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THE IGBO SOCIO-POLITICAL SYSTEM

Papers presented at the 1985
Ahiajoku Lecture Colloquium

*Published by the Ministry of Information
Culture, Youth and Sports, Owerri
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COLLOQUIM**

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CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS,
OWERRI, IMO STATE**



FOREWORD

Every year, on the day preceding the Ahiajoku Lecture, selected Igbo dignitaries from various walks of life are invited to discuss aspects of a broad theme chosen outside the focus of the year's main lecture. This innovation has proved a huge success as it has continued to give opportunities to many more speakers than the distinguished Ahiajoku Lecturer of the year, to express their views on any chosen subject.

In order to make the contents of the various papers so far presented in these Colloquia available to a wider audience, Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports decided to publish all of them starting with the 1985 Colloquium whose theme was Igbo Socio-political system. The preceding and subsequent series will be published in due course. The views expressed in these papers as in the main Lectures already published are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Ministry.

I see the Colloquium papers as significant contributions to our search for self-discovery and do not hesitate to commend to the reading public this maiden issue of the Ahiajoku Colloquium Papers titled THE IGBO SOCIO-POLITICAL SYSTEM.

MR TEMPLE BENSON
COMMISSIONER FOR INFORMATION, CULTURE,
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INTRODUCTION

Many of our readers will perhaps be familiar with the dichotomous model of society evolved in Social Anthropology which contrasts 'tradition' and 'modernity', treating both as independent variables which depict what are seen as "take-off" and "landing" stages in a developmental continuum characterized as the process of transformation into advanced industrial society. This may well have been the evolutionary mode of Western society, and indeed the model corresponds fairly closely to the European experience of industrialization and the growth of capitalism. However, when the substantive meaning of these concepts is generalized to apply to the experience of non-Western societies, such as those of Africa, the model tends to obscure more than it explains. The idea that 'tradition' and 'modernity' represent determinate societal categories whose parameters are ascertainable empirically presupposes societies that are always in equilibrium, and assumes as self-evident both the characteristics of these types and their evolutionary relationship to one another. Yet it is obvious that the signification of tradition or modernity in any given historical context is itself a product of history. The European model cannot be applied directly to the experience of African societies without thereby precluding a consideration of the actual processes at work in contemporary "traditional" situations.

But in one respect at least, the model does provide a useful starting point in the effort to comprehend the real circumstances of such societies: it incorporates the notion of 'transitional society'. Transitional societies are those societies whose social, political, and economic arrangements are somewhere between the old and the new. To be more precise, they are societies which are characterized by a discontinuity of cultural perceptions arising out of the juxtaposition of mentalities formed by asynchronous existential variabilities. All societies contain elements of this cultural dissonance to some degree; but transitional societies are defined in their essentials by this "simultaneity of the non-contemporary", this presence, sometimes in one and the same person, of attitudes and perceptions which belong in effect to different historical epochs. Such

societies have generally evolved in varying proportions beyond the possibilities, constraints, and prescriptions of "immemorial custom", and are fully immersed in the effort to come to terms with the often traumatic changes which the twentieth century has wrought in their midst. In response to these changes, all aspects of their culture - social, economic, political, psychological, normative, etc. - are undergoing both consciously-directed and unconscious transformations. But as a group, they have yet to master the techniques, and have not generally assimilated the ideologies and mentalities, which structure the new cultural forms emerging from these transformations.

Contemporary Igbo society is undoubtedly a transitional society in this sense, and the selection of papers of the 1985 Ahiajoku colloquium herein presented deal with aspects of this process among the Igbos. Still, a word of caution may be in order. Although these papers are concerned with Igbo traditions, it is necessary to bear in mind the macro-context within which these traditions have had to operate. Many of the salient features of the so-called traditional societies of Africa may in fact be explainable in terms of, or at least need to be differentiated from, a characteristic cultural reaction to their two dramatic encounters with history: the slave trade and the colonial subjugation which followed it. In other words, these are societies which are undergoing change, but which are doing so in the context of internal and external pressures largely conditioned by their involuntary involvement in a world economy that has turned them into what Samir Amin has characterized as "dependent peripheral societies".

One way in which societies respond to such threatening pressures is to reaffirm the fundamental tenets which underpin their social being; and because that social being is precisely what is in question, the process usually involves attempts to reinforce cultural discipline. Cultural discipline refers essentially to socialization into the folkways of a society by a type of training of the mind and character designed to internalize desired cultural attitudes in members. Such attitudes, as Allport reminds us, consist in "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related". The process of inculcating these attitudes normally involves the systematic reduction of existential options - political, economic, and social - to ritualized symbols capable of eliciting a quasi-automatic

emotional response at the individual level. The characteristics of these symbols then constitute a community of shared meanings, a sort of common emotional language, the effect of which is to render the behaviour of members mutually comprehensible, thus eliminating the need for precise definitions in each situational context.

Cultural discipline depends on the preparedness of members to behave in accordance with these prescribed norms; that is, in line with the symbolic representation of the prevailing self-apprehended image of the community. A disciplined society is one in which the range of possible existential phenomena has been invested *a priori* with such cultural symbolism. The result is a 'standard way of doing things which then colours the activities and the expectations of members, such that a specific 'national' character emerges and constitutes the 'cultural type' of the given society.

Two of the papers in this selection are concerned specifically with this process as manifested in Igbo society. Madugba Iro approaches the issue from the point of view of the effects of a characteristic ethic on the personality of the Igbo man. Igbo ethics, he says, are predicated on traditional notions of order and discipline in society, the idea of a humane life and the possibility of individual progress. He finds that this combination has produced a vibrant, achievement-oriented personality that other peoples often see as abrasive, and concludes that psychological adjustments may be necessary. For his part, Hyacinth Uba examines the actual inculcation of this ethic in a specific area: the rites which accompany the passage of Igbo youths from adolescence to adulthood. The tests of strength, courage, and endurance, he says, largely succeed in endowing Igbo youth with the capacity to approach existential problems in a critical and discerning manner, ensuring that the predilections and conventions of youth are enabled to change in accordance with the valued norms of Igbo society.

The third paper in our selection sounds a critical note. Situations may occur where a process of socialization is all-too-successful in institutionalizing cultural attitudes in such a way that they become subversive with regard to the continued coherence of the social organism. Eme Awa applies this insight to the political culture of the Igbos, and finds that its religious, educational, social, and

ideological ramifications have evolved in a manner which resulted in a contradictory juxtaposition of a strong sense of macro-nationalism in the global Nigerian context with equally strong attachment to ethnic leadership. He argues that this has led to the political marginalization of the Igbo masses and their consequent apathy towards the system while at the same time inducing in the elites an opportunistic and predatory attitude towards political institutions and processes.

That cultural discipline may produce contradictory, even disruptive consequences unless it also makes for cultural adaptability will come as no surprise to those who are familiar with the large body of anthropological research concerned with the cultural inhibitions to the acceptance of change. Societies must be stable to survive. But stability is not an end in itself; its object is to assure that society can pursue its purposes free from undue conflict, and it does this by maintaining a given order of responses that has proved adequate to the perceived requirements of existence in a given temporal setting. But the society also exists in a geo-political context that is subject to uncontrollable and sometimes unforeseeable and unpredictable transformations. There can be no immutable standards therefore, if the society is to make progress. The attitudes engendered by cultural discipline must be capable of modification in the light of perceived alterations in the environment.

One area where such attitudinal modifications would seem to have become increasingly imperative in Igbo land is the problem of how to accommodate the modern urban industrial culture which has grown up side by side with the external pressures on the traditional culture. Geoffrey Nwaka takes a look at this pattern of urban growth and finds a crisis of adaptation. The contemporary problems of urban growth in Igboland, he says, have been compounded by a past colonial policy of neglect or even active hostility towards 'native' towns, anti-urban prejudices inherited therefrom, and a subsequent uncritical idealization of rural life by scholars and administrators. He argues that cities have become an integral component of Igbo culture, and accordingly calls for positive policies that would reduce most current urban ills and enable the cities to play their necessary role in the adaptation of the Igbos to rapid change and modernization.

The last paper in our selection harks back to our earlier allusion to the manner in which "peripheral societies" have been incorporated into a predatory world economy that has distorted every facet of their current being. Inya Eteng examines Igbo patterns of socialization, and argues that their current manifestations can only be properly appreciated from the perspective of the production relations induced by the capitalistic ethic introduced by colonialism. This ethic, he says, has had disastrous consequences on the traditional values of functional interdependence and co-operation. The situation accordingly calls for a drastic transformation of the present Igbo society. This can only be done, he concludes, through a scientific socialist movement that will imbue Igbo society with revolutionary fervour, so that linked with similar elements in the rest of Nigeria this society can finally promote authentic and real development.

This publication marks the first time that the papers delivered at the colloquia accompanying the Ahiajoku Lecture series are being presented in this format. Like all pioneering efforts, it is necessarily incomplete. It is planned, for instance, that future presentations will include the audience reaction to the papers, such as to assemble a more representative sample of opinion on the issues discussed. The idea of bringing such exchanges to the attention of a wider public is of course basic to the conception of the Ahiajoku series. It is hoped that this kind of cultural stock-taking will prove invaluable to those Igbos who are interested in deepening their awareness of their society and contributing to its regeneration. But it should prove equally useful perhaps to all those others, scholars and non-scholars alike, who are involved in cataloguing and elucidating the cultural cross-currents now agitating the African continent, as its sons and daughters attempt to rediscover their heritage and define a new socio-political posture that is equal to the challenge which contemporary history has thrown at their feet.

THE EDITORS.



IGBO ETHICS AND DISCIPLINE

MADUGBA I. IRO

In periods of uncertainty and stress, whether economic, psychological, political or social, people like to cast their minds back to the ethical and moral values which have formed the inner drive of their social action. They may recall with elation innate qualities that have seen them through the years of struggle with their immediate environment and the outside world.

Winston Churchill during the dark days of the Second World War offered his country men and women blood, sweat and tears. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* of Max Webber (1864 1920) can be read as a guide to action based on religious background. The book deals with the kind of religion (Protestant) and the kind of ethical/moral values, and the achievement motivation that could generate accumulation of capital for development.

Nearer home, Amadi Elechi (*Ethics in Nigerian Culture*) was concerned with an analysis of selected topics in contemporary Nigeria which he treated in their ethical settings: religion, secret societies, murder, theft, adultery, supernatural crimes, warfare, slavery, concepts of goodness, social discrimination, sexual discrimination, 'awufu' (bribery), and leadership.

In September 1972, General Olusegun Obasanjo, the then Head of State, presented his "Jaji Address" to the nation. His theme covered political ideology, discipline, leadership, social and economic discipline, patriotism, justice and the humane society. To him:

discipline implies restraint and self-control in individuals for the good and happiness of all. It is an axial principle on which my idea of society rests.

His "humane society" he argued, would encourage positive initiative and the channelling of such initiative towards the overall benefit of the society.

The society which makes the welfare and the well-being of one the concern of all is a humane society and no one demands more than he deserves. An inhumane society, like the unjust society, cannot escape self-destruction.

We are also familiar with former President Shehu Shagari's "ethical revolution" rhetoric of 1981 - 1983, which was an appeal to the moral conscience in the political sphere; but since Shagari was not a charismatic leader, his appeal bore no positive results.

Normative and moral ethics cannot be divorced from the morals, religion, value systems, and the culture of a people. There is a strong correlation between values and discipline; people who attach a strong moral value to their lives and actions are generally disciplined and industrious people. The Americans, the Germans and the Japanese can claim with a measure of pride that their work and religious ethic, their industry and discipline and the high quality of their education (which is rooted in their culture and history) have all combined to produce highly industrialized societies which today are models for many developing countries aspiring to capitalist development.

The ethos of the Igbo people rests on morality, industry, and discipline. We have always been so both at the level of the primary family unit in our child-rearing practices within the nuclear and the extended family systems, and at the group level as in 'Umunna' and 'Ikwu na Ibe' (assemblies of members of one kindred and of members of associational groups). In our traditional society, our people rested their future on their culture; they were guided in their daily actions by the prescriptions of their forbears and their gods. As G. T. Basden has remarked:

They have rules for the regulation of conduct applicable to almost every detail of life. Habits are naturally engendered and developed; they are a subconscious part of the native's being and amongst the older generation, it is a rare thing to find one failing to observe the traditional rules of conduct.

When Christianity came to Igbo land, our people fully embraced it. The former Eastern Region of Nigeria including Igboland remains the most Christian part of Nigeria because the Christian religion taught moral and ethical values and norms of behaviour and conduct which are in agreement with some of the customs and traditions of the people, especially in the area of social mobility through education. The table below illustrates this fact.

TABLE 1: RELIGION IN NIGERIA, 1953 - 1963
(Census Data) (%)

AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION

Region	1953			1963		
	Chris- tians	Moslems	Others	Chris- tians	Moslems	Others
Nigeria	21.14	45.31	33.55	34.50	47.20	18.30
Northern Region	3.31	69.27	27.42	9.70	71.70	18.50
Western Region (excluding Mid-West)	40.40	41.40	18.20	48.70	43.40	7.90
Eastern Region	50.06	0.32	49.62	77.20	0.30	22.50
Midwest (Bendel)	23.10	4.70	72.20	54.90	4.20	40.90
Lagos	54.70	49.90	3.40	54.30	44.30	1.10

Source: Computed from Reports of 1952 - 53 and 1963 Censuses of Population of Nigeria.

In his book, *Traditional Humane Living Among the Igbo People*, Chieka Ifemesia defined humane living as:

a way of life emphatically centred upon human interests and values, a mode of living evidently characterized by empathy, and by consideration and compassion for human beings.

