African Culture and Communication Systems in the Coronation of Ata Igala, North- Central Nigeria

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Abstract

African culture cannot be detached from the mode of communication of Africans. In this study, the writer examined the aspects of African culture communicated during the coronation of the 27th Ata Igala of Kogi State, North-central Nigeria. The study was motivated by the fact that the Ata, Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni, rather than modernize his installation, went back to the olden-day practice of coronation rites. It therefore became a re-enactment of African culture in Igala land, which called for investigation on its semblance with the patterns of communication in the distant past. Using ethnographic approach, the researcher employed participant observation and interviewing to understand the process and how it communicated African culture. The study revealed that the coronation had an extensive use of African communication systems in the exercise. Those traditional modes of communication are still very effective and can be properly harnessed into a platform for cultural communication among the elite. The study therefore recommends that other African nations should

imbibe the cultures of their fore-fathers, the modern technology and media imperialism not withstanding, because they reflect the true identity of the African generation. It also recommends that the mass media should be used in championing the African culture, transmitting them and showcasing their richness.

Key words: African Communication, African Culture, Ata Igala, Coronation,

Introduction

Communication and culture are interrelated. That is why one affects the other positively or negatively, depending on the way it is utilized. No people ever survived without a system of communication. In the distant past, African communities devised means to carry out their daily businesses through their own unique communication media. The traditional media system is principally an oral process that makes effective use of the human auditory system (Ukonu and Wogu, 2008).

Nigeria has rich cultural practices which the people guide and guard jealously. With over 250 ethnic groups spread across over 150 million people, Nigeria is a country with an avalanche of cultures, arts and traditions. A compendium of Nigeria at 50 says this co-existence over the years forms the tradition of the people culminating in the culture which ultimately becomes the heritage. As it is with Nigeria, the multi-faceted historical expressions are as diverse as the over two hundred cultures therein. Nigeria's rich culture is well demonstrated through art, dance, literature, folklore and music.

Thus, African indigenous communication systems are means by which African people communicated with one another in the primitive era, and according to Finegan (1970, p.22) in Ella (2012, p.142), "Such communication systems are derived from society's experience and thoughts over a long period of years. It becomes impossible to separate culture from communication because African culture is transmitted through its unique communication media. Ugboaja (1985) notes that the African indigenous communication, which could be called oral media, include: "Mythology, oral literature, (poetry, storytelling and proverbs) masquerades, rites of passage and other rituals expressed through oracy, music, dance and drama, use of costume, social interplay and material; symbol which accompany people from womb to womb and beyond."

The Igala people occupy the eastern senatorial district of Kogi State, North-central Nigeria. The history of the Igala, according to Aruwa (2012, p.1) "is problematic." This is because there are divergent versions about the origin of the people. Some of the claims of Igala origin are that they migrated from Benin (Miachi, 2013); they are a faction of the Kwararafa kingdom (Aruwa, 2012); they have a link with the Yoruba, Jukun and Benin (Enemaku, 2013); and are said to have a link with an invisible super being called Atinolo which descended from heaven (Adegbe 2012). Miachi (2012, p.73) contends that "Scholars working on the Igala are interested in knowing where the Igala come from; they wonder whether the Igala were the original

inhabitants of the area where they now occupy or whether they came from somewhere else; and how long they have been living in their present location." The Igala occupy the area of land to the south of the lower reaches of Benue and east of the Niger Rivers at about the confluence of these two great rivers of Nigeria – an area of about 8000 square kilometres.

The Ata Igala stool is as old as Igala itself. Over the years, everyone who became Ata passed through rigorous selection process by the kingmakers. Thus, when Ata Aliyu Ocheja Obaje died in July, 2012, and was buried later in the year, candidates from the ruling houses began to jostle for the seat. The kingmakers, mainly the Etemahi Igalamela and Achadu Igala, in their unanimous decision endorsed the Prince Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni. They forwarded their recommendation to the Igala Area Traditional Council, which in turn forwarded it to the Kogi State Council of Chiefs. The Council of Chiefs approved the recommendation and forwarded it to the Governor, Captain Idris Wada, for ratification. The Kogi State Governor finally approved the selection on 29 February, 2013. The coronation of Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni was a week-long activity, beginning on Tuesday 5 March and ending on Sunday 10 March, 2013.

