (IDI/Male /Resident /18/10/12)

On some occasions, Zangbeto was mentioned in the prevention of cases of armed robbery in the community. An interviewee had this to say:

"I can still remember some incidences of armed robbery in the past. Zangbeto groups came to the rescue of the communities involved and the armed robbers were prevented from carrying out their operations. So, I can rightly say that they really assisted the communities in curbing armed robbery in Badagry." (IDI/Female Resident /18/10/12)

In the course of our focus group discussion, a discussant admitted that Zangbeto really assisted in fighting armed robbers in the Badagry community. The discussant had this to say:

"I remember Mr. X who single handedly arrested four armed robbers in his quarter. When the police were alerted of the robbery operation going on, they came to the scene of the robbery, but later fled from the armed robbers. However, Mr. X, being a member of Zangbeto group, came out and confronted the armed robbers. Three of the armed robbers were arrested that day. The fourth one was arrested the second day through the intervention of other Zangbeto members in his quarter". (FGD/Female Resident (Discussant)/18/10/12)

From our findings, the respondents admitted that Zangbeto works hand in hand with the Nigeria police in the Badagry community and its environ. The respondents explained that criminals arrested in the night by Zangbeto were usually handed over to the police. However, they complained that police, occasionally, did not usually charge the accused to court for prosecution. This was as a result of corruption in the Nigeria police.

*Zangbeto: An Antidote to Evil People and
People of Questionable Characters*

Zangbeto and the evil people cannot be friends. Zangbeto has the power to render the operations of the witches and wizards useless in the night. One of our interviewees (Male, 40 years + a Christian) admitted that Zangbeto can arrest the power of witches and wizards in the community.

In order to substantiate this, our key informant had this to say during the course of our investigation:

"No Witch can operate whenever Zangbeto is performing his night watch. Whenever Zangbeto makes his humming noise to announce his arrival, witches and wizards powers would be rendered inoperative. The witches and the wizards in the community fear greatly, Zangbeto because their powers were kept in check by Zangbeto". (Key Informant/High Chief Ayeni, Possu /18/10/12).

People with questionable characters and deeds can also be checkmated by the Zangbeto. Alleged criminals, fraudsters etc. can be made to appear before Zangbeto for swearing, to determine their innocence or otherwise. Furthermore our key informant explained to us that Zangbeto can also be invoked to banish people of questionable characters from the community. He had this to say in the course of our investigation:

"Zangbeto can also be used to banish people of questionable characters from the community. In doing this, the name of the alleged person would be placed under Zangbeto invocations. Within the seven days of the invocations, the person would vacate the community because he or she cannot withstand the invocative power of Zangbeto" (Key Informant/High Chief Ayeni, Possu/ 18/10/12).

*Zangbeto (Klegbeto): The Security Guard of the Property
In the Community*

As explained to us, 'Klegbeto' were the operations of the Zangbeto group that were pertinent to the day. "Kle" means day. Most of the security works of guarding and protecting property were done during the day by the group. In doing this, a part of the "raffia" dress of Zangbeto called "Gbeto" can be removed from the raffia dress and placed on the property that is to be protected or guarded. One of our interviewees comments on the function of Zangbeto as a protector of property in the community:

"The function of Zangbeto is that you can use it to protect your property from being stolen or to prevent trespass on such property. For instance, you can use zangbeto to protect your land from being trespassed on". (IDI/Female Resident/ 18/10/12)

Some of our interviewees pointed out that farm lands can also be guarded and secured by Zangbeto emblem to ward off thieves on such farmlands. Furthermore an interviewee (Female, 40 years + a Christian) confirmed that the emblem (a piece of Zangbeto raffia) can be tied in front of a house, whenever the occupants were not around. This is to ward off thieves or burglars from breaking into such house when the occupants were away. The emblem from the raffia dress of Zangbeto, used for the purpose of protecting and securing the property is called "Gbeto".

Zangbeto: The Community Peace Maker and Disputes Settler

Dispute settlement is one of the functions of Zangbeto. The Zangbeto was known to be peace maker in the community. Our key informant explained to us that fights or conflicts in the community can be brought before Zangbeto for settlement. The conflict, according to him, may be between two or more

quarters in the community. It may also be between two or more people in the community. Family dispute or matters, especially between husband and wife can be referred to Zangbeto. Hence, Zangbeto in Badagry community performs traditional judiciary function. The guilty persons would be reprimanded and admonished, to allow peace to reign. They equally performed restorative function between the offender and the offended and the community at large.