He went on to elaborate:

Hence the reasons for the Igbo emphasis on the human being and his welfare, on humane living, have to be sought (. . .) first, as among other human groups, in the people's innate humaneness and manifest love for human beings - in the best sense of those expressions, not in the later-day sense of humanitarianism or philanthropy, either of which has come to be virtually synonymous with histrionic distribution of directed charity or conscience money. In reality, Igbo humaneness is deeply ingrained in the traditional belief that the human being is supreme in the creation, is the greatest asset one can possess, is the noblest cause one can live and die for.

We see in this passage a restatement of the philosophy of Igbo life: to make the world better as they found it, to appreciate and enjoy the good things of life, to acquire wealth where possible and leave behind a good name, honour, and valuable property for their descendants. The figures given in Table 1 above show very clearly that the people of the then Eastern Region (Igbo, Ibibio, Efik, Ogoja, Ogoni, and Ijo) and to some extent the Ekiti in Ondo, and the Lagosians share the same ethical values as indexed by the percentage of Christians, but their value orientations have been mediated by their culture and environment.

In 1966, Robert A. Levine carried out a study among secondary school pupils in Nigeria. His sample contained representatives of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria - Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. He asked the pupils to write accounts of dreams they remembered and also write essays on "success". He found after analysing the returns that dreams reported by Igbo boys most often contained achievement imagery, the southern Yoruba came next, then the Northern Yoruba and finally the Hausa. The proportion

of people mentioning self-development as their principal ambition followed the same order of ethnic groups - Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa.

M. Wober's (1966) study of Nigerians showed that public stereotyping of the major ethnic groups was as follows:

Hausa	traditional
Yoruba	inbetween
Igbo	hardworking

However, non-Igbo stereotype Igbo as:

they like everybody
they do not discriminate
they are not tribalistic
they are always kind
they always tell the truth
their "yes" is "yes" and their "no" is "no"
the Igbo read the Bible.

One would like to replicate these studies to note if there has been any significant change in the stereotyping of the Igbo by non-Igbos or of the Igbo by themselves since the end of the civil war.

II. Reinforcing Ethical Values in the Socialization Process of the Igbo:

The entire Igbo socialization process, is designed to reinforce moral uprightness and discipline in their children. The Igbo belief in reincarnation or rebirth is a case in point. According to Cardinal Francis A. Arinze,

There is a belief in reincarnation. Not only are people believed to have been born again of the same or another mother, but also children who die young are believed to have decided beforehand in their group when they would die, especially if they do not like the family. These children are called Ogbanje (changelings). Among the ancestors, only the good ones are believed reincarnated.

Belief in reincarnation is not an entirely Igbo /African tradition. D. A. Martin (Sociology of English Religion) reported in 1969 that ten per cent of the British population believe in it. In Igbo mythology, reincarnation may involve either a rebirth of the spirit in another person, or a rebirth of the entire person. If reincarnation is accepted in this sense the work of the Creator, the Supreme Creator, becomes limited in scope: creation would be limited to those who have not experienced any earthly life (birth) and inanimate objects lower animals, trees, shrubs and flowers and insects. Reincarnation as a process of rebirth would make sense in those who had "lived" in this world before. In the olden days, people had either poured hot oil or chopped off part of a finger, or cut off hair or left some other characteristic mark on the dead as a sign which might enable them to identify a particular person at rebirth (Ahumarachi). It has been said that living people have identified themselves or their relations as such and such a person in their earlier world (O bu nnam/nnem loro uwa). The scar carried into rebirth would not be an inherited trait and its presence would certainly confirm aspects of the belief in reincarnation.

People reincarnate to immediate kin, good and wealthy relations and members of their kindred. They may also reincarnate to maternal and paternal relations (O loro uwa na umunne/umunna ya).

It is not specified how long people might stay in the world of the dead before reincarnation, nor is there any particular sequence: those who die young do not necessarily reincarnate before those who die old. What is more, neither sex is favoured over the other. It is not unusual to hear women under severe stress in pregnancy or in frustration declare that in their next life they would reincarnate as men.

Persons who were put under a curse as notorious criminals and other evil doers did not reincarnate as human beings; they would live their next life as trees and lower animals, or their spirits might continue to wander aimlessly till they were either lost completely or the gods were sufficiently appeased to grant them peace and rebirth. Those not given befitting burial may refuse to reincarnate to any of their relations, and in some cases may cause the deaths of such living relations.

I have heard people say that because they spent lavishly on burying their late father, mother, wife or dear one the spirit of the dead person has brought them wealth. Does this perhaps account, in part at least, for the expensive burial ceremonies in Igboland today, indeed in the rest of Southern Nigeria?

There is the Ogbanje that never settles for a reasonable length of time in either the world of the living or that of the dead. To some people the Ogbanje has a nuisance value in the world of the living, although the tribulations it inflicts on the living may be minimized if appropriate sacrifices are offered in suitable forests, shrines, streams, or rivers, especially when the child is between the ages of six and fifteen.

Reincarnation as a population process would appear to face some intractable problems: The rate of population growth would be necessarily indeterminate because:

- (i) We do not know the number that will be 'created' by the Supreme Deity to augment those added by reincarnation.
- (ii) We do not know whether creation will take place in discrete or continuous time intervals.
- (iii) We do not know whether the dead reincarnate once or seven times, as is believed in some parts of Igbo land where a person is said to have seven lives!

We have explored this topic here because reincarnation is central to the Igbo world-view concerning the ethics of good and disciplined living. For as Rev. E. Ilogu put it

But it is only those who lived *a good life* that are believed to be capable of coming back.

Professor V. C. Uchendu summarizes the Igbo world as a

world where people not only strive for equality; it is one in which change is constantly expected ... Since the relationship between the social and the spiritual world is contractual, there is always the fear that the terms of the contract might not be fully honoured by either party; the spirits often change their mind as do men (and women).

Order and discipline are valued norms of Igbo life. The principle of War Against Indiscipline (WAI) can be recognized in aspects of Igbo social organization which include age seniority and seniority in membership as the norm of social action. Among the Ozo title holders, the Okonko* members and in the age grade system, seniority was determined not entirely on grounds of biological age but age at initiation and the date of the initiation played a prominent role. A rich Okonko member could initiate his infant son, a relation or his 'staff of office' (mkpara) and each took precedence over an adult human being who was initiated at a later date. It is a violation of discipline and the code of conduct for any member of such societies to jump the queue. The queuing culture of modern times, 'first come, first served', is a call to action to expand the scope of traditional culture to include modern complex society.

III. The Igbo and the Wider World:

If the Igbo people were living in a world of their own insulated from contact with others, their humane mode of living would pay off handsomely, but unfortunately this is not so. Some of the most pervasive influences on the Igbo people and their society have come from outside Igbo land, e.g. the slave trade, colonization, amalgamation, external economic and social relations (trade, missionaries, education), the First and Second World Wars, independence and the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War. Some of their neighbours have not "seen", assessed and reacted to these situations in the way the Igbo have done. These neighbours have often made subjective value judgements on issues which the Igbo themselves have seen in ethical terms. Some of them have seen the industry and hard work of the Igbo people as motivated by a desire to dominate other peoples or seize more than their fair share of the national cake. Igbo migration to other parts of Nigeria is a case in point.

*Okonko is practised in several communities in the Old Owerri Province and in the Ahoada/Ikwerre Divisions of the Rivers Province. The staff (mkpara) initiation entitles the father or whoever paid for the initiation to share in rewards and contribute to payments on behalf of the infant until he comes of age. A ceremony is arranged for the members of Okonko to initiate the young adult into the ritual of Okonko. From this time on, he becomes a member of the Okonko society and not a staff. The effective date of his initiation into the Okonko ritual is not the date of his membership but the date on which he achieved staff status.

In a truly united country there would be no overt or covert barriers to migration. In Britain, in America, a citizen can reside in any part or State of the Union. In some cases, he starts to enjoy citizenship rights in that State within a year or two of settling there. Before the authors of the 1979 Constitution incorporated the concept of "National Integration" into the Constitution, the Igbo people had achieved a very high rate of population dispersal throughout the country based on the notion of one country one destiny; indeed, with the construction of the Eastern District of the Nigerian Railways, 1906 - 1915, our people took off in waves of migration for all parts of the country. By the time of the 1931 census, the Government Statistician, Mr S. M. Jacob, could assert about internal migration generally, that:

for this reason a figure of ten per cent of the total population as residing continuously in places other than their places of birth, seems to be a reasonable estimate of the extent of internal migration in Nigeria as a whole. (Vol. I Census Report 1931 p.26)

The report did not specify which migrants came from what particular ethnic/linguistic area of Nigeria, nor how long the migrants had lived in their new abode. However, by the time of the 1953 census, the Igbo migrants constituted about one per cent of the total population of 16,835,000 Africans living in Northern Nigeria including Lagos and, most significantly, fifty-three per cent of the over three million Igbo migrants were found in non-Igbo areas such as Ogoja, Cameroons, Calabar and Rivers' Provinces. It should also be noted that the population of the Old Western Region included an over 300,000 indigenous Igbo population in the Benin and Delta Provinces. The most revealing of these significant statistics was the dispersal of the Igbo population throughout the length and breadth of the country including the Southern Cameroons. The pattern of dispersal in 1953 was maintained by the time of the 1963 census with a greater movement towards the area of South-western Nigeria. In Lagos alone, the Igbo component of the population grew from four per cent in 1931 to eleven per cent in 1950 and to fifteen per cent in 1963.

There are various meanings attached to these demographic movements: to the Igbo people, the movement has occurred in response to the unification of the country

which allowed people to live and work in any part of the country. Igbos are psychologically a restless people who like to explore the world around them; they will migrate to any place anywhere because mobility (social and geographic) is a part of their psyche. That is why we see some of the Igbo who said they would never return to the North following their experiences of 1966 - 70 go there after 1971; that is why we find some of our people staying in Equatorial Guinea in spite of the inhuman treatment they encountered there. To non-Igbo, however, these movements have occurred because,

- (i) there is shortage of land in Igboland: the population density in Nigeria they argue is highest in some parts of Igboland: they have a high fertility rate in areas around Owerri where Ewu-ukwu is still practised; they have no choice; they have to migrate.*
- (ii) there are fewer economic opportunities in Igboland since the jobs are not there but abound elsewhere they have to go to these places to earn a living. (Some Igbo critics do not ask why there exist differences in the creation of economic opportunities between the Eastern Region and the other Regions of Nigeria.)
- (iit) for purely political considerations, Igbo migrants are encouraged by their political leaders to leave their home Region so that they may outnumber the indigenes of the host area and thereby dominate the political and economic systems of their hosts and thus enhance the bargaining power of their leaders.

The truth is that both sides perceive and interpret the objective reality differently.. It required the events of

*A study carried out by Alex Chika Ezech of Imo State University in 1985 showed however that the total fertility rate in Mbaise was between six and seven children per woman; the effect of Ewu-ukwu on marital fertility was limited to a small number of women who enjoyed the visibility conferred by that ceremony.

1966-67 to clarify their perspectives but without changing anybody's fundamental position. Since 1970 many Igbo migrants have gone out in large numbers mainly to trade but with greater understanding that their position has been weakened in their host communities. Some others have invested in the development of their villages; so much so that Igboland could become one single conurbation by the year 2020 if the trend continues.

Some other perceptive Igbos have argued that if trading is the primary motive, what may be required is to build more markets and lock-up shops in Igboland so that their trading movements outside their homeland will be for a short duration.

We must not ignore history; Igbo people and/or their descendants in Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo Libreville, the Cameroons, Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso, and beyond the continent of Africa (the West Indies, Europe, North and South America, etc.) have served the Igbo interest very well. What the Igbo should do is to try to adjust their ethical values and become more pragmatic, and so come to terms with their reality as a migrant race.

IV. Igbo Corporate Interests in Nigeria:

The Igbo are an integral part of Nigeria and have corporate as well as personal interests which they must protect. This assumes they can recognize their corporate interests and know when and how to act collectively or through their leadership to maximize their advantage or minimize their losses as the occasion demands. Igbo corporate interests encompass among others the territorial, the economic, the social, and the political.

These four interests have sometimes brought the Igbos into conflict with other Nigerians. The territorial interests of any group of people include the right to live and the right to speak and promote their language and culture within their territorial boundaries. We are strongly attached to our homes and land. Over ninety-five per cent of Nigerians are buried in the ancestral soil. Our corporate interest in land becomes much more relevant when it is remembered that we are an agricultural people.

The area of Igboland has been put by L. T. Chubb, a former Resident of Rivers Province, at about 20,000 square miles, or 5.6 per cent of the land area of Nigeria. Its estimated population in 1984 was eighteen million out of the estimated 100 million Nigerians or eighteen per cent of the total population. Put in another way, one in five Nigerians is an Igbo. Igbo people constitute the indigenous populations of Anambra, Imo, Rivers (all main land areas excluding Ogoni), and Bendel States (from Asaba through Kwale to Agbor). Without their own land area, they would be tenants in other people's lands; their homes, their agricultural practices, etc. would depend entirely on the whims and caprices of others and they would psychologically suffer perpetual humiliation. Many Igbo investors in real estate did not survive the transformation of their holdings into "Abandoned Property" in areas which had hitherto been known as Igboland. It may be difficult to know the real import of Obigbo turned Rumuigbo/Oyigbo and Umukurushe turned Rumukurushe on

- (a) the indigenes of these places
- (b) the non-indigene Igbo
- (c) the other Nigerians.