Statement of the Problem

The last time an Ata was installed before 2013 was in 1956 when the then Ata, Aliyu Ocheja Obaje, took over from his predecessor, Ameh Oboni. Ata Aliyu Obaje was the longest ruling monarch on the stool. The process of coronation of Ata Igala had almost become extinct, since, as a rule, the sitting Ata must remain on the stool till death. Thus, with the modern way of life taking over African culture, the expectation was that the in-coming Ata would jettison some of the rites of kingship, or at least, westernize the exercise; more so that it was said that the preceding Ata, did not observe the rites since, he did not allow the piercing of his ears. On the contrary, Dr Idakwo Oboni observed all the coronation rites. The ceremony therefore became a moment of reawakening and affirmation of African culture embedded in Igala tradition. During the ceremony, there were various aspects and perspectives that showcased how Africans lived and communicated in the past. Those practices need to be studied and documented for a proper comparative analysis between cultural communication and the social life of the people of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Ukonu and Wogu (2008, p.46) seem to have captured this necessity when they say:

> Although traditional modes of communication are no longer able to meet all contemporary communication needs, it is believed that they need to be studied and developed further because modern media do not yet answer all of Africa's communication questions and they are not direct products of Africa's culture. No one can dispute the need for development to stem from a thorough understanding of a people's

environment and using internal resources to meet needs and challenges in contexts a people can identify with.

The problem of this study therefore is the picturesque description of the perspectives of African culture and communication in the coronation of Ata Igala in 2013 and how those perspectives contribute to re-enacting the richness of African cultural heritage.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the aspects of African culture and communication systems in the coronation of Ata Igala in 2013.

2. To determine the relationship between African culture and communication in the process of Ata Igala's coronation.

3. To ascertain the relationship between Igala culture and other cultures in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

African communication systems refers to the means by which African people communicated among themselves. These systems of communication are, through oral tradition and experience, passed from generation to generation. According to Ella (2012, p.142), "the expression indigenous communication is not a substitute for archaic, barbaric or rudimentary communication systems. Rather, it stands for a cherished age-long system of communication in Africa."

Through those systems, Africans had a socio-political, cultural and economic culture that had stood the test of time, despite the emergence of the modern media of mass communication. The African communication modus operandi was expressed through the media of the town crier, oral tradition, the talking drum, the age group, long brass, smoke signals, the open market, symbolic displays, dance, proverbs, tribal marks, music, signals, folk tales, riddles and narratives (Ndolo, 2005; Ukonu and Wogu, 2008). Suffice to mention that the traditional media have survived from the earliest of times and made an adjusted transition into the electronic age. But this transition does not (or should not) undermine the tenets of African culture, as Ekwelie and Okonkwo (1983) have noted that "Although they have undergone changes of their own, they have retained both their basic modes and significance."

Many scholars who offered slightly different views on the meaning of African communication systems agree that the indigenous communication systems is rooted in the culture of the people or community concerned. Thus, Ansu-kyeremeh (1998) in

Akpabio (2003, p. 2) defines it as "any form of indigenous communication system which by virtue of its origin form and integrate into a specific culture, serves as a channel for message in a way and manner that requires the utilization of the values, symbolism, institution and ethos of the host culture through its unique qualities and attributes."

Ochigo (2006, p.88) describes the African communication symbols thus:

> The symbols represent things of physical importance and relevance to the African traditional belief. They are a vehicle for the transformation of ideas, beliefs, behaviours, dogmas and philosophies of African societies as a legacy handed down from one generation to the other.

Ugboaja (1985) in Ebo (1999, p.31) said that:

> Oramedia or folk media are grounded on indigenous culture produced and consumed by members of a group. They reinforce the values of the group. They are visible cultural features, often strictly conventional by which social relationships and a world view and maintained and defined. They take many forms and are rich in symbolism.

Kombol (2012) points out ten characteristics of the traditional African media of communication: they are generally oral, multi-media and multi-channeled; they have limited audience and are not precise; they are consumer-friendly, no specialized training required and they lack fidelity. They are cheap, they bind people together and are non-alienating.

Africa as the source of humanity and socialization is not only unique in customs, tradition and culture, but in its means of communication. The uniqueness of the African means of communication is embedded in their originality, creativity, tradition and culture of the people. These essentially make them highly effective and enduring in the dissemination of information personally, interpersonally and through group communication (Osho, 2011). Despite the claim that the western culture has taken over Africa, Mazni and Mazni (1995, p.161) in Osho (2011) maintain that "oramedia has continued to endure. This might have, perhaps, been further motivated by the nationalistic movements of negritude, pan-Africanism, and the African personality." He notes further that oramedia has been sustained through its originality and resilience in the face of neo-colonialism and imperialism.

