AFE BABALOLA UNIVERSITY ADO-EKITI

PCS 207 CULTURE,VALUES AND CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

A TERM PAPER ON CULTURAL PRATICES IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH GEO POLITICAL ZONE.

[IBIBIO CULTURE IN AKWA-IBOM STATE]

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South South Team- mid term/report on presentation

Team work on the South South Ibibio people of Akwa-Ibom, Uyo state

WHY WE CHOSE THE IBIBIO CULTURE:

Ibibio is a tribe found in the South south geopolitical zone in Uyo state. We chose this tribe because we have information on it and a parent of one of us is from the tribe. Also because we love how their culture is colorful and full of life and also diverse.

THEIR BACKGROUND:

The Ibibio people are reputed to be the earliest inhabitants of the south southern Nigeria. It is estimated that they arrived at their present abode from earliest times about 7000 B.C. Inspite of the historical account, it is not clear when the Ibibio arrived the state. According to some scholars, they might have come from the central benue valley, particularly the jukun influence in the old Calabar at some historical time period. Another version had it that the Cameroon will ofer a more concise explanation of the Ibibio migration story.

THEIR GEOGRAPHY:

The total population of ibibios in Nigeria is 4,482,000, 46,000 in Ghana, 39,000 in Cameroon, 2,700 in Equatorial Guinea and 371 in Trinidad and Tobago.They are found predominantly in Akwa Ibom state and are made up of the related anaang community, the Ibibio community and the Eket and Oron communities, although other groups usually understand the Ibibio language. Because of the larger population of the Ibibio people, they hold political control over Akwa Ibom state but government is shared with the anaangs, Eket and Oron.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

* Traditionally Ibibio society consists of communities that are made up of Large

Families with blood affinity each ruled by their Constitutional and Religious Head known as the *Ikpaisong'*.

* The Obong Ikpaisong ruled with the **Mbong Ekpuk** (Head of the Families)which together with the Heads of the Cults and Societies constitute the ‘Esop Ikpaisong' (Traditional Council or Traditional Shrine or Traditional Court').
* The decisions or orders of the Traditional Council or the Obong Ikpaisong were enforced by members of the Ekpo or Obon society.
* The members of the ekpo society act as messengers of the spirits and the military and police of the Community.
* Ekpo members are always masked when performing

their police duties, and although their identities are almost always known, fear of retribution from the ancestors prevents most people from accusing those members who overstep their social boundaries,

effectively committing police brutality. Membership is open to all Ibibio males.

* In their society, one must have access to wealth to move into the politically

influential grades.

* The Obon society with its strong enticing traditional musical prowess, with popular acceptability,

openly executes its mandates with musical procession and popular participation by members which comprises children, youth, adults and very

brave elderly women.

RELIGION

* Ibibio religion was of two dimensions.
* The firstCommunication and invocation of the God of Heaven (Abasi Enyong) and God of the Earth (Abasi Isong) by the Constitutional and Religious King/Head of a particular Ibibio Community who was known from the ancient times as **the Obong-Ikpaisong** (the word 'Obong Ikpaisong' directly interpreted means *King of the Principalities of the Earth' or 'King of the Earth and the Principalities' or Traditional Ruler*).
* The second dimension of Ibibio Religion centered on the worship, consultation, invocation, sacrifice, appeasement, etc. of the God of the Heaven (Abasi Enyong) and the God of the Earth (Abasi Isong)through various invisible or spiritual entities (Ndem) of the various Ibibio Division such as Etefia Ikono, Awa Itam, etc. The Priests of these spiritual entities (Ndem) were the Temple Chief Priests of the various Ibibio Divisions.

* A particular Ibibio Division could consist of many inter-related autonomous communities or Kingdoms ruled by an autonomous Priest-King called Obong-Ikpaisong, assisted by Heads of the various Large Families (Mbong Ekpuk) which make up the Community.
* These have been the ancient political and religious system of Ibibio people from time immemorial.

**RELIGION (Colonial and Post-Colonial Era)**

* The Ibibios were christians through the work of early missionaries in the nineteenth century.

* Samuel Bill started his work at Ibeno.

He established the Qua Iboe church which later spread places in the middle belt of Nigeria. The Methodist church , the Roman catholic church and Presbyterian church rode into the Ibibio hinterland.