'Igboness' is not only a state of mind a way of feeling and acting; it is a statistical/political parameter, because it involves the number of people enumerated as Igbo. By the time of the next population census of Nigeria when Obigbo indigenes may not be enumerated as Igbo but Oyigbo or Ikwerre, the resulting total population will place the Igbo ethnic group as the third largest rather than the second largest in the country - a position which it enjoyed from 1911 to the inaccurate 1963 census. On the other hand since States were created to reduce ethnic chauvinism, the more States that are created in Igboland the better for the Igbos. They can exploit the increase in the number of States assigned to them to win greater political leverage. The Kwara State in Nigeria is a typical case; the educated Yoruba elites who are natives of Kwara and have made their mark in academics, politics, business and industry associate with the North and even speak fluent Hausa. In this way they are able to capture top positions in the several spheres of activity in the North, being part of Northern Nigeria. On the other hand, the hearts of the ordinary people of Kwara are with the Yoruba of the Western States. Since 1967, the people of Kwara have played the political game to their mutual advantage.

State boundary adjustments have become sources of anxiety to Imo and Anambra States since 1970. Clear guidelines should be defined on how interState boundaries should be demarcated.

It is in the realm of economic interests that the Igbo people need to be circumspect. Some Igbo have expressed the fear that the internal contradictions within the Igbo political and academic elite have been largely responsible for their present economic stagnation. It is often stated that Federal projects meant for Imo State have been frustrated by Anambra people for the ostensible reason that Imo people have not given them political support; the way the Governments of the two States managed their joint ventures in the last civilian era left much to be desired.

Whatever truth may be in these allegations should reinforce the central issue that the Igbo people should work in co-operation wherever they may be, in the interest of their masses and their homeland. There is an Igbo saying: "Onye ajuru aju anagh aju onwe ya".

As a migrating people who can reap the economic advantages of transferring their savings to their home States, they must be able to apply their industry, utilize their economic contacts to attract and establish small-scale and medium size industries in their homeland. Co-operative ventures rather than family business should be encouraged. Group medical practices, incorporated business ventures are the avenues towards industrialization of Igboland. Igbo entrepreneurs should establish research links with universities and colleges of technology in Igboland in research and development to be able to mobilize talent and capital towards a major economic leap-forward in Igbo land. At the same time, indigenous technology (in for instance, the modernization of traditional medicine, food processing, printing, recycling of waste material) is an area where group effort is required in order to create the appropriate great leap-forward to the twenty-first century.

As a people we must be science-and technology-oriented; our primary and secondary schools must cultivate a commitment to the study of science and technology. Every secondary school pupil in Igbo land must study our language, History, Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. Some may substitute technical drawing for Biology, and

Zoology. Our educators must begin to give serious thought to writing text-books in the basic sciences. We should aim at giving our youths the best qualitative education and enable them to excel in several areas. In a competitive world there is no substitute for excellence.

In our social interaction with non-Igbo people we must adopt a broad spirit of accommodation and tolerance. The problem with Nigeria is that most Nigerians admire the Protestant ethic of industry and achievement motivation which the Igbo have internalized; indeed when things go wrong in this country as they often do, we recall our experiences in Europe and North America where telephones work, letters and parcels get to their destination in a matter of days and untampered with, banks and super-markets serve their customers cheerfully and with a minimum of delay, etc. Yet we resent these qualities in the Igbo. The resentment is misplaced and is usually due to rivalry in the economic sphere.

In the realm of politics we should be able to exercise our freedom of choice in the matter of associates; the idea of all Igbo people joining one political party in a multi-party system is politically naive and undiplomatic; sane people do not put all their eggs in one basket. In matters affecting the corporate interests of our people however, we must show greater vision and act together irrespective of our local differences. In politics there should be no permanent friend and no permanent enemy; our corporate interest should be our permanent ally.

If we examine Nigeria's politics since 1960, four combinations have become discernible (not that each unit is homogeneous).

- (i) the minorities as a unit
- (ii) the Yoruba as a unit
- (iii) the Hausa/Fulani/Kanuri as a unit
- (iv) the Igbo as a unit.

At any given moment a politically wise leadership can see which combination/alliances will maximize its political interests. Regarding each of these combinations/alliances as forming twenty-five - thirty per cent of Nigeria's

population or close to it, none acting alone could hope to rule, or indeed has ever ruled this country. The trade-offs have involved which combinations and permutations of alliances were likely in each instance to maximize the political advantage of a unit.

For the Igbo people there should be some introspection and soul searching. We do not advocate retreat in the face of difficulties. Igbo people should exploit their innate qualities to the fullest. To act against their best judgement is not in their best interest. By all means the Igbo migrants must respect the culture of those in whose lands they live.

The solution to our ethical dilemma is not for the Igbo to abandon the moral/ethical basis of their humane existence; to do so would mean creating a different people out of themselves, out of the Igbo as we know them.

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IGBO RITES OF PASSAGE

H. M. E. UBA

rites of passage

INTRODUCTION:

You will all agree with me that a budding young man or woman goes through a number of developmental stages before he or she is regarded as a full blown adult. Many psychologists have advanced a number of theories in support of their findings on these physiological and intellectual changes that take place in a given young person. Regardless of the developmental model one prefers, adolescence is generally, regarded as a time of special developmental significance. For purposes of this paper, I will turn to Jean Piaget's terms and qualities for my description. Perhaps, no theory of human development has stimulated as much research as Piaget's theory of intellectual development.

Adolescence is the last of Piaget's four intellectual ages of man (sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal). Rites of passage is another term for "Puberty Rites".

Formal presentation of adolescent boys and girls for initiation into adulthood through the rites of "Itu anya" for boys and "Iru mgbede" for girls are events which have special ceremonies which distinguish them from other rites. These characteristics that set them apart will be discussed in detail later in the paper. "Igba mgba" (wrestling) and "Iwa akwa" (cloth wearing), though not strictly rites, are events which form part of the activities which adolescents engage in as part of the ceremonies which confer on them the

status of adulthood. They will also be described in detail. Initiation rites in general are ceremonies supervised in part by adults of the culture. They are mandatory for the adolescents. These initiations mark the passage of an adolescent from the social status of a child to the social status of an adult. An initiate goes through a period of social transformation in which he or she gives up one identification for another. Since the timing corresponds to a crisis period for the average adolescent, the public nature of the ceremonies improves the adolescent's self image. Parts of the program built into the ceremonies are instructions on the customs and classified information which supposedly only adults know. Initiation rites vary in their degree of sophistication. For Van Gennep (1960 original 1909), a rite of passage is a ceremony of regeneration, a rite of death and rebirth, a transition from the profane to the sacred. And so, it is with the "Iru mgbede" and "Itu anya". There are phases of "separation, transition and incorporation".

Piaget's theory of intelligence is epigenetic and interactional. Flavell (1963) and Hunt (1961) put it pointedly that cognitive structures gradually come through an active organism interacting with the environment. The implication for this in the Igbo rites of passage is the rationale for these ceremonies. They recognize cognitive growth as a thought-building process which initially depends on action and perception in childhood and later relies on thought as the adolescent builds structures of time, space, causality and logical classes. These rites and ceremonies emphasize action before and up to the end of the initiations, replaced by a phase in the life of the initiated when thought takes over in the building of the concept of reality in all life's endeavours. The increasing interest in the variety of social systems, real or possible, represented in these rites obliges the regenerated Igbo boy or girl to be critical of his or her standards of general behaviour and lifestyle. Therefore, the emerging adult begins to look objectively at himself and at the assumptions of the various groups of which he is a member. This situation has continued to help the rules and conventions of the youth in Igbo land to change in keeping with societal norm.

The rites in our culture include - Itu-anya-uta, Iwa akwa (cloth wearing ceremony), Iru-mgbede (fattening), Igba-mgba (wrestling), Ima-uhe, Isa aka, Ekpe, Okonko, Iri-okporoko, Igba egwu. I will here and now attempt to describe the rituals of "Itu-anya-uta". I will not reveal the secret aspects.

ITUANYA

Bohanna and Curtin (1971) observed that when a doctor tells a Westerner that he has a rare disease, he does not immediately say "Why me?" At least not to the doctor. But when an African is struck by a disease, misfortune, sterility or plague, he links such social problems to a divine act. The above is true today of the "unbeliever". Today, a typical African would ask the "why me" question by going to a diviner to search for a device which was used to bring it about and perhaps to determine the author, who may be a spirit to whom insufficient attention has been paid or an ancestor who is punishing a descendant, or an innocent person who is being punished for the social, moral or spiritual shortcomings of his relatives. Also, it could be a human author who is venting his anger, envy or selfishness on the victim. The art of "Itu anya" tells priests, patients and the community what rituals must be performed. To be a priest or a diviner requires intuitive understanding of the society. Diviners must be men of courage. Almost always they bring into the open the inadequacies in the daily life of the community. Unless they are strong and forceful they can be frightened with threats. 'Itu anya' is only a first order ritual in a hierarchy of initiations which fully equips a person with all the knowledge, power and courage he needs to be a diviner. 'Itu anya' introduces adolescents first of all to the world of men with an additional power or ability to communicate with spirits. According to the belief system, the initiated sees far into the future. 'Itu anya' initiation lasts eight days.

'Itu anya', usually is performed by adolescent males. The timing is at the discretion of the community and boys who were born in a particular year are free to join. In some cases, children born within two or three years of each other are pooled together for the initiation. It has to be emphasized that these ceremonies are collective, since they are performed once and jointly by all the initiates of the same period who then constitute a formal corporate set.

'Itu anya-uta' begins with 'Ikpu omu' which starts on the evening of Eke day. The venue is the village square. Aspirants retire to the residence of the chief celebrant and wear rags around their waists to cover their genitals. They tie 'omu' on their necks, the ankles of both legs wrists

with carved idols hanging on each and resting on the hips. Each aspirant hangs a raffia bag on the left side. They spend the night dancing the 'egedere' dance and singing the accompanying songs. The songs are exhortations to self control, courage and other manly attributes:

Nwam siwe obi ooo
Isiwobi gi amara ogwu - ooo
Imara ogwu iwuru Nwoke - ooo

My child endure
If you endure you
become initiated
If you are initiated
you become a (real)
man.

On the second day, that is Orie, the chief initiator accompanied by his assistants and all the aspirants with the accompaniment of egedere music go from one juju shrine in the vicinity to another. Fowls are sacrificed at each shrine. They pay homage to these shrines in turn and collect from each the different roots and herbs which they will use for the rituals.

Afo, the third day, is the day for 'Isu ogwu' and 'Itu ogwu'. The roots and herbs are mixed with a lot of pepper. All the initiates in turn have these mixtures poured into their eyes. They lie on their backs on banana leaves while this is being done and if they must cry out they must shout "Agwum-ee" not the usual 'Nnem-ee' or "Nnam-ee" which we are used to in the face of danger or excessive pain.

On the fourth day which is Nkwo, the aspirants do the 'Itu oba anyanwu' during which they lie in a row with their faces to the sun while chicken blood is sprinkled on their eyes in turn.

The fifth day, which is Eke is the day for 'Itu uda' and 'Itu ohara'. Itu ohara is done in a widow's kitchen. A lamp is suspended from a grating above the fireplace and oil from this lamp is made to drop into the eyes of the aspirants in turn. Each aspirant must undergo this terrible ordeal. This ceremony of 'Itu ohara' is performed at night while the 'Itu ogwu' is performed before noon.

On the sixth day, Orie which is the market day the group rests. In the evening they go to the market and are allowed to take any articles for sale with their left hand. This ceremony is the first opportunity that the public has to see the candidates for the initiation.

On the seventh day Afo, the initiates are taken to the traditional burial ground. According to the myth, skulls of the dead are collected; each initiate then places his head on a skull and has his human eyes removed and replaced with the eyes of 'spirits'. The scars are covered over with 'Nzu' and 'Odo'. With the 'new eyes', the initiated is then able to see spirits, according to belief, which the uninitiated cannot. That same day, the 'Ima Acha oku' ritual is performed. A collection of roots and animals such as tortoise, insects, reptiles and millipede is boiled at a spot in the village square. Each of the initiates then runs from one end of the square and dips his hand into the boiling pot being required to eat whatever he picks with the left hand. Whatever one gets indicates what occupation he can usefully take up as a man. To pick a root or a herb indicates that one can be a successful native doctor.

The eighth and last day is for the 'Ida miri' ceremony. The initiates are taken to the stream reputed to be the abode of all the spirits in the land. A support team for each initiate is placed in a strategic position in the stream. When a candidate is pushed into the water his eyes covered, there is supposed to ensue a struggle for him between the spirits and the human support team; the humans usually succeeding in capturing the candidate. At the end of this ceremony, the candidates wash their bodies and remove the paraphernalia of initiation which they put into their bags, and dress up properly in clothes brought to the site by relations waiting at a distance. These ceremonies are still performed in some parts of Igbo land.

Severity of Initiation Rites:

All rites of passage involve some ordeal calling for qualities such as tolerance, endurance, courage and strength. By successfully performing these rituals the erstwhile adolescent attests to his readiness to assume the responsibilities of adult life. Some of the rites leave physical evidence of adult status such as tattoos and scarifications on the body which often leave scars which are proud documents of adult status. The degree of emotional involvement varies from one rite to the other and the amount of physical discomfort ranges from performances that seem a form of sadistic torture to fairly pleasurable experiences.