The Ata Igala, Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni 11 became the Ata after undergoing the rigorous installation process between 5th and 10th March, 2013. One cannot but come to terms with the reality of the full display of African cultural communication and pride in Igala kingdom as showcased during the coronation.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for this study was the symbolic interactionism theory. It developed during the 1920s and 1930s as a reaction to and criticism of behaviourism (Baran and Davis, 2009). The theory holds that people learn culture and culture structures their everyday experience. It was George Herbert Mead that harmonized all the versions on the understanding of this theory in 1934. His emphasis was that there should be a better way to understand how people learn to make sense of their everyday life and structure their actions.

The tenets of the theory are:

1. Cultural symbols are learned through interaction and then mediate through that interaction.

2. The overlap of shared meaning by people in a culture means that individuals who learn a culture should be able to predict the behaviours of others in that culture.

3. Self-definition is social in nature; self is defined largely through interaction with the environment.

4. The extent to which a person is committed to a social identity will determine the power of that identity to influence his or her behaviour.

The relevance of this theory to the study at hand is in the correlation between cultural symbols and learning. With proper communication of cultural activities, the tendency of members of society identifying themselves with the norms is high.

Study Methodology

Ethnographic method, interviewing, participant observation and pictorial method were all adopted in the study. Ethnographic method involves the interpretation of people's cultural practices from the native's point of view; an analysis of a phenomenon based on natural experience or observation of human activities directly as against assumptions or hypotheses.

The writer was at the scene of all the major events from the very first day to the last and had the privilege of interviewing the Ata and other relevant persons during and after the ceremony. Also, as a member of the NTA Idah reporting crew, the researcher had video clips of the event. Finally, as a professional photographer, he took relevant shots of the coronation, which now serve the pictorial purpose in this study.

In the course of the study, the researcher interviewed the Ata Igala himself, the Achadu Igala, Chief Yusuf Ameh-Adaji; the Ochala Onu Aya, Chief Musa Aleku; Leader of the Jukun delegates; the Egwola, Chief Hassan Haruna, and the Achadu's

messenger, the Ikabi. Their responses were harmonized to constitute the descriptions and positions held in this work.

The Ata's Coronation

The Ata-to-be, properly called *Aidokanya* (a synonym for Ata-designate) at this stage of the process, arrived in Ugwolawo at about five o'clock in the evening of Nigerian time amidst, according to Miachi (2013, p. 26), "an impregnable crowd of supporters", a crowd that had never been witnessed at any event in Igala land from inception. He went to put up in a thatched hut that had been prepared for him. In the hut was a local bed with a mat on it. The Aidokanya, who was greeted **Toodo**, entered the hut to retire while different cultural troupes were outside displaying different cultural activities throughout the night. The following morning, the Ata-designate set out for Idah as early as seven o'clock. That was after he had received a message from the Achadu Igala through the **Ikabi** that he should come to Idah to be crowned Ata. The Ikabi had a red cap and a horse tail from the Achadu to be delivered to the Aidokanya. With the red cap on his head and the horse tail in hand, the Ata-to-be made the historical endurance trek to Idah. Immediately he left the hut, some men set it ablaze. The burning of the hut showed that no Ata ever lived elsewhere apart from the palace.

The thatched hut where Ata slept in at Ugwolawo

The burning hut, after Idakwo's departure

The Monarch inside the hut built at Ugwolawo. With him is Dr Emmanuel Onucheyo.

Ata- designate on foot from Ugwolawo to Idah, about 16 miles away.

The journey was in company of the largest crowd on the Idah-Ugwolawo road. Admirers, friends and relations, well wisher, historians and representatives of governments and corporate organizations along with different groups, associations and troupes were part of the long Ugwolawo-Idah trek.

He stopped to receive cheers from those along the road who had come to greet and catch a glimpse of the new Ata. In fact all primary and secondary schools along Idah-Ugwolawo road suspended academic activities to pay homage to Idakwo. At some points the Aidokanya stopped, muttered some words, waved his horse tail left, right, back and forth and then, like one responding to instructions from unseen beings, resumed the trek with more agility.