Zangbeto can also be called upon to mediate in the matter of house tenancy. One of our interviewees gave the following comment on this:

"Some tenants that are stubborn and troublesome can be handled with the intervention of Zangbeto. If such tenants refused to turn over new leaf, the Zangbeto can be used to chase away such stubborn and troublesome tenants from the community." (ID/Male /Resident /18/10/10).

Very relevant to this function is the function of Zangbeto in debt settlement. Zangbeto can be called upon to intervene in the collection of money owed by the debtors in the community. An interviewee gave a comment relevant to this function, thus:

"Zangbeto is a traditional debt collector. A creditor can call upon Zangbeto to intervene in the collection of the money being owned by a debtor. The unrepentant, hardened and such tardy debtor on such intervention had no alternative rather than making the payment of such debt quickly. Hence, conflict between creditor and debtor can be easily solved by Zangbeto". (IDU/Male Resident /18/10/12)

Zangbeto: A Social Group for Entertainment

Discussions on Zangbeto would not be complete without discussing their value in cultural entertainment in Badagry community. Hunsu (2011) argued that zangbeto is synonymous with cultural entertainment. The mystical and spectacular oeuvre that pervades its appearance at night is played down in order to allow the audiences enjoy the performances.

According to Hunsu (2011), there are usually two to four masquerades (believed to represent ancestral spirits and possessing some supernatural powers) covered in raffia (see figure 1), who are escorted by men and women alike on such occasions.

Our key informant (High Chief Ayeni Possu) explained that a woman cannot head a Zangbeto group neither can a woman take part in the night watch activities of Zangbeto. However, he admitted that women were always present during the social entertainment where Zangbeto performed. According to him women were good in praising and eulogizing Zangbeto.

The key informant informed us that women can assume a position in Zangbeto group called "Omadato" (a women affairs' coordinator). She (Omadato)

coordinates all the activities involving women; such activities are: songs, praises, cooking and any other activities peculiar to women folk). Women therefore, can only take part during the cultural entertainment of the group. However, when it comes to night watching, women stayed away and dare not come out. All the night operations of Zangbeto were exclusively men's affairs.

Virtually, all our respondents made mention of cultural entertainment as another important function of Zangbeto when we asked them to mention other functions apart from policing, securing and making peace in the society. The respondents who took part in our study confirmed Zangbeto group as "first class" cultural entertainer in Badagry community.

Zangbeto, in a costume of raffia, which usually look like hay stack (see figure 1 for the traditional costume), provides entertainment during ceremonies, festivals and state functions. Zangbeto dances by spinning around. He can shrink and grow in height as he turns. Zangbeto can display some magical power publicly. For instance, Zangbeto can swallow splinters of glass without being harmed, cross rivers by walking on water, transform water into palm-wine or become tiny and dance inside a bottle. Zangbeto cultural entertainment is also an avenue for the members to express their solidarity and social obligation in songs. The Zangbeto group considers solidarity and commitment a serious matter in the constitution of the membership and this was usually expressed in the presence of a live audience (Hunsu 2011). During the cultural display of Zangbeto, it was a forbidden thing for the people to wear shoes when approaching Zangbeto to masquerade. Anybody who breaks this rule may be thrashed with cane.

Furthermore, it is a taboo for the children to mimic the earie humming noise of Zangbeto. The parents of any child or children who break this rule would be fined by the Zangbeto group. All the community people know these rules and keep them whenever the Zangbeto appears to display during cultural entertainment.

Zangbeto: Who Constitutes the Membership?

The spirit of solidarity and commitment which is indispensable to Zangbeto membership prompted us to ask our key informant: who are the people that normally constitute the membership of Zangbeto? In replying us, he said that the person must be at least eighteen (18) years old. Such person must be a person of unquestionable and impeccable characters and manners. In becoming the member, the person must be initiated in the night in a place called "Avari" which serves as a shrine for oath making. Such person would be requested to swear an oath of allegiance to the group and the entire Badagry community.

After the initiation, the person initiated would bring local gin, kola nut, bitter kola and alligator pepper as gifts to the other members, especially the leaders of the group. Moreover, if the person is rich enough, he can bring food and other refreshments to the shrine to entertain the members.

Zangbeto or the Police?

We requested from our respondents to make a choice between Zangbeto, as policing and securing social mechanism in the Badagry community, and the Nigeria police. Some of the respondents preferred Zangbeto as a local police to the Nigeria police. There are many reasons for this, according to their responses in the process of our investigation. One of our interviewees preferred Zangbeto to Nigeria Police and this can be inferred in her statement thus:

"I prefer Zangbeto to Nigeria police. Modern Police in Nigeria are not trustworthy. You cannot trust them at all. But people in the group (Zangbeto) are people of good conduct in the community. We know them and appreciate them". (IDI/Female Resident 18/10/12).