The initiation of women normally involved beautification (e.g. new hair arrangement), sequestration and dietary restrictions accompanied with instructions on such things as sexual behaviour, behaviour to in-laws, care of children and similar information designed to equip the average woman for life with a man. Some writers have argued that the severity of the rites of passage in any society is the function of the mother/child relationship. A prolonged weaning period usually meant a severe initiation for the child. Among other things, the adolescent male may be barred from women, as well as submit to severe tests of manliness as part of the initiation. Similarly, girls may be barred from sexual contact with men. Here, we are stressing that societies that indulge infants tend to demand more of their adolescents than those that place greater restrictions: on the infants.

Sex Differences in Puberty Rites:

Sexual maturity is of greater significance in the female than in the male. If the importance attached to the rites were to be determined by the significance of physiological changes, Benedict (1934) argued that these rites would be more emphasized among females but because of the dominant role of men in many societies, the initiation of male adolescents is emphasized. Mead (1950) argued differently. She held that whereas one can definitely say from the onset of the menstrual flow from a girl that she is a woman, so to say, there is no specific physiological development event that can specifically tell that Nnanna, Ifeanyi or Obi is now a man. Pubertal changes in the male are many and appear slowly over a long period of time. Mead stated that because of the above, society steps in and establishes sexual identity to mark a new definition of him by the rites of passage. These ceremonies make the status of the initiated boy known to the community. His status is made visible by scars, tattoos and circumcision.

Values and Beliefs Associated with the Rites of Passage:

The need to have enough money to buy the cloth, the gun, the gun-powder and the food, etc. to be used for the "Iwa Akwa", to use one example, has forced the average adolescent from Mbano, Etiti or Mbaise Local Government Areas, where to date they are practised, to set out early in life to take up a trade and thus save money. This sense of

mission and commitment has indirectly encouraged many a young man to be their own ambassadors in his place of sojourn. Most of the time these youths have succeeded to save enough money from their businesses to celebrate their passage as well as succeed in establishing themselves as independent nuclear units of their families. Some succeed in building their own houses before the rites and marrying their own wives, instead of hiring young girls they might not marry after the trial sex experience which characterizes the ceremony in some communities. In the same vein, such adolescents acquire for themselves the sprit of discipline, industry, perseverance and independence.

THE RATIONALE FOR "IRU MGBEDE"

The rationale for 'Iru mgbede' is to allow the girl time to rest, to refresh herself and to be formally prepared intellectually, emotionally and physically in readiness for the revered status of a married woman. She is opportuned to raise whatever questions she has about these subjects. In a way 'Iru mgbede' is a medium through which parents reward their daughters for their services to the family; an occasion for honouring them publicly for their proven strength of character and their high moral standard. The lectures, the incantations and the nocturnal visits to shrines and the village markets are experiences that die hard. A typical incantation such as the one that follows underscores the rationale for the ceremony:

Topu agbu ujo
 I kere m gburugburu,
 Di ka ajo agwo
 Kere onye o jikere idogbu
 I huru m n'anya,
 Kwe ka ihunanya gi
 Di ka ifufe di nwayoo
 Wetara m
 Udo n'obi,
 Udo n'ulo.

Nye m ike na ume ohuu;
 Ike echiche uche,
 Ike olu;
 Ike ime mma;
 Ike iga n'iru;
 Ike idi naemeri emer

I huru m n'anya;
Kwee ka mu na gi soro n'ije ;
Ka otu ihe
Duru mu na gi
Rue ala ihe,
Ala ihu-na-anya,
Na nke udo,
Na ike,
Na mmeri,
Ebe I huru m n'anya.

Ironidi A. (1978) p. 75.

The rites and ceremonies being examined in this paper are for adolescents who are healthy and mentally sound. Any youth who is seen to be immature in any form is not allowed to be initiated even though he or she might chronologically have attained the same number of years as those being initiated. Elkind (1978) describes Piaget's formal operations period as a "period of life's stage when adolescents comprehend historical time and geographical space and contrast ideals as well as grasp contrary-to-fact conditions as they conceptualize and think about their own thinking". This corresponds to the period in the life of the Igbo boy or girl when they are initiated into adulthood. The Igbo use the opportunity of these ceremonies and rites for the revelation to the young adult of historical secrets about the ethnic group and their culture generally. The 'Itu anya', more than any other ritual, entitles an adolescent boy to many secrets of the Igbo not revealed to non-initiated members. The secrecy is enforced by the oath on which such important information is given. The use of symbols (similes and metaphors) is generally believed to force the adolescents to look for meanings which will enable them take different viewpoints. The varied experiences to which the rites expose the adolescents enrich their imagination and extend their power of verbal expression, thus enabling them to make allusions as well as assertions within the limits of logical possibility which replaces the illogical fantasy of childhood. The time the adolescent gets to complete these initiations corresponds to the end of the developmental aspects, to which Piaget has drawn attention, namely, the directive function of language, the formation of concepts, translation of concrete experiences into verbal

and symbolic terms, and the evolution of logical thinking. Thus, the general developmental sequence of the Igbo youth agrees with Piaget's developmental stages.

The tradition of the Igbo man involves notions about the universe, about time and space, about things considered private to people and places, and those other things that are communally owned and shared. All these experiences cumulatively enable generations of youths to develop from childhood to adulthood. The adolescents find that in spite of their attempts to fit into the society, they are alienated and that despite their feeling and the urge sometimes to revolt, they cannot simply break away from the tradition by either leaving it or organizing an uprising. Alternatively, the intensive experiences and training which the above rites instil into the adolescents enable them to meet five basic challenges in the society:

- (1) The Challenge of Adventure: The environment of 'Itu anya' - the eight days of trial for courage and endurance, the scene in the house of the widow, the dipping of hands in a hot pot of 'fate' and picking something from it, the cemetery scene, and the deep river drama are frightful adventures meant to instil endurance, daring and skill. 'Igba mgba' and all the training that goes with it, the courage to stand out and engage an untested opponent in a sheer adventure and risk are all lessons of life which these rites impart in the youth.
- (2) The Challenge of Creativity: Most of the ceremonies and the exercises undertaken are challenges for learning and recreation. There is no doubt that many a youth takes some time off to reflect on what was going on, to think of alternatives and to arrive at an understanding of the culture of Igbo adult.
- (3) The Challenge of Service: The ceremonies emphasize selfless service, to the community. All the unusual, harsh treatment to which people are subjected in 'Itu anya' and the matter of seeing spirits and communicating with them are initial training for selfless service to the community as diviners, priests or medicine men. The lady who subjects herself to the fattening ceremony (Iru mgbede) wants, among other reasons, to make

sure that she puts the best into married life by way of giving full, satisfactory and satisfying service to her husband and her children. She could get married without these ceremonies but she undergoes 'Iru mgbede' to make sure that she goes into marriage as a full-fledged and well brought up Igbo housewife.

- (4) The Challenge of Logical Inquiry: A challenge to explore one's curiosity to formulate questions or personal problems and to pursue a solution is provided by the 'Igba mgba' and 'Iwa akwa' institutions. Both provide opportunities to the youth for the challenge to enquire and to seek to win. Apart from the opportunities which the age grade system (direct outcome of "Iwa akwa") offers people for leadership it creates a forum for the sharing of points often with equals and colleagues on the many opportunities it offers to its members. The communal experience the youths enjoy provides a strong sense of solidarity, belonging and identity. Society here expects them as its most active and virile members to identify themselves with the aspirations of the community but also to project its norms.
- (5) Moral Development and Moral Judgement: A careful study of child rearing practices in Igbo-land shows that ego development affects moral judgement. Also, ego development while related to general cognitive development, depends on other factors such as social environment. Every generation of Igbo adults and elders (senior citizens) sees the youth as would Ceniston (1975), as a product of the forces which opposed the norm of the culture. Almost always, their suspicion is confirmed by the psychological existence of an identity search, continual groping, a great deal of experimentation with major institutional forms, symbolic rejection of parental values, significant and widespread counter cultures and an obsession with personal taste and self expression, increased age segregation and alteration of family socialization practices.

For purposes of socialization in the moral domain, societal values, beliefs and attitudes must be internalized in the young. Thus, the Igbo elder as it were, decided presumably at the dawn of history, that children must come to adopt adult values as their own, and conform to them irrespective of the hope of external reward or fear of external punishment. Society's agents begin by imposing values and by controlling children from without. Thus, the ceremonies connected with the above rites are loaded with values, attitudes and beliefs intended for the moral growth of the adolescent. Therefore, the initiations and all about them are supposed to help the adolescent to be critical of their moral judgement, to be astute, and to be more comprehensive in their thought.

Since ethical viewpoints seem to reflect the mental maturity of people who hold them, the moral beliefs and attitudes built into these institutions help the Igbo adolescent to become susceptible to reason, to persuasion and discussion. This is why as a way of life, important family concerns are brought for discussion by the entire family or kindred during or after major family meals. Topics of such meetings include misdemeanour, marriage and the need for family members to represent or reflect the family ideals outside. Among the Igbo the adolescent is directly and indirectly assisted to outgrow his childhood notions that moral rules are fixed and final.

After completion of initiation into adulthood, the adolescent's mind is filled with cultural learnings. He tends to generate conclusions similar to his culture. The process of cultural learning is not supposed to rid him of the inner turmoil, reflection, and systematic thought he should experience in order to reach his conclusions. Thus, adolescents have opportunities for the first time to develop intellectual awareness of the reasons behind social standards, customs and manners. As children, they were conditioned to these cultural norms; now as adults they think about them and the appropriateness of their institutionalization and enactment. In such situations, conclusions are not predictable or wholesale; instead, general trends are the usual outcomes.

*Symbolism in "Iru Mgbede", "Itu anya",
"Igba Mgba" and "Iwa Akwa"*

A symbol in a general sense is "a word or phrase (or other form of expression having a complex of associated meanings" (Shaw, 1972, p. 803). A symbol, therefore, can be viewed as having values different from those of whatever is being expressed. "Symbolism is the practice of representing objects or ideas by symbols or of giving things a symbolic associated character or meaning" (Ibid). The function of symbolism is to represent a reality or truth and to reveal them either instantaneously or gradually. Symbols can be material or visual. Some part, if not all of the attire of "Itu anya" has meanings. The "omu" (tender palm frond), the carved idols hung over the shoulders by the initiates, the yellow paintings on the eyelids, the scanty and dirty rags used to cover only the private parts of the initiates during the period depict evil spirits. In fact, their ghost-like appearance symbolizes the evil spirit into which they are supposed to change during the eight days after which they change back by "divine" power to their human form at the end.

The circular sharp cut round the eyes is an expression that human eyes have been replaced by "spirit" eyes, which see further both here and in the spirit world, therefore enabling the initiates "to see and foretell the future". The visit to the cemetery and the ceremonies performed symbolize a visit to the land of the dead. The dead are supposed to brief the initiates on the causes of death and advise on how to check all future plagues, illnesses and diseases which evil spirits let loose to disturb humanity. The ceremonies at the village river, and the absence from home for eight days symbolize 'death' and 'rebirth' which are expressions of the radical changes of role and status of the initiates. The initiated adolescents by token of the ceremonies become agents of both man and spirits in their relationship with the community.

In "Iru mgbede", the water obtained fresh from the stream (calm and clear water) for "Iro ukwu" symbolizes cleansing. The "spitting" (Iko ihe) symbolizes purging the initiate as it were, of all the impurities brought about by her evil deeds and those of her ancestors that might have been visited on her.

"Igba mgba" (wrestling) - the act of carrying up and throwing and opponent is both a real and symbolic representation of strength, a strength which the adolescent should acquire and keep handy all life to fight the constant physical, spiritual and economic aggressors that evade man all the time. In each and all of these situations, the Igbo believe that man should fight such aggressors, human or spiritual, to the best of his ability. In Igbo land, "a man is said to be a man" where he efficiently and effectively handles trying situations.

"Iwa akwa" (cloth wearing ceremony), symbolizes, a number of things. The long wrapper which the initiates wear or put around them while being presented at the market symbolizes an "armour of manhood", and the gun they shoot into the air symbolizes strength. Their preparedness to acquire weapons represented by the gun, required in the constant war which they as men adults and guardians of their villages will champion for the rest of their lives when and if the need arises.

There are other forms of symbols - linguistic and social. During all the ceremonies hand movements are widely used in ritual and liturgical actions. The touching of objects by the initiates or their being touched by the initiators, is performed according to the rules and regulations. The stretching of the hands by the "Iru mgbede" initiate towards her "chi" symbolizes her willingness to carry and nurse the child "chi" will give her. The "oha" plant symbolizes "chi". All future petitions about her to the spirit world would be presented from there through her "chi" to other gods.

Symbols can be behavioural or conceptual. In the case of "Iru mgbede", the change of status is acted by the woman expert to validate the change of the social status of the initiate. The songs during the ceremony convey information about sex, pregnancy, child-bearing, child-rearing, and morality. The removal from the usual place of abode of the initiate of "Iru mgbede" or "Itu anya" (separation) and assuming a new status in the case of "Itu anya" is transition. The final transition is the home-coming of the initiated at the end of the ceremonies. In both "Itu anya" and "Iru mgbede", this final transition confers on the initiated a stable social status which gives him or her all the rights and obligations of his or her new status.

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IGBO POLITICAL CULTURE

E. O. AWA

NATURE AND ROLE OF POLITICAL CULTURE

Political culture, as the term implies, is a derivative of culture itself. What is included under the rubric of culture varies to some extent with the discipline and orientation of the analyst who defines it at any point in time. I think, however, that the minimum content of culture encompasses values, beliefs, attitudes, images, behavioural norms and the expressive symbols of a people. And by political cultures we refer only to those aspects of a culture which have an impact of some sort on political traditions, political behaviour, political institutions and their operation. Political cultures are normally an amalgam of both old and new values, beliefs, attitudes, etc. The traditional or older sets tend to persist in the minds and hearts of people while new ones creep in gradually to supplant some and to co-exist with the others. In a society like ours where we can very well speak of the existence of two "nations", we find great complexity in the political setting and this can seriously confound political analysis.