Raising the horse tail, Ata's symbol of authority

On entering Idah, the Prince Idakwo went into the palace of Achadu Igala where he received the warm embrace of the Achadu, Dr Yusuf Ameh-Adaji. Traditionally, he was expected to undergo tutorials on palatial administration, after which he would have his ears pierced. The most senior wife of the Achadu called *Iye Okpo* was assigned to do pierce Idakwo's ears the following day. Part of the exercise was the Ata-designate's visit to *Egwola's* palace for beading and presentation of traditional staff of office. Egwola is the custodian of Ata Igala's traditional regalia. Tradition has it that as soon as an Ata joins the ancestors (Igala's euphemism for Ata's death), the Egwola receives all his wears and treasures them awaiting the next Ata. Chief Hassan Haruna was the Egwola at the time Idakwo became Ata. He decorated the Ata-designate with wrist beads called *Oka* and shoulder beads called *Odugbo;* and handed him the staff of authority known as *Okwute.*

The Egwola, decorating the Ata at Ojaina

The 10th of March marked the grand finale of the ceremony. On that day, the Ata-to-be took a trip into the ancestral cemetery, east of Idah, across Inachalo spring. It was the *Ojaina* royal cemetery. There, the Aidokanya performed some rituals and prayer sessions on the grave of his own father, Ameh Oboni, after which he laid a stone on the spot where he would be buried when he passed on. As tradition demands, once an Ata lays a stone in the Ojaina forest, he will not return to that place (alive) again.

From Ojaina, the Ata-to-be took another route crossing the Inachalo spring to Ede. He was carried on shoulder by men so that he would not have contact with the water of Inachalo. At Ede, the Onu Ubi Ogbo the "father" and Onu Ede the "mother" performed a traditional mating to result in the birth of the new Ata. Having done that,

they officially announced that an Ata had been born. From that point the *Aidokanya* or Ata-designate became *Ata Igala* proper.

HRM Idakwo Michael Oboni, Ata Igala in full regalia

Other activities were the visit to the earth shrine, *Ere-ane,* at Igalogba for more rites and the eventual march to the Ata Igala's palace. Before entering the palace through the eastern gate, the Ata took anti-clockwise treks round the palace three times. At the third revolution, the Ata pronounced his three power names as:

1. *Akpochi neji ochi*, meaning a tree is identified by its bark.

2. *Una jo kerebo omi*, I mowo ka, meaning no matter how fierce a fire is, it ceases to burn when it meets with water.

3. *Ogijo dunyi k'ache ma che imoto*, meaning when an adult is at home, the child does not lack.

Thus, the long journey into becoming Ata came to an end. He entered the palace amidst cheers. The men greeted *Gaabaidu* and the women, *Amideeju* or *Deeju* for short. In all these were perspectives of African communication and culture some of which have been verified to reflect the cultural identity of the Igala nation. Others have semblance

with other traditional systems. Alhassan (2010, p. 31) believes that culture in its right sense is what makes the Igala people human. He says:

> We are discussing what makes us human and earned us the right to be so addressed in the community of Nations. We are discussing our uniqueness (life styles, language, dresses, etc) that makes the world incomplete without the Igala race. It bothers on our past, our present and above all, our future.

Cultural troupe performing

Royal flute players

Drum and flute players

Royal drums

The   Jukun   Team   from   Wukari

Aspects of African Communication and Culture in the Coronation

1. **Use of Emissary**

   In the past, emissaries were sent from one community to the other. Kings, parents, groups and troupes sent emissaries who were to deliver messages without distortions or manipulations. During the Ata Igala's coronation, the Achadu Igala sent a messenger, the *Ikabi* from Idah to Ugwolawo to invite the Ata and present him the red cap and the horse tail both of which symbolized authority. This shows that it has been part of African culture to share ideas using mediators who serve as messengers. It is still being practised today.

2. **Symbolism**

   Symbolism is an adopted communication device in which an object that stands on itself, perhaps with its own name, conveys another meaning. Literally, symbolism of art is said to have been adopted when an object, action or behaviour conveys other meanings from its facial look. Africans are known for the use of symbols in passing across information. The Ata Igala's installation

had an array of symbolic acts and objects which form perspectives of African communication systems. Some of them are:

a. The thatched hut built for the Ata symbolized the outside temporary residence of the Ata. Burning it the moment he left the hut meant that he would not dwell in any other home again. Ata has no residence except the palace. This action agrees with the saying, "go to the palace and meet the Ata." This means at whatever time you desire the assistance of the Ata, he would be at the palace to attend to you.

b. The red cap and horse tail given to the Ata-designate by the **Ikabi** symbolized power and authority. It signified the acceptance of the candidate presented to the people. That justified the chant of encomiums each time the monarch raised the horse tail. So also was the presentation of staff (**okwute**); and decoration with beads, **Oka** and **Odugbo** at Ojaina.