The spiritual power that zangbeto possesses is another reason some people prefer Zangbeto to Nigeria police. An interviewee said this in the process of our interviewing her on her preference:

"I would prefer Zangbeto to Nigeria police. People believe in the potency of their power. People fear them. Their punishment on the offender is felt immediately, not like the police or judiciary way that is prolonged and often not given to the offender". (IDI/Female Resident 18/10/12)

Faithfulness is another reason some of our respondents preferred Zangbeto to Nigeria police. They admitted that in faithfulness and sincerity, the Zangbeto group is far better than the Nigerian police. Another factor for preferring Zangbeto to Nigeria police is that Zangbeto performs selfless service to the community, unlike the Nigeria police who were usually paid for the services they render to the community, most of the time, apart from the salaries they received from the government.

In order to buttress this point, one of our discussants in the focus group discussion who told us the story of MR. X that single handedly arrested four armed robbers in his quarter admitted that Zangbeto is a selfless service to the community. She told us what the community leaders told the man after the successful arrest of the armed robbers as follows:

"The day he arrested the armed robbers, people in the community highly praised him. However, he complained of the non-recognition of his service by the police and the government. In order to encourage him, the high chief and other community leaders reminded him that Zangbeto service are for the community people to enjoy and that it is only God that can faithfully and adequately reward such services to the people who do them". (FGD/Female Resident (discussant)/18/10/12)

Hence, Zangbeto traditional way of policing and securing the community is a selfless service to the people and the entire community.

Zangbeto and Legal Back Up

A fairly large number of the respondents wanted Zangbeto to be given a legal back up by the government, especially, the Lagos state government where Badagry community is situated.

The respondents wanted that a bill be initiated in the House of Assembly that would give a legal back up to Zangbeto and that such bill must be signed to law. Such law will make the group a legal entity that can sue and be sued, as the one of our interviewees said. Giving them legal backing would empower them to perform their security works fully in the community as noted by another interviewee.

Moreover, the activities of Zangbeto should be zoned under the law so that all other neighboring communities would feel the impacts of the services of Zangbeto. In addition to this, the group must be equally encouraged and funded by the government.

In making comment on legal recognition of the group, an interviewee comments thus:

"The activities of the Zangbeto group must be legally recognized. The activities of the group should be harmonized and properly monitored by the government. The members should be equally remunerated for effective performance of securing lives and properties in the community". (ID/Male Resident /18/10/12).

Furthermore, some respondents requested that upon recognizing them legally, the government should give them equipment and material things needed to carry out their operational services to the community. Finally, the reason adduced by some of the participants who took part in our study for preferring the Zangbeto to Nigeria police was that they have lost confidence in the Nigeria Police because of the corruption, brutality and ineffectiveness in the system. Hence, traditional way of policing and securing the community like Zangbeto should be approved legally by the government.

As noted by one of our interviewees, the fear that people have for Zangbeto is the reason for preferring Zangbeto to the Police, and so he was suggesting that the group should be given a legal backup. He had this comment to give on this:

"The appearance of Zangbeto usually instills fear in the criminal minded people. If Zangbeto shrines are set up in various places in the community, criminals would be reminded of the implication of their actions". (IDI/Male Resident /18/10/12).

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

Zangbeto has come to stay in the Badagry community of the Ogu (Egun) speaking people. Zangbeto can be described as community masquerade group saddled with the responsibility of providing the security to the lives and property of the people in the community. Zangbeto culture speaks peace and all the activities of the said Zangbeto are for the peaceful co-existence of the people in the community.

The first function of Zangbeto is to police the community and secure it from the criminals and the people of questionable characters in the community. As rightly argued in this study, the Zangbeto has been doing this work to the admiration of the people in Badagry (both indigenes and non-indigenes). The second function is related to the first one: they settle conflicts and disputes in the community. Zangbeto is a social mechanism of solving conflicts and disputes in the Badagry community, even to the family level i.e. between a husband and wife or among the siblings in the family. They settle feuds between warring quarters, settle disagreement between creditor and debtor, and resolve tenancy disputes between a landlord and a tenant.

Cultural entertainment is another spectacular social function of Zangbeto. The various displays of magical power in entertaining the community people during festivals and ceremonies in Badagry cannot be underrated. Such displays were very interesting and add value to the cultural life of the people in Badagry community. Zangbeto therefore, is a proclaimer of cultural heritage of Ogu (Egun) people within the community, the state, at the national level and internationally. Zangbeto is part of the African cultures that must be encouraged as one of the black heritages. Such heritages are the values handed over to us by our fore fathers and ancestors.

With all indications, the modern system of policing and securing the lives and properties through the police, has failed in Nigeria. Hence, there is a need for the government to revisit some traditional ways through which the responsibilities of the police can be aided and supported. Therefore, we recommend that government should set up a national committee that would investigate the traditional ways that can be revived and updated to serve the purpose of policing and securing the Nigerian society, for the security of lives and properties is a big problem casting aspersion on the good governance of the country.

We want those traditional ways to be given legal status in the county, but must be harmonized with the Nigeria police and Ministry of Justice. The activities of these traditional ways must be closely monitored by the government to prevent violation of their oaths of office and codes of conduct. Their legal recognition should not be an avenue for them to intimidate and oppress people. The people involved in such traditional policing and security group must

be remunerated. Furthermore equipment and facilities must be provided for them for effective performance.

Dallies (2005) argued that historical criminology of African continent is under-researched and that the studies on African history, especially that of sub-Saharan West African is largely ignored by mainstream academia in the field of academics. Therefore, we recommend continuous researches on the African history to discover ways through which African countries can help themselves where westernization has failed them.

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Figure 1
Pictures of Zangbeto Masquerades in Traditional Raffia.
SOURCE: JANE DELIAN, 2011.

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Zangbeto: tradicionalan način nadziranja i obezbeđivanja zajednice kod naroda Ogu (Egun) u Badagriju u Nigeriji

Rad predstavlja etnološku i antropološku studiju o običaju Zangbeto među narodom Ogu (Egun) u Badagriju u Nigeriji. U studiji je korišćen anketarni pristup s akcentom na kvalitativnom metodu: intervjui, razgovori sa fokus grupama i razgovori sa ključnim informantima. Pri izboru učesnika koji su sudelovali u studiji (n=40) korišćene su procedure namernog i prigodnog uzorkovanja. Podaci prikupljeni na terenu su analizirani primenom metode analize sadržaja. Nalazi studije su otkrili da Zangbeto i dalje predstavljaju efektivan društveni mehanizam za nadziranje i obezbeđivanje života i imovine u zajednicama u Badagriju. Zangbeto (u svojstvu individue ali i društvene institucije) takođe igra važnu ulogu u uspostavljanju mira među zavađenim stranama u društvu, ostavši pritom i vid društvene zabave i kulturnog eksponata. Ova studija poziva na zakonsku podršku običaju Zangbeto kao tradicionalnom načinu nadziranja i obezbeđivanja života i imovine u ovoj zajednici, i ukazuje na mogućnosti kontinuiranih istraživanja u afričkim zajednicama s ciljem da se otkriju načini kroz koje afrička društva mogu pomoći sama sebi u onim domenima života gde ih je vesternizacija izneverila.

Ključne reči: Badagri, policijski nadzor, obezbeđivanje, tradicionalni način, Zangbeto

Zangbeto: Moyen traditionnel d'assurer le maintien de l'ordre
et la sécurité dans la communauté chez
les Ogu (Egun) à Badagry, Nigéria

Ce travail est une étude ethnologique et anthropologique de Zangbeto chez les Ogu (Egun) de Badagry, au Nigéria. L'étude s'appuie sur une approche qui comprend la conception des sondages avec un accent sur la méthode qualitative: interview, groupe de discussion et investigation auprès des informateurs clés. Dans la sélection du domaine de recherche et celle des répondants qui y ont participé (n=40), c'est la technique non-probabiliste qui a été utilisée, à savoir les procédures d'échantillonnage dirigé et d'échantillonnage aléatoire. Les données recueillies dans le domaine d'étude ont été analysées à l'aide de la méthode de l'analyse du contenu. Les résultats de l'étude ont révélé que Zangbeto demeure toujours une machinerie sociale efficace assurant le maintien de l'ordre et la sécurité pour protéger la vie et la propriété dans la communauté à Badagry. Il a aussi joué un rôle majeur dans le rétablissement de la paix entre les parties en conflit et demeure toujours une source de divertissement social et de manifestations culturelles. L'étude a exigé un appui légal de Zangbeto comme d'un moyen traditionnel d'assurer le maintien de l'ordre et la sécurité de la vie et de la propriété dans cette communauté et comme d'un moyen de recherche continue des sociétés africaines de s'aider elles-mêmes là où l'occidentalisation les a déçues.

Mots clés: Badagry, maintien de l'ordre, sécurité, moyen culturel traditionnel, Zangbeto

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