Our main concern in this paper, however, is the role of political culture in society, with specific reference to Igbo society. The usual role of political culture in any society is two-fold in nature and consists of (1) a framework for perception and (2) an orientation towards political life. As a framework political cultures deal with the images, beliefs and values which provide people with the means for perceiving, interpreting and evaluating the physical and social environment in which they find themselves. Thus a political culture deals with how a people perceive the socio-political reality of their society and this perception may be accurate, i.e. actually depicts what does

exist or has developed, or it may be a distortion of reality. In such a case we have a conflict between image and reality and it is important to understand that an image of a situation which is inaccurate does constitute reality for the perceiver, for it is on the basis of that perception that he makes his calculations.

A political culture also defines what is a good Government, what goals ought to be pursued by the community, the standards of conduct appropriate for public officers, the rights and responsibilities of citizens and the role of the individuals in the political process, and finally determines the standards to be applied in judging political institutions as to whether they are good, just and rational. For instance, we may find in a particular community the concept of rights is largely collective in nature and we may get into difficulties in the community if we apply this concept in a largely individualistic sense.

As an orientation to political life, a political culture is subdivided into (a) cognitive aspects (b) affective components and (c) evaluative processes. The cognitive is concerned with the knowledge or awareness that people possess of political objects and events, their interest in politics, the extent to which they are able to focus their attention on political events and any variation of such focus from the local through State to national political issues. We should note that generally speaking, the poor, the illiterate and the sick have low cognitive ability, with their knowledge and interest decreasing from local government to national government. The affective component relates to people's feelings of attachment to their political community and the political system, their involvement in its affairs and their identification with the system and acceptance of its central values and norms. The affective component also refers to questions of alienation of some groups, classes or other social formations in the society.

The evaluative role of political culture involves moral or normative judgement made on the basis of prevailing or individual values and beliefs about the community and political system. For instance, a society which believes in the values of equality, individual rights and human freedom will tend to evaluate quite highly any political systems which maximize opportunities for participation and in other ways promote these values.

Political Socialization:

We must say one or two things about the relation of political socialization to the understanding of political culture. By political socialization we mean the process by which individuals come to acquire knowledge of the political culture of their society. That is, we deal here with the question of how values, beliefs, attitudes, etc. are transmitted from one generation to another, thus maintaining some degree of continuity in the political system. It is to be noted that in the process of the transmission of these values, some modifications or significant changes may in fact occur in the values transmitted.

The mechanisms for socialization include the family, the school, the church, political parties, the bureaucracy, the mass media and peer groups. Traumatic events such as wars, famine, economic depression or natural disasters, may serve as mechanisms of political socialization in so far as they leave on the family and other agents some specific imprints on values, beliefs, and attitudes which are passed on to the members of the socializing agencies. It is instructive to note that if the socialization processes are consistent and homogeneous, the values are cumulative and the political system may possess high stability. For instance, if the family, the educational system and political parties lay emphasis on deference, indifference to moral virtues and the values of nepotism, then people are not likely to develop attitudes conducive to the idea of checking the abuse of power by the political classes. But there may be contradictory and inconsistent messages emanating from various sources. The church and the school, for example, may emphasize the need for people to give diffuse support to the political system while peer groups may insist that support for a system should be anchored on the willingness of the system to enable every individual to meet his basic needs for food, clothing, shelter and good health. In that case we find that a society will begin to change from the traditional setting to a transformation stage or even to revolutionary conditions. Let me end this section by noting that the primary sources of the various aspects are religion, education, ideology and certain secular institutions.

Igbo Political Culture:

As we well know, Igbo people had had a political system characterized by the separate existence of town/village states and this meant that the town or village was in most cases the terminal political boundary of each group of people. There had been some loose form of integration of people up to the clan while the Igbo society as a community of loose discernible linkages is a fairly recent phenomenon. At the base of the Igbo society, i.e. at the town/village level, we have a variety of customs which bear resemblance to one another in the various communities. Although there are differences in many things, I believe that the common features in the customs are significant and constitute a basis for enabling us to speak to some reasonable extent in generalizations about Igbo values, beliefs, attitudes, etc. There is available today a good deal of important literature on the Igbo people, notably works by Ikenna Nzimiro, Elechukwu Njaka, Victor Uchendu, Lamberth Ejiofor, etc., from which one can learn a lot about the Igbo society and customs. After considering every knowledge I have gained from the general literature, I see that it is essential for me to state that this study is exploratory in nature. The first major problem I have encountered in writing this essay deals with the question of pinpointing the central values, beliefs, etc. in their application to political matters, both traditional and modern. I think that the value of this essay will be essentially heuristic and therefore I hope that other scholars will probe these matters more deeply than has been possible for me, given the severe limitation of time in which I have had to prepare the essay.

I have indicated above the sources of values, beliefs, attitudes, etc. Since the sources are several, one must analyze each source as far as possible to extract what is there. We will then later state in broad terms the political culture which seems to emanate from each source and then decide what the central issues appear to be.

(i) Religion as a source of Culture:

The Igbo believe in one God, in lesser deities, spirits and in ancestors who are regarded as lesser deities and may be worshipped as such. This traditional religion is non-aggressive or evangelical but involves the use of propitiatory rites designed to appease the deities or to

request their aid in times of need and crisis. The priests have a role in the system which is quite significant since it is generally they who organize the propitiatory rites and the fortunes of a whole community will usually be perceived as being determined by their effectiveness as priests. Those who possess *ofò* may function as their own priests in certain matters but it is generally believed that every person possesses a *chi*. This *chi* is understood as the immediate determinant of one's fortunes or career through life in this world. Both the possession of *ofò* and the belief in *chi* have tended to put emphasis on the individual as an authentic person who has a right to control certain aspects of his life and can, by working hard and thereby eliciting the greatest aid that his *chi* has in store for him, achieve great wealth, prowess in war and other worthy goals in life. The god *Ikenga* is recognized as the principal god of achievement.

The religious system is also a means of stabilizing the society. For instance, the services of the priest are sought for a general blessing at the planting season and when the harvesting is to begin. In strict tradition, nobody may undertake planting or harvesting until the necessary rites have been performed by the priests. This emphasizes respect for authority, custom and order. Of course it is a manifestation of belief in the supernatural as an aid to achievement in the mundane world. We shall return to this a little later but here we must note that stability was also achieved through the administration of oaths to people as a means of settling disputes or determining guilt or innocence in criminal and other types of offences.

Rooted essentially in traditional religion is the cosmology of Igbo people. To the Igbo, the universe has three basic elements, namely, the present, the past and the future. When a person dies, he becomes part of the ancestry of his relatives whom he can guide and assist in many ways here on earth if they propitiate him in some acceptable ways. There is a strong belief in reincarnation and the relatives of a good person are always anxious that he may reincarnate in due course as a member of the same family. All these emphasize acknowledgement of the limitations of human beings, their willingness and eagerness to solicit the aid of others, their faith in the extended family system and their desire for high morality in their behaviour towards ancestors and the unborn in order to procure maximum benefit for the family.

We should note that christianity has come along and brought benefits and problems with it. The main benefits relate to the insistence that religious rites requiring acts which are contradictory to natural justice, should be abolished and the idea of the equality of all human beings as creatures of the same God: all people being created by the same God possess an intrinsic worth which society must enable all people to realize. But christianity emphasized the inferiority of our traditional religion vis-a-vis itself and thereby tended to depreciate our culture as a whole. This is apart altogether from the fact that christianity is riddled by doctrinal cleavages and therefore deliberately sought to carve within our society spheres of influence for each main Christian sect.

The main values, beliefs and attitudes connected with religion may be summarized as (1) individualism tempered to a great extent by the need for (2) conformity to the social order and to the need for respect to established authority; (3) achievement in material matters: (4) belief in God, in lesser gods and in the supernatural; Christianity has not been able to eradicate belief in the lesser gods and in supernatural beings: many Igbo christians including the high priests among them, tend to combine both religious systems in seeking solutions to their personal problems; (5) a certain degree of vagueness in their minds in relation to moral and political questions.

(ii) Education:

The traditional educational system of Igbo people incorporated into the teaching of the young ones through formal and informal processes, lessons in various spheres or aspects of life such as technology, morality, social welfare, the application of high intelligence in the solution of social and personal problems, the virtues of courage, daring and adventure. Thus people were taught lessons in the methods of farming, of the need to let the land lie fallow for some years and thus to regain its fertility as well as the need to ask the gods to chip in to enhance this increase in fertility. Smithing, carpentry, housekeeping, the art of war and wrestling were all taught with meticulous care. The members of the extended family and the community were trained to treat one another with kindness and generosity so as to ensure that no one would live below the poverty line. Land was used normally as the mechanism for engaging in farming to some degree.

Folk tales and parables which show how a fragile animal such as the tortoise can pit his strength against that of the ox or elephant and win through the use of cunning or high intelligence, were told to young people. Stories were also told about the adventures of some legendary heroes in the spirit world or far-away places in quest of honour and glory and for a search into the meaning of life, etc.

Western education introduced serious difficulties into the life of the Igbo. In the first place, there was a shift away from the emphasis on technical education to the supremacy of the three R's. In the second place, like Christianity which initially appeared inseparable from it, it infused into the minds of people the idea of the superiority of Western culture to that of the Igbo and thus left us up till today with the heritage of mental serfdom. Of course Western education brought the teaching of science with it and from this point of view, was designed to instill in us the value of knowledge, i.e. a search for truth, for the understanding of the phenomena around us so that we can explain these phenomena and thereby develop skills in controlling our environment. But the science was taught in a most haphazard manner to a very small fraction of the population. For most of our people therefore phenomena are to be explained by relating them to myths and supernatural elements in the universe while the educated people have come to acquire an outlook on life which is informed by a combination of science and the supernatural, the latter often receiving preference in difficult circumstances. All these, as we shall see later, help determine the cognitive ability of the Igbo man.

(iii) Social Institutions:

The main values, beliefs and attitudes which we consider important and want to bring out here relate to ideas about political participation, of checks and balances employed in the political system as a deterrent to the abuse of political power, of recruitment of people into the political system; the value of an integrated Igbo society and its impact in raising the cognitive ability of the Igbo into the broader political framework of Nigeria. The main agents which have helped shape our culture are the town/village governmental system, age grades and secret societies, the improvement unions culminating in the Igbo Union as the apex of social organization in the turbulent days of Nigerian politics, especially in the 1940's and 1950's.

The typical Igbo governmental system consists of: (1) the Chief and council of elders at the centre, (2) lineage groups, age grades, secret societies, priestly groups, etc., who exercise a considerable amount of influence over the decision processes of the community and (3) the town/village forum. From the well-known processes by which these institutions take decisions and exercise power we know that Igbo people value participatory and consensus politics, along with checks and balances. We must note in particular that in consensus politics, the individual is entitled to express dissent on any issues that crop up in discussions and the leaders of the institution concerned must somehow explain away the problem raised so that all can go along together. This, we must emphasize, has tended not to dispose the Igbo towards the acceptance of the role of permanent opposition which seems to be a central mechanism in Western democracy. Further, when so many people seem persuaded of the rightness of a cause or the rectitude of a political process, it is normally difficult for the average person to want to express dissent on important issues and it can be said that consensus politics implicitly emphasizes conformity of the individual to the group will. When we relate this to certain aspects of the influence of education and religion on the personality of the individual, we can say that in the pursuit of political objectives the individual has far less autonomy in political matters than in the pursuit of economic objectives.

When we refer to the improvement unions from the town or village, through the clan to the whole Igbo ethnic level (as expressed in the former Igbo Union), we find that some Igbo leaders made deliberate attempts, at great expense to themselves in many ways, to raise the cognitive ability of the Igbo people. This has been done in two main ways, namely, (1) creating an awareness among the people that they belong to one ethnic group as different from other ethnic groups in Nigeria and therefore must take steps to improve their educational standards, treating one another as their brothers' keepers and (2) by establishing channels through which information regarding the activities of Governments on regional/state and national levels could be disseminated to as many people as possible.

(iv) Philosophical Values:

On the issue of ideology, I must point out that the Igbo people have been subjected to the same influences as

many other Nigerian people. I have written about this in some detail elsewhere and will here only discuss the outlines of the ideologies.

The first question relates to the influence of Plato's philosophy on the minds of Nigerians. The influence of this philosophy came to us through the colonial system and the British colonial administrators in Nigeria who had imbibed the essence of this philosophy from the teaching of the Greek classical texts in British universities and from the operation of the British political system. Plato was not a democrat and believed strongly in severe stratification of Greek society. He divided Greek society into two, namely, (1) the upper classes consisting of the philosopher-kings, the guardians i.e. the political actors and the soldiers and (2) the masses. The only role he assigned to the masses was the function of providing all the goods and services that the upper classes required in order to live comfortably and thus administer the nation effectively, in the light of their (elites') understanding. The British administrators saw themselves as the members of Plato's upper classes and all Nigerians as the masses whose only role was to minister to the needs of the former. By the time we attained independent status, the upper classes in Nigeria - political, bureaucratic, intellectual and business elites - had come to see themselves as the successors to the British colonialists and therefore, quite unwittingly, came to see the workers and peasants as the masses i.e. lower class whose role is primarily to cater for the needs of the elites in many ways. We shall refer to all these again later.