c. The journey of Ata-designate from Ugwolawo to Idah on foot symbolized identification with the olden-day practice. According to Ata Idakwo Oboni, he would travel to Idah, a journey of about 16 miles, on foot to recall with nostalgia, the way the former Atas did on such occasions. He said while it was a good thing to remember, it was also important to state that the former Atas went on foot because there were no vehicles and the roads at the time were winding, passing through thick forests. This means the journey was significant to the present generation as it communicated the natural ways of doing things against the present-day technology with its attendant speed and risk. Our fore-fathers who travelled on foot on long journeys never encountered accident, and they lived much longer as a result of the exercise they embarked on. These were the claims communicated through the symbolic trek.

d. The piercing of the ears of the Ata at the palace of the Achadu Igala symbolized the cultural perspective of the Ata being a "woman." By the act, the Ata became a traditional "wife" to the Achadu, the Ata's "husband." So, when Idakwo met the Achadu immediately after the piercing of his ears by the **Iye Okpo** the most senior wife, he (Achadu) exclaimed, "Now I know I have a new wife!"

Another version of the symbolic piercing of ears was that the first-ever-Ata was a woman called **Ebulejonu**. So, all successive Atas must identify themselves with womanhood by piercing their ears.

e. The traditional rebirth of the Ata at Ede symbolized the transformation or transfiguration of the Ata into a super being, no longer an ordinary man.

f. The greetings by the men and the women symbolized submission to the throne of His Royal Majesty. The men greeted *Gaabaidu* or *Agabaidu* (an onomatopoeia for the mightiest of the mighty lions in the jungle)! The women greeted *Amideeju* or its abridged version, *Deeju*. This translates to mean *Ata jemi deju mi deju. Ata jemi leku mi leku*. This means if Ata says I live, I live; and if Ata says I die, I die. It was a way of communicating respect for the throne.

g. The regalia of the Ata at the completion of the installation symbolized authority, victory, kingship and dominion.

- The cap was designed with *onunu ere* (the tail of octopus) and *iwe uloko* (eagle feathers) numbering up to one hundred. The octopus is believed to be the king of the aquatic kingdom, while the eagle is believed to be the king of birds. They symbolized the Ata's kingship all round. To the Ata Igala, the eagle feathers represent the fact that his authority does not leave one in a doubt: he cannot be hidden, hence, the saying "the eagle's feather on display cannot be hidden."

- The mask, *eju beju ailo* (the eye that scares other eyes), hung on the Ata's shoulder symbolized victory. It was said that the Ata Igala of old conquered the Benin Empire in a war and took the *eju beju ailo* mask from the Benin monarch. He began to wear it as a reward for victory.

- The beads on the Ata's wrist communicate power and difference. Other traditional rulers wore four strings of beads on each wrist, but the Ata always wore five on each wrist to symbolize that he was apparently different from them.

3. Music and Dance

Every African community has a unique music that the people cherish. They are unique in both the instruments utilized and the styles adopted in the display. During the occasion, varieties of music in Igala land were displayed. There were *Agwonu, Abele, Alo, Agale, Ogwu, Ogba, Olele, Idologo, Ibele, Sabada, Igba, Iya, Oye, Onukikpo, Oganyi* among others (Johnson, 2013).

The flute player was at the entrance gate to the hut at Ugwolawo and displayed throughout the night.

A group of women known as *amakpugwa* (the women who chanted greetings) were always on ground with the royal chant:

Alimi Gw'ata taku meni omi gw'Ata

Amideeju

Music communicates African culture and through it instills a sense of pride and belonging in the people. At the occasion, some of the music and dance communicated the supremacy of the Ata Igala institution

4. **Incarnate Beings**

   Different cultural troupes, some with masquerades, (referred to as incarnate beings by Miachi, 2012) also adorned the programme. The incarnate beings were of different designs. In the series of interviews conducted, the researcher was made to understand that the incarnate beings were a significant aspect of African culture. They were the media through which the spirit world communicated to the human world. They included the royal incarnate beings *Ekwe, Agbanabo, Epe, Odumado, Ichawula, Ochochono, Inelekpe, Abilifada and Ikeleku Afuma*. Others were *Akwujane, Odenigbo, Ujamadeko, Oma Ekwe, Epere, Otikpokpo* and*, Egwu Ura*.

In addition to the spiritual functions, they also helped in enforcing compliance by the crowd. They ensured that people were orderly at the scene of event. If you would not leave a place that people had been asked to leave, the incarnate beings would compel you to. Thus they helped the security operatives in maintaining order. Incarnate beings therefore played the role of the African law enforcement agencies.