* Later, churches were also introduced, for e.g. The Apostolic church, independent churches, like Deeper Life Bible Church, came into the area in the second part of the twentieth century.

* Today Ibibio people are predominantly Christians.
* The Ibibio practiced the killing of twins before it was abolished during the colonial era, with help of missionary Mary Slessor.
* It was common practice for twin babies to be taken to their community's local evil forest and left to die as it was a taboo for twins to be born.

LOCAL DISHES

Ekpang nkukwo

Afang soup

Edikikong soup

Ukom

Atama soup

* FESTIVALS: The festival I know of is when the paramount rulers confer chieftaincy titles on deserving sons and daughters of the land. The influence of christianity is strong in the current day ibibio land and most festive occasions are modeled around religions celebrations like Christmas and Easter. They also have the ekpo masquerade festival with is during Christmas but these days people don’t participate as much as before because of Christianity.
* MARRIAGE: Marriage is called bro (pronounced Ndaw). In the olden days, girls were sequestered in the fattening rooms for a period of time before marriage. Girls were fed with large quantities of food so as to gain weight. A fat woman was considered the epitome of beauty in the past. Slim ladies were considered poverty stricken and not considered to be beautiful. In fattening rooms, girls were also given beauty treatments like massages, use of special body creams and camwood powder for the skin. The women were tutored on how to cook, keep her home and to care for her husband. On the day or release, the now plump maidens called MBOPO pronounced MBOWPOH were paraded through the community to the admiration of all and receiving gifts. In modern days this is hardly carried out.

In modern days traditional marriages, start with a day for the grooms family to make enquires from the brides family. This is called MBUP. A wedding list will be given to the groom to purchase items for the family . This wedding list may be amended according to the wish of the brides family. Complete outfits for the brides parents.

* FATHER: wrapper or trousers, shirt, bowler hat, walking stick, complete underwear as well as shoes.
* MOTHER: handbag, blouse, wrapper, underwear, head tie, umbrella and shoes. Cash may be given
* FOR EXTENDED FAMILY: assorted drinks, cash, food stuff. This will also be given to the clan as well as the youth (meaning the boys of the village).

The girl is expected to be given a box (black metal with red half moons) filled with clothes: wrappers, lace, blouses, shoes and jewelry with which she is expected to start her new life as a married woman.

On the wedding day, the grooms family and friends are welcomed with a table of food (udia ibenge). This is all assorted food that the husband is going to enjoy from his wife in marriage (all types of rice, swallow, and assorted soups, porridges, Ekpang nkukwo) etc. all this food is eaten by the groom, family and friends FIRST before negotiating the bride price.

Bride price is Twelve Pounds or Twenty Five Naira. Having done that, the bride makes her appearance (after a few false brides are first presented for the fun and raising a little money for the women of the extended family).She presents her groom to her parents and receive their blessings. Likewise the groom shows his bride to his family for blessings too. Thereafter dancing and merrymaking commences. Modern day ibibios almost always following up with a white wedding in church.

* BURIAL: Burial is done with a mix of cultural and Christian practice. Burial commences with the opening of the “mourning house”. Women and men of the family and community come to offer condolences. There will be wake keep. A church service may be held and a social occasion follows overnight with native music or contemporary music. The burial is preceded by a funeral service according to the Christian values. After interment, native burial ceremonies may continue with different sociocultural groups being hosted and fed. A cow is killed when a big man is buried. Burials can be costly affairs.
* SOCIAL VALUES: Things like honesty, integrity, hard work (the ibibio people are farmers, fishermen, palm wine tappers, traders), faithfulness,cleanliness, modern day ibibios value education and hardwork and can be fund in about every vocation and profession imaginable, all these are social values which are highly valued.
* Intercommunity conflicts have been known to occur between rival ibibio

communities.

* Conflict Handling Method: conflict is settled when emissaries are sent

between the warring parties. Eventually elders will come together and

discuss and resolve the dispute to an acceptable agreement.

ART: The masks and accoutrements of the Ekpo society make up the greatest

works of art in Ibibio society.

Drumming and music are also important elements in Ekpe ceremonies.

The wooden sculpture from this area is also very detailed,

and artists are just as likely to capture beauty as they are the hideous forms of

evil spirits.

REFERENCE

Wikipedia

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