The other strand of Western political thought which has had a considerable influence on our socio-political values and attitudes may be referred to as the philosophy of orthodox capitalism. The roots of this lie mainly in John Locke, Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer and these roots are traceable both to Britain and to the United States. The political outlook provided by this philosophy was brought to this country by Nigerians who studied in Britain and the United States from about the early 1900's up to the late 1940's. This philosophy was wider in its practical applications in the United States owing to the influence of the seemingly open frontier while in Britain it was a little muted by the outcries of Fabian socialists. This philosophic attitude was brought to bear on Nigerian Government and politics mainly by Igbo people educated in America.

The core values are private initiative, private enterprise, the pursuit of wealth and political power through the use of every trick in the book, with the tacit assumption that in any society only the fittest survive. It assumes that capitalism in order to operate effectively requires the existence of a bourgeoisie which can be created if need be with the resources which belong to the peasants, such as for instance, the use of funds accumulated from the labour of farmers, to build up the bourgeois groups through loans and other means. The

practical effect of all the manoeuvres has been the development of a "dual nation system" among the Igbo: the bourgeois groups including the intellectuals, the business classes, the bureaucrats, professionals and the political class constitute, by and large, an opulent elite group while the peasants have grown poorer and poorer with the passage of time. Forced into a marginal existence, the masses have developed a dwarfed personality and a false consciousness, having a false image of the political and economic realities of the conditions in which they live today.

(v) Modern Politics:

Here also we will make only the barest statements for a vast field and a long period are involved in such an analysis. In any case the salient issues are well known because they have been subjected to critical analysis by many scholars.

The Igbo qua Igbo were introduced into the mainstream of Nigerian politics during its most turbulent phase in the 1940's. Politics was explained in effect by the leaders as a struggle virtually unto death among the ethnic groups of Nigeria. The picture created deliberately, as among the other major ethnic groups, was that only Igbo leaders could fight honestly and successfully for their people. It was explained that Nigeria was one nation indivisible and that everybody had a right to settle anywhere, especially in Lagos and claim privileges and socio-political rights on the same terms as the indigenes of the other places. Thus they were being socialized at one and the same time to adopt a nationalist attitude and to acknowledge as leaders only those who were Igbo people.

As one crisis after the other occurred, the Igbo leaders embarked on an experiment of trying one expedient alignment after another with other ethnic leaders. The Igbo

people came to be perceived by the other ethnic groups as irreverent and iconoclastic in their behaviour towards other people. They never really achieved any great success in their political manoeuvrings and after the civil war they seemed to think that their best approach to Nigerian politics is semi-withdrawal from the political battles. For, even in the civilian politics of the period 1978 to 1983, the hard core of Igbo élites moved away from their traditional leaders to second echelon positions in the parties of other groups.

Overview of the Situation:

Let us first consider political culture as a frame-work for perception and evaluation of a socio-political system. Since so many issues are involved, we shall pick out what seems most fundamental to us and this is what the political culture of the Igbo people defines as a good system of Government.

By and large the Igbo people relish a democratic system of Government. But theirs is democracy with a difference. The masses reject the idea of opposition and so any group from within that joins a political party not led by people considered traditional Igbo leaders (traditional leadership is always linked to Dr Azikiwe) are considered foes of the Igbo people by the masses. Similar attitudes have led the masses to abdicate their power of control in local government affairs to such leaders: First, because the local government officers are perceived as a part of the traditional Igbo leadership group, and secondly, because, having become marginalized citizens, the masses are unable to exercise control over local government officers. It can therefore be said that the peasants possess what political scientists refer to as subject political culture i.e. they are given little or no say in the question of how they are ruled.

We emphasize that for the masses the debate about the suitability for Nigeria of either the parliamentary or presidential system of Government is meaningless. They are not in a position to appreciate the fine points involved in such a debate. A policy designed deliberately to involve them in some reflection and action, centred around the concepts of social justice, fairplay etc., is what is needed to mobilize them and being mobilized, they will come to possess authentic freedom and an active role in politics.

The elites, like their counterparts in other parts of Nigeria, have materialism as their central value and accept any governmental system which creates opportunities for them to acquire wealth either through hard and honest work or through chicanery and fraud. The primary instrumental values for the hard core are ability to work hard and honestly and for the other to hoodwink the public and get rich at their expense. The norms of behaviours considered appropriate for public officers and other elements of the elites are those which reflect these values.

When we turn to the question of orientations, we will take first the cognitive ability of the people. As we have seen, over the years, many forces operating in the society have tended to increase the awareness of the people. The knowledge that many people possess is coloured by the influences of religion, education and illiteracy and the constraints of ethnicity and other social forces. Consider, for instance, the general understanding of the Igbo people, especially the educated ones, of the doctrine of federal character. There is a general feeling that it is an instrument designed to deny employment opportunities to qualified Igbo people in particular. In theory the adoption of the doctrine was motivated by the desire to assure equity to all ethnic groups in the country in filling vacancies in Federal Government establishments. If the doctrine were applied honestly and effectively, the Igbo ethnic group, because of its population and the quality of education obtained by its people, would benefit more substantially than any other group. But most Igbo people, I believe, possess a faulty perception of the problems involved and do not care to press for the effective application of the doctrine. Their understanding of the doctrine has been influenced by the lingering effects of the civil war on their minds and the type of political socialization that ethnic politics has provided in the country. And I suspect that this socialization has infused into their minds an element of displaced aggression and they are unwilling to call for and examine the facts of the case.

We will now take a brief look at the issue of affectivity, that is, the whole question of identification with the political system as nationalists, as votaries of the capitalist ideology and involvement in political activities. The training that Igbo people receive which infuses into their minds a love of adventure and their acceptance of the teaching of their traditional leaders that Nigeria is one

nation has induced in them a spirit to wander far and wide in Nigeria, taking up residence' in all nooks and corners of the country. Their spirit of nationalism is quite high and yet they do give diffuse support to any Government if they identify it as being associated with Igbo traditional leadership. They will give this support even if they realize little or nothing from the Government. To show an attitude of high nationalism and at the same time to show preference for Igbo leaders, creates the impression of ambivalence on their part which in turn tends to undermine the basis of coalitions between them and other ethnic groups, in the quest to achieve socio-political power in Nigeria.

In the area of ideology, they have little or no problem. As we have already noted, upper class Igbo people do accept materialism as the central value and so like their counterparts elsewhere, they do not want the culture of capitalism to be tampered with and the identification of a small, mainly intellectual group, with Marxism, has only minimal impact on Igbo society. Yet we must reiterate the point that masses are marginalized and therefore alienated towards the capitalist system. Their present, alienated condition is a far cry from their status in traditional Igbo society.

Finally, we will take a look at the evaluative political culture. How do Igbo people evaluate the political system in relation to the concepts, say, of equality, freedom, order, authority and scope of Government? We will only consider the concepts of freedom, equality and scope of Government.

We take freedom first and in order to put this discussion within reasonable limits, we shall ignore all questions relating to positive freedom, concentrating only on its negative component. This means that we define freedom simply as the absence of restraint. Among other things, this implies that a person has a right to hold any political views of his choice, to support or join any political party and campaign for it without fear of being molested or ostracized. Freedom understood in this way is not accepted by the masses of the Igbo people generally speaking. The conditioning effect of consensus politics already noted and the political training given to them directly or indirectly over the years, have disposed them to regard virtually as a foe anybody whose views and political activities differ fundamentally from the perceived views and activities of the members of his community. But by and large, upper class

Igbo people have grown out of such restraints and make their political moves with regard essentially to the preservation of their economic interest and the acquisition of an effective share of political power in the country.

Then there is the question of equality: equality of opportunity for all and equality of all people before the law. The social welfare scheme (already mentioned) in traditional Igbo society provided a setting which approximated closely to the ideal of opportunity for all. The developments we have gone through in the past few years or so have led to serious departures from this ideal. Equality of all before the law is a maxim which is honoured in its breach than its observance: upper classes here also enjoy considerable privileges which are not available to the masses.

As for the question of the scope of government activities, we can say simply that both the marginal citizens and the elites want an increase in such activities but for different reasons. The former desire these in an attempt to procure some substantial benefits for themselves in order to arrest their descent into abject poverty while the latter are concerned mainly with what the State can do to provide them with more opportunities for private or personal gain.

Summary:

I shall summarize the position as follows. The Igbo people are reputed to be a very intelligent people but the cognitive content of their political behaviour is weak while the emotional or affective content of that behaviour is quite strong. This may be explained as the effect of (a) heavy emphasis on the supernatural in our traditional education and religious system; (b) the type of political socialization which is emotionally loaded to influence temper which conduces to the generation of mass support for the Igbo upper elites in their fight with their counterparts in other parts of Nigeria; (c) the inability of the modern school system and the universities to establish an effective system of scientific culture which emphasizes the values of critical and inquisitive attitude; (d) the immersion of the people, especially of the elite groups, in the ethics of orthodox capitalism and its Darwinian/Spencerian undertone with its emphasis on activism and not on reflection, planning and social justice.

All these tend to result in our tendency to withdrawal and resentment in the face of opposition: We do not attempt adequately to adduce argument to make effective contributions to national debates such as, for instance, federal and we end up attacking the wrong foe or making foes out of people who may be well disposed towards us.

Secondly, we do not seem to be fully acquainted with the problem of the general orientation to Nigerian politics. What is easily discernible is that with a combination of astute manoeuvring and an ability to form and retain coalitions, people can come readily to possess opportunities to realize a sizeable share of socio-political power in Nigeria. Traditional training in Igbo land does extol the value of astuteness in the handling of individual and collective affairs but the socialization provided by modern political leaders has tended to emphasize brutal frankness and distrust of the out-group leaders. We therefore find difficulties to operate according to the rules of the Nigerian political game.

Thirdly, there are serious faults with our concepts of rights, equality and democracy because our political culture does not address the basic issues which lie behind the realization of these values. It is quite obvious that the society requires some degree of transformation, putting the mode of production into a somewhat different perspective, before we can realize the values of rights, equality and democracy.

Finally, let me say that the study of the political culture of a people will normally enable a community to take a critical look at itself and see what values, beliefs and attitudes need to be dropped or modified in order that a better social order may be achieved. When we take account of the sources of the various forces and mechanism which determine a political culture, we can easily see what remedial activities are called for at any point in time. There can be no question that in our case a severe transformation is needed and I have said enough here to point to the direction in which we should go. As I stated earlier, this essay is exploratory in nature and I can only hope that it will sooner or later stimulate indepth studies into these matters.

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URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL CULTURE IN IGBO LAND:
THE CRISIS OF ADAPTATION

GEOFFERY I. NWAĞA

We are strangers to this land. If good comes to it, may we have our share, Amen. But if bad comes, let it go to the owners of the land who know what gods should be appeased, Amen.

Umuofia city dwellers, in Achebe's
No Longer at Ease.

Critics of the Nigerian city often portray our urban culture in a disapproving and pessimistic manner, deploring the unpleasant and sometimes dangerous conditions in which townspeople live. There is widespread concern that the rate at which towns are growing has outstripped the capacity to plan and manage them effectively, especially in areas like Igboland which have no past tradition or experience of urban management. Our novelists and dramatists of the city world tend to present static caricatures of the modern city as alien colonial aberrations, "a strange and sinful new world", responsible for social disorganization and rural impoverishment.' A lot has been said and written about the baneful influences of city life, with its competitive individualism and acquisitiveness, its brutalizing environment, its greed, crime and sexual permissiveness, its slums and poverty which coexist with its luxurious excesses.

In Igboland as in other parts of Nigeria, the rate of urban growth is more than double the rate of population growth, and is totally unrelated to the general level of economic development. Most European countries had a much slower rate of urban and population growth and free access to the vast resources of the colonies to support their industrial and urban expansion. The policies and institutions for managing their cities, for housing, transportation, environmental sanitation and public services

evolved gradually over the centuries as the town expanded. By contrast, our cities are already too large ahead of the general level of economic and technological development, and far ahead of the development of an effective system for controlling and managing them. Our urban culture is not an industrial culture since rapid urban growth is sustained artificially on borrowed technology from a culture of which we have not tried hard enough to internalize and domesticate. This accounts largely for the strains and stresses of our urban culture, with its confused, poorly funded and loosely co-ordinated system of planning and local government, the breakdown of waste disposal arrangements, electrical overload, traffic congestion, inadequate housing, insanitary dwellings and "illegal structures" which are now being arbitrarily demolished at great social cost.

Besides, the concentration of administrative, commercial and service functions in these centres attracts to them numerous migrants (many of them unemployed) who overburden the poorly developed infrastructure, services and organization but have little scope to contribute meaningfully to the development and welfare of the cities. The import-substituting industries, which began to be introduced in the 1950's and 60's, depend largely on imported, capital intensive technology (and often also on imported raw materials) and therefore fail to create enough jobs or to generate greater productive activities in the rural areas.² It is in this sense that our urban culture is said to be extremely parasitic. The panic caused by the worsening 'urban crisis' accounts in part for the general antipathy to the city, as well as the antiquarian nostalgia often expressed about the virtues and innocence of village life where most adult urban dwellers were born and bred.

On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine what the countryside would be like without the cities to provide at least a few jobs and to ease the extreme population pressure on the overcrowded and badly eroded rural agricultural areas. One does not have to be a great lover of urban life to acknowledge the cultural and material achievements of the city as the seat of Government, fashion, trade and education; nor can we overlook the role cities have played in the political and social transformation of our nation and society. Our cities have great potential for development and the greatest results are likely to be achieved there because of their position in cities:

all the things man does are done more intensively, more precisely and more profoundly and in more varied ways because of the profusion of alternative choices provided by the abundance of human power and skills within a territory or system that allows easy availability of all parts of the whole.³

The argument of the paper is that instead of denouncing the growth of cities and trying in vain to arrest the tendency towards greater urbanization (often by compelling town dwellers to go back to the land), it would be more realistic and desirable to accept urbanization as an important and inevitable aspect of our cultural development. It is a misguided policy to associate 'culture' only with the past and the bush. When we accept the cities in which we live and work as an integral part of our *indigenous* culture, we shall begin to ask the relevant question about improving the physical, institutional, managerial and socio-economic dimensions of our burgeoning urban industrial culture. We would also appreciate that the problems of our cities are not necessarily inherent in the cities as such but often imply criticism of the inadequacies of our policies and institutions for urban development.

One of the many perjorative stereotypes about the Igbo is that they failed to develop an indigenous urban tradition because they lacked the political sophistication and organization needed to do so before colonial rule; that urban culture in Igboland is an alien culture to which the people have not been able to adjust properly.⁴ An opposite view, also widely held, is that the Igbo embraced change and modern urban/industrial culture with enthusiasm, "with no regrets, no strains or conflicts" because they had "nothing of their own to lose";⁵ that the Igbo people are far more urbanized than *Igbo people* first because the Igbo before the civil war formed about fifty per cent of the non-indigenous populations of the major towns of Nigeria outside Igboland, and second because for a variety of reasons the Igbo have "a market-place orientation to life" which predisposed them well to adapt to change and modernization without much difficulty.

Views of this nature raise wider question about what constitutes urbanism and modernity, and how urban and industrial cultures relate one to another - questions which require more time and space to address than we can afford in a discussion of this nature.

There are some general attributes of urban life and culture, and ideally we should not be talking about Igbo urban culture since cities are supposed to be cosmopolitan melting pots of different cultures.⁶ Indeed it is difficult to conceive of a distinctly and uniformly peculiar Igbo urban culture even though we recognize that urban culture in any given context has a strong local content. But there are sub-cultures even within a given city; and in Igboland it is easy to observe marked differences in the urban culture of the predominantly commercial towns of Aba and Onitsha when compared with those of the administrative and educational centres of Enugu and Owerri and also with the quasi-industrial town of Umuahia. Besides, some of the policies and individuals that influence the culture of Igbo towns are external to Igboland: Federal Nigerian urban and financial policies, policies affecting the structure of local government and so on. Nonetheless urban culture in Igboland is a dynamic culture, with a history that has influenced its character. To understand this culture one needs to examine not only the large towns and townspeople but also the factors associated with the emergence of urban settlements, the changes which occurred in the area over time, in technology, in the environment, the political, social and economic organization, and how these changes affected the use of space, the distribution of population, the concentration of specialized services and functions at certain points, the growth in the size of townspeople in relation to the rural folk, and changes in the patterns of behaviour, life-styles, attitudes and institutions.

Traditionally, most Igbo communities lived in dispersed settlements, especially in southern parts, because of the population pressure on the limited land which had to support extraordinarily high population densities with pre-industrial agricultural technology. As population density increased, large settlements tended to break up as new ones were established to explore new land for better agricultural yields. The dispersed and non-urban pattern of traditional settlement was also reinforced by the decentralized and democratic nature of the Igbo political and

social organization, as well as the relative absence of large-scale wars to compel the Igbo to congregate in large clusters for defence and related purposes, as in many parts of 19th century Yoruba land.

The basic unit of traditional settlement was the compound of the extended family, arranged in a way to reflect kinship relationships. A group of such compounds formed the village, and a group of such villages formed the village group or town. These villages were usually grouped around central meeting places which served a wide variety of social, political and economic functions. Kinship relationship was an important factor in settlement structure since human interaction at the village level was mainly among primary groups sharing a sense of mutual interdependence and a folk-like community spirit. Land was usually communally owned and worked, and everybody was his brother's keeper.

Housing and sanitation posed few if any problems since the settlements were not large and congested. The traditional compound consisted of a collection of clay-walled and thatched-roofed houses erected by communal labour with local materials. The individual had considerable freedom in the choice of site, the cost, as well as the structure of building. Equiano's early but now disputed account of traditional Igbo society reckons that the Igbo of his time considered "convenience rather than ornament" in their building. Late 19th and early 20th century European visitors to various parts of Igboland were very favourably impressed by the orderliness of Igbo settlements. Bindloss observed that "Ibo huts are scrupulously clean . . . and an Ibo village is remarkable for its orderliness". Miss Wilson of the C.M.S. Mission observed closely how the houses were "kept beautifully rubbed with mud till they shine like stone, patterns being painted on the walls in bright red, yellow and black".⁸ Vice Consul Harry Johnston's laudatory account needs citing in full:

The Igbo country is densely populated, and their towns are of a very distinct character, with rectangular, well-built houses of clay and thatch, interspersed with groups of magnificent trees and flowering shrubs The Ibo towns are never crowded . . . ; the open spaces of the town are kept scrupulously clean, being frequently swept with brooms made from twigs or palm fronds . . .

The town consequently is a most pleasant place, with its neat-looking houses, often very tastefully arranged inside . . . The sanitary arrangements are very superior to what prevails nearer the coast.⁹

Estimates of the size of these towns varied from 100 to a few thousand people although Dr Baikie reckoned that Arochukwu had a population of 24,000 in 1854, while Major A. G. Leonard put the population of Bende at 15,000 in 1896. Julius Spencer described Uburu as "a large town of about 10,000":

The streets and roads are well paved and laid out as if under the supervision of a civilized surveyor . . . a good criterion of a purely native town that has not the slightest touch of European or Asian civilization.¹⁰

Some of the larger trading towns like Bende, Ohambele, Uzuakoli, Uburu, Onitsha and so on performed special urban functions and handled a wide variety of specialized higher order goods. They hosted long distance traders and provided dormitory facilities since commercial transaction sometimes lasted several days. These towns may not have developed mature urban status in terms of the arbitrary Western concepts of permanent population size, density heterogeneity and physical form, but they were 'urban in the sense that they performed special functions and helped to integrate the wider region'

III

The establishment of British colonial rule accelerated the pace of population agglomeration and influenced the character, location, physical form, administrative functions, social conditions and economic orientation of towns and of urban culture in Igbo land. The British introduced a new political culture and a new form of political integration focused on a hierarchy of administrative centres or government stations. These formed the nuclei of new urban centres. A modern system of transportation by rail, road and river, which reflected the level of technological advancement in Europe rather than Africa, was introduced, and this altered the pre-existing orientation of trade routes and led to the emergence of new rail-side towns, seaports,

new bread-bulk points at road and rail junctions and so on. The expansion of the import and export trade attracted migrants and commercial facilities to these new centres.

Ironically the colonial regime which was largely instrumental to the growth of cities remained unreconciled to the growth of a detribalized urban population, or to erecting centres that would one day become modern cities. Colonial policy insisted that "the natives should as far as possible live in their towns (villages) under their own chiefs and native courts",¹¹ in keeping with the administrative philosophy of indirect rule. Towns were not considered suitable places for permanent African residence except in so far as they served the immediate needs of trade, transportation and administration, for gathering local agricultural products and distributing imported trade goods. Igbo towns, like their counterparts in other colonial dependencies were not conceived as centres of industry and production for self-sustaining growth but rather as enclaves to handle external trade which was oriented heavily to the metropolitan country. This partly explains the poor economic base, and low rate of employment in the cities. Colonial officials preferred to deal with a docile rural peasantry rather than with a detribalized and potentially subversive urban population.

The anti-urban prejudices of the colonial administration explain why urban policies and institutions were of a makeshift and *ad hoc* nature, ill-suited to the demands of rapid urbanization. It can be said, quite firmly, that some of the major problems and anomalies of our urban culture today have their roots in the failure to lay a sound basis and tradition at the early crucial stages for effective urban growth and development. Almost every aspect of contemporary urban life bears the marks and scars of past neglect, and cities tend to resist modifications once they have grown.

Colonial legislation and policies for urban land control, town planning, urban Government and so on retarded the development of modern urban institutions and a healthy urban culture. In traditional Igbo society there was little difficulty in acquiring land for public purpose because there was usually full discussion of the proposal and the public purpose was of a kind which everybody understood. Colonial laws designed to facilitate the acquisition of land for public purpose were ignored because colonial officials

preferred the cheap informal traditional method which they manipulated to the disadvantage of the original land owners. The indigenous populations of most of our urban areas today still complain that their land was acquired without adequate compensation, and rented out on a commercial basis to "strangers". The antagonism between the "sons of the soil" and stranger elements in town has formed an unfortunate part of our urban culture.

Besides, urban land control in the colonial period was so restrictive that many migrants felt insecure. Most of them had "temporary occupation licenses" which offered little security for permanent residence. Consequently, the tradition of transience and of lack of commitment to the towns developed as part of our urban culture. Sylvia Leith Ross, a colonial anthropologist observed in the 1930s, that towns in Igboland were places where nothing of real importance to the life of a family was allowed to happen. "No one takes root there; no one visualizes his future there; no one hopes to die there. Men come to make money and have no thought of settling there for good".¹²

Successive administrations have tried to find how best to enforce effective urban land control measures at minimal social cost; how land can be made easily and cheaply available in towns for much needed planned development; how the necessary pressures can be exerted to compel the development of idle land held by private persons and families often for speculative purposes; how to generate more revenue from property rents and above all how the measure for urban land control can be made compatible with social justice and public welfare especially in towns which have large indigenous populations.¹³

The expectation that the Land Use Decree of 1978 would solve all urban land problems now seems to be misplaced because of the weaknesses of the machinery for implementing the provisions of the law and the unwillingness of the Government and its agencies to accept the discipline of their own legislation. Land still appears to be widely acquired in a corrupt and irregular manner, while in some areas artificial restrictions are still placed on its availability by certain private persons and interest groups.

Land control is closely related to urban physical planning and environmental control which form an important part of the current *War Against Indiscipline*. There is also

the problem of how to improve the quality of living conditions, ensure that housing is adequate and compatible with local resources and standards and that basic urban services are provided for. There is a disturbing view now widely held that since planners set standards of housing that cannot be met by the majority of the urban populations "what the poor can do for themselves is illegal by definition". How do we strike the balance between the elitist and the popular approaches to planning, especially in respect of housing?¹⁴

Since colonial planning neither anticipated nor approved of urban growth, current plans for rapid urban expansion have to contend not only with the accumulated problems of past neglect but also with the inadequacies of existing policies and institutions for urban development. Before the end of World War II when the Nigerian Town and Country Planning Ordinance was introduced, there was very little formal town planning beyond the haphazard enforcement of a wide variety of sanitary regulations. Planning was of a piecemeal and ad-hoc nature, carried out in an amateurish fashion by local officials and private persons with the rudimentary skills and resources available at the time. Colonial officials seemed content merely to ensure that the small community of Europeans was safely protected in segregated reservations which insulated them (and now the local elite) from the realities of urban conditions. It was not until the mid 70s that the third National Development Plan introduced a new urban policy and acknowledged openly that:

the nation has paid very little attention to physical planning and the result is an outmoded urban structure providing little satisfaction from the point of view of efficiency or aesthetics.¹⁵

The new policy created the Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Environment (FMHUDE) to co-ordinate planning at the Federal, State and local levels, and to ensure that the different agencies concerned with urban planning are adequately staffed and funded. But again the good intentions of the new policy have been vitiated by bureaucratic delays and conflicts, lack of funds and managerial expertise, lack of political will and discipline as well as public apathy.

Urban government constitutes the weakest aspect of our urban culture perhaps because of the anti-urban prejudices bequeathed by the colonial administration. The towns have always lacked the administrative and financial autonomy they require to function effectively. In the colonial period, urban "Local Authorities" were subordinate to the Residents who diverted urban revenue to develop the rural areas, leaving the towns without the resources to provide basic urban services and amenities. Local government reforms after World War II made Urban District Councils subordinate to County Councils which were again dominated by rural District Councils. The participation of educated townspeople in urban government was minimal and frustrating, hence the urban elite turned to ethnic unions and associations which were oriented to village development and were often antagonistic to the government and its agencies. Reform in urban local government after independence made little difference, until the *Guideline on Local Government Reforms* issued in 1976, sought to "check the continued whittling down of the powers of local government by State and Federal Governments", to strengthen their powers and resources, and to make them more development oriented:

Local government councils will be empowered to exercise substantial control over local officers as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects to complement State and Federal Government efforts.¹⁶

But we know that urban local government is still hampered by constraints of all sorts: institutional, financial, managerial and so on. There is still no system for co-ordinating the extreme fragmentation of decision making and policy initiatives, and this has resulted in overlapping jurisdictions and open conflicts between the various State, Federal and local government agencies which operate in the same towns. A leading Igbo town planner complained in the late 70s about the structure of urban planning in Eastern Nigeria:

At best urban development function is distributed among the three bodies: the Planning Authority, the Urban Council and the Health Authority. Each is controlled by a separate State Ministry and

each has separate regulations (in many instances conflicting ones) to operate. The three bodies are usually in conflict and constitute in themselves a constraint on urban development as they inhibit rather than promote private efforts.¹⁷

Besides, the current revenue allocation formula makes it difficult for urban local government authorities to play more than a subsidiary role in the management and development of towns.

IV

We have given more time and space to these managerial and institutional dimensions of our urban culture because the social and economic aspects have been examined in great detail in existing studies.¹⁸ As only one out of every five Igbos resides in large towns, Igbo culture is still predominantly rural and agrarian although the towns and townspeople have exerted an influence far out of proportion to their size.

The poor managerial conditions in the towns reflect their weak economic foundations. Our towns are not centres of industry but of government bureaucracy, commerce, education and transportation, and therefore cannot provide enough jobs for townspeople. A survey conducted in the mid 70s shows that over seventy-five percent of Nigeria's total industrial establishments are located in a few of the country's large cities. Metropolitan Lagos alone accounts for about sixty-three per cent of the country's total industrial investments, followed by Ibadan, Kano and so on.¹⁹ Consequently, there is a large 'informal sector' and a high incidence of unemployment, underemployment and economic insecurity in nearly all Igbo towns, and this forces many townspeople to maintain economic links with the village, and the extended family.

The historical experience of our towns has dictated a peculiar pattern of adjustment which has in turn created a distinct urban culture. Many townsmen are more committed to their home villages and clans than to the towns where they live and work. Sometimes their attitude to the city is predatory, and so is their attitude to public funds, to public property and to public welfare, in contrast to the sentimental and protective disposition to their home areas. The role of the vast variety of urban unions and

associations is already too well known. They provide group identity and cultural shelter for townspeople from the same areas, and help immigrants to find accommodation, jobs and comfort in difficult times. They provide scope for townsmen to participate in political and social discussions and serve as mutual benefit and credit institutions to supplement the role of established organs of urban management in providing social control and social welfare. Above all they provide channels through which "sons abroad" influence their home areas through the remittance of money and the spread of progressive ideas for development.²⁰ Unfortunately these unions help to create competing sub-culture and sometimes ethnic tensions in towns, and tend not only to detract from the general loyalty of townspeople to the city, but to undermine the emergence of a municipal, cosmopolitan spirit. The have yet to be displaced or even effectively challenged by supra-ethnic associations based on class, occupation, religious affiliation, and son on. As a recent writer has observed, "if many an ethnic association calls itself 'improvement unions', this refers not to the improvement of urban living conditions but to the development of its members' home area".²¹

Many townspeople accept to live in extremely insanitary and dangerous conditions so long as they can stay in the city to make sufficient money to build their own houses in their home villages where land is easy to obtain and where they hope eventually to return. Even well placed civil servants and professionals are sometimes equally preoccupied with improving the conditions and services in the villages where they spend their vacations and where they hope to retire. Whether this pattern of behaviour will continue with the third and future generation of townspeople is hard to say.

Now, a few last words about the 'negative' aspects of our urban culture about which so much concern has been expressed: crime, ranging from felony, armed robbery and drug abuse to ritual and political murders, prostitution and a wide variety of overt and clandestine sexual adventures, poverty, slum dwelling, the exploitation of children and the indiscriminate adoption of alien values and fashions offensive to traditional sensibilities. The anonymity of city life shelters people from traditional scrutiny and inhibitions. But as we worry about these 'urban pathologists', we must recognise that they are problems which are not necessarily inherent in the city but reflect the general malaise in society in general. Urban attitudes

are often influenced by rural pressures, expectations and values. Admittedly, the incidence of say crime is likely to be higher in cities since the reward for it would be much greater there than in the impoverished villages. The same is true of prostitution. Besides, the size and rate of growth of towns tend to dramatize and publicize city problems by concentrating them in restricted area. Poverty certainly looks more oppressive when it is closely juxtaposed with affluence in cities, even though the urban poor are still usually better off than their rural counterparts. Urban prostitution arises partly from the weak competitive economic position of women vis-a-vis the men, the fact that men in towns outnumber women, the growth and spread of pornographic literature and movies, and above all to the fact that prostitution is a relatively easy way for women to make money and acquire property and status. Unfortunately, prostitution is difficult to deal with, not only because prostitutes have clients among those who are supposed to eradicate the practice but, more importantly, because even those who condemn it strongly recognize that it protects their own daughters and wives from danger in a sexually permissive urban environment:

It is hoped that economic development, the improvement of urban social welfare services, the creation of more job opportunities and the spread of education would help to reduce the incidence of those vices or at any rate make their manifestations more discrete and less offensive to public conscience.

To conclude, the tense and disorderly character of our urban culture reflects the unresolved crisis of adaptation to rapid change and modernization. To create a healthier urban culture, the Igbo and other Nigerian peoples ought to rethink some of the anti-urban prejudices inherited from the colonial period and now reinforced by an uncritical adulation of the virtues and innocence of rural agrarian life by scholars, novelists and even some elite town dwellers themselves. This paper is in a sense a plea for reforming and strengthening the institutional and managerial aspects of our urban culture through the efforts of government agencies, individual townspeople and voluntary organizations in order to improve the quality of city life.

It is legitimate for governments to encourage rural development, and to seek to maintain a healthy balance in rural - urban relations by providing social services and

economic opportunities in the villages; but this should not be done with the intention of restraining the 'monster' of urbanization as is often suggested. We must realize that rural agriculture is already over crowded and will require less and less people as it inevitably becomes more and more modernized and mechanized. Indeed it is of doubtful wisdom to pursue the so called 'back to land' policy as aggressively as we often tend to do since, "if any group of producers find themselves usually depressed, it is obviously pure folly to suggest that their position can be improved by compelling or persuading more people to join the group".²²

Townsppeople themselves usually make rational choices in deciding whether or not to remain in the city. If, as is often the case, some of them "stay on the margin of the urban economy, it is either because, even there, they are better off than they would be in agriculture", or because they are prepared to endure some hardship in the hope of ultimately obtaining suitable employment.²³ A survey in the early 70s of Onitsha Market pamphlets, written by townsppeople themselves suggests that some of the panic and adverse criticisms of city life reflect the prejudices and concerns of the elite minority, rather than the perception of urban conditions by most townsppeople themselves:

In contrast to the intellectual novelists and dramatists of West Africa who are deeply sceptical of the contemporary society and its changing values, and who use their work to express their scepticism of change, the pamphlet authors identify with change and are enamoured of the possibilities which come with change .²⁴

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RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION AND CONTEMPORARY
IGBO PATTERNS OF SOCIALIZATION AND
DEVELOPMENT

INYA A. ETENG

INTRODUCTION:

Today, as one mentally traverses the length and breadth of the once humane Igboland,¹ it would seem that things have gravely fallen apart, even with the whiteman's apparent exit from the land. Indeed, the gods and the ancestors now seem so drawn in a long stupor that they no more 'do their thing'. Today, evil men, women and children freely and audaciously romp through the land, wreaking havoc to life and property.

In the immediate and extended families, the kingroup, the neighbourhood and the community, those folkways and mores whose rigid observance traditionally bound individuals and groups to one another and to the community at large, now appear totally desecrated and impotent. Elders and various 'significant others' who hitherto wielded authority, defined social norms, and accordingly inducted members into the Igbo 'cultural givens' now seem to have forfeited a significant proportion of their customary socializing functions, obligations and responsibilities to foreign 'cultures' and strange institutional arrangements. Today, debilitating crime waves pervade Igbo towns and villages, and human life has never been so blatantly degraded and cheapened every where by uncontrollable armed marauders, ritual and judicial murders, dare-devil 'taxi-by-air' drivers, and rip-off men and women of various political and ideological persuasions, often deliberately or inadvertently aided by significant sections of the Igbo conventional society.

Amidst this gloom, a frontal discussion of Igbo patterns of socialization would, at first sight, seem most incontrovertibly opportune and appropriate. This notwithstanding, a slight modification of the original title of this discussion is necessary in order to reflect analytically and meaningfully the concrete historical and contemporary experiences of the Igbo, and in so doing, to put the people's socialization patterns and processes in perspective. I have, therefore, chosen to briefly discuss the theme: "Relations of Production and Contemporary Igbo Patterns of Socialization and Development".

Our main argument is that it is analytically untenable to talk about Igbo Patterns of Socialization independently of other socio-historical contexts and forces to which this critical process is dialectically related. To do this is to 'illegitimately disembowel' socialization among the Igbo of its historical and material concreteness. For, as an adaptive and transformative process, socialization, *per se*, never occurs in a social vacuum. In point of fact, this process has always been historically and structurally anchored to the people's mode and social relations of production and self reproduction. In other words, patterns and processes of socialization are instrumentally though dialectically linked in myriad ways to the prevailing system and process of material and non-material production, distribution, exchange and consumption collectively called *Igbo culture* in the widest sense possible.

To place Igbo patterns of socialization in their proper context, Pan-Igbo society² is therefore conceptualized in historical materialist terms. Accordingly, we conceive Pan-Igbo society or any of its constituent units or combinations thereof primarily as a system of production and reproduction. The foregoing conception markedly differs from that which views Igbo society as mainly possessing:

- (a) a distinct set of central or dominant values and beliefs;
- (b) a number of social institutions, and
- (c) patterns of interaction between individuals, groups and institutions.

That these are important constituent elements of the Igbo or any other human society, is hardly the issue at

stake. What is being challenged here is the implied assumption that these elements constitute *the real basis* of the Igbo society or any other social formation for that matter. In our view, a distinct set of central values and beliefs, the main social institutions, and the existing patterns of interaction between individuals and institutions are all derived from, and hence contingent on, the mode and social relations of production prevailing at any given time among the Igbo.

These facts are worth restating. For too long, values and beliefs, philosophies, ethics, norms and other non-material aspects of culture constituents of the ideological superstructure have erroneously been conceived of as the foundation of society.³ Consequently, given the current preoccupation of most Nigerians, the Igbo inclusive, with deadly macro and micro ethnocidal rivalries, most people have invariably tended to characterize Nigeria, or its component social formations, purely in non-materialist (idealist) terms as the traditional abode of 'culturally' disparate and non-assimilable ethno-linguistic entities. In this regard, the prevailing system of inequalities which is more meaningfully emendable to class analysis is usually blamed on ethnicity. What is more, the fundamental problems of underdevelopment in Nigeria, namely, perpetual political instability, endemic conflicts among the Nigerian socio-economic classes, vulgar materialism as a pervasive cultural value, irrelevant educational policies and programmes, gripping corruption and graft in every crevice of the country's institutions, staggering crime rates, grinding poverty among the Nigerian producing masses, mismanagement and wastage of scarce resources and skilled personnel, etc., are almost always attributed to the country's ethno-cultural differences.

This mode of theorizing, as Nnoli observes,⁴ provides little or no insight into the dialectal relationship between class and ethnicity in relation to scarce resource distribution. Nor does it illuminate our understanding of the basis and nature of the internal contradictions discernible even within the contemporary Igbo neo-colonial social formation. And, because this ethnic approach is incapable of unravelling the problematic link between extant property relations and Igbo socialization processes, the present difficulties encountered all around in socializing and resocializing the present day Igbo for real and authentic development, is generally left unexplained. Rather, at best, ethno-pluralists usually tell us that the Igbo are either

rugged individualists or unrepentant materialists, or both. When we seek for cogent explanations as to why the Igbo exhibit these tendencies (which, by the way, are easily generalized to other ethnic groups in the country), we are almost always left in the lurch.

It is contended, in conclusion, that a close dialectal relationship exists between property relations and Igbo patterns of socialization, on the one hand, and between both and Igbo development/underdevelopment processes, on the other hand, with socialization playing a critical mediating role between the other two.

This paper briefly discusses:

- (a) the general meaning of socialization;
- (b) socialization in Igbo pre-contact subsistence economy in relation to the traditional Igbo concept of community welfare and humane living; and
- (c) socialization among the contemporary Igbo in the context of the prevailing neo-colonial political economy and its contingent capitalist development praxis.

Conceptualizing the Socialization Process:

Socialization is often known as "the internationalization of culture". It is generally regarded by functionalist anthropologists and sociologists as an enduring socio-cultural process whereby thought, feeling and behavioural processes required for the social perpetuation of, and concomitant adaptation to, culturally determined expectations and conditions, are formally and informally transmitted and learned by individuals and groups. Functionally speaking, therefore, this internationalization process among the Igbo would aim to:

- (a) instil broad cultural modalities of thinking, feeling and behaving generally associated with this ethno-linguistic formation;
- (b) instil human cognitions, perceptions, values, beliefs, motivations and aspirations, including culturally determined goals to which the Igbo should aspire and the means with which to attain them;

- (c) inculcate basic knowledge, skills and techniques which enable the Igbo to effectively harness their socio-physical environmental resources in satisfying their basic needs with determinate degree of success;
- (d) teach Igbo role incumbents, anticipatory and concomitant social roles, normative expectations, basic facilitative attitudes and psychological predispositions to enable them effectively perform these roles; and
- (e) generally habituate Igbo individuals and groups to the demands of their folkways and mores, thus orienting them to the social sanctions that would result, should they deviate from prescribed social norms.

Accordingly,, among the Igbo, socialization as a dynamic process is formally and/or informally consummated through the medium of language which assumes various forms of the written prose, poetry, songs, sounds, gestures, art forms, rituals and ceremonies, symbolic artifacts, scientific works, etc. Cultural internalization is also a continuous and a cumulative process. Among the Igbo, this process thus continues throughout the life span of an individual. Equally, every single Igbo is often subjected to constant resocialization as a result of his transition from one social space to another. Resocialization, in effect, underscores the complexity and dynamism of both culture and the socialization process itself. Resocialization may be individual or group-oriented. In reality both forms are generally interrelated, especially since no individual is ever completely an island unto himself. Group resocialization among the Igbo has often and variously been due to some dramatic changes in their social and physical environments occasioned by