One of the performing incarnate beings

5. Proverbs

Proverbs are witty sayings that convey messages relevant to the African culture. It is a powerful tool used in expressing issues on the African soil. This suggests why great writers adopt proverbs in their literary works in their bid to communicate African cultural ideology. For instance, an African man will say: "The stubborn fly goes into the grave with the corpse" to caution someone against an action or decision that will endanger him or her. Also, to justify the foresight and wisdom of the elderly in society, the African man says "What an elder sees in a sitting position, even if you climb the tallest tree, you cannot see it." This means the young ones should seek the counsel of the elderly before taking any action.

Thus said, proverbs were employed during the Ata's coronation. They reflect significantly in the power names of the Ata. It is germane to state again that when the Ata came to the palace, he declared the names by which he would be identified. Those names were all proverbial as explained below.

The first name was *Apochi neji ochi* an expression which translates into *eikpa oli ma du ma oli,* meaning a tree is identified by the make of its bark. Giving a specific translation to this adopted name, Miachi (2013, p. 54) says "The actual meaning is that if one knew Ameh Oboni, one would know Idakwo Ameh Oboni." Generally, the proverb means that one is identified based on ones doings or characters. By extension, your behaviour is a reflection of your origin.

The second name was *Una jo kerebo omi imowo ka.* This means no matter how fierce a fire is, it ceases the moment it meets with water. To the Igala folk, this power name is significant as it seems to stress the end of every problem on the land. The problem—social, political, religious, economic—were the fire. The Ata was the water to quench them. Thus, no matter the situation, Idakwo was there to fix it in Igala land as Ata.

The third name was *Ogijo dunyi kache ma che imoto,* meaning when an elder is at home, the child will not lack. By this power name, Agabaidu meant that with him as Ata (the father of) Igala, the people will not suffer any lack, especially good leadership

It is important at this point to relate the aspects of Igala culture that have some similarity with the Igbo and other cultures. The Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa and other extractions in Nigeria are good users of proverbs. The relevance of proverbs in African communication is captured in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* that proverb is the palm oil with which words are eaten. Also , Ukonu and Wogu (2008, p.18) say "Proverbs, most often carry with them moral lessons as

they are employed in offering advice, praise, information and in rebuking." To this end, in the literary world, all proverbs are considered epigrams since they are often short, witty, corrective and educative. They constitute an important aspect of African culture and communication system found among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

6. **Use of Long Brass and Drums**

The long brass and drums are used to herald the arrival and exit of the Ata. They are used to hail the Majesty and their sounds, along with the voices of the chanting women, were capable of sending the Ata into a moment of ecstasy, which culminates into his stopping over to reward the blowers and the drum beaters. It could be in form of spraying money on them or simply waving his horse tail their direction while passing by.

The Ata rewarding the drummers by spraying them money (days after the coronation).

Apart from this, the long brass sounds to send the Ata to bed at night and to wake him up early in the morning. Consequently, the entire palace community understands that once the brass blower and the drummers operate their instruments at night, everyone should retire. In the morning, those sounds wake them up, but specifically, the Ata.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study adopted ethnographic methodology to produce the harmonized version of responses given on key aspects of the coronation of Ata Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni that had bearing on African cultural communication. Some of the people

interviewed were the Achadu Igala, Alhaji Dr Yusuf Ameh-Adaji; the Ochala Onu Aya, Chief Musa Aleku; the Ochaada Ata, Senator Ahmadu Ali; the leader of the Jukun team from Wukari, Taraba State; the Egwola, Chief Hassan Haruna; and the Ata Igala himself, His Royal Majesty, Dr Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni 11. The study has, through the instruments adopted, been able to relate the salient aspects of Igala tradition and culture which were communicated during the coronation of Ata Igala in 2013. It has also been established that despite the emergence of the modern media of communication and the threat of globalization and media imperialism, the Igala nation still holds its cultural heritage in a high esteem. This is attested to by the array of different cultural displays at the coronation as well as the large population that graced the event. Those traditional modes of communication are still very effective and can be properly harnessed into a platform for cultural communication among the elite. There are aspects of Igala culture that are similar to other cultures in Nigeria, and they can be transmitted into the future generation.

It is therefore recommended that other African nations should imbibe the cultures of their fore-fathers, the modern technology not withstanding. In fact, the mass media can still be used in championing the African culture transmitting them and showcasing their richness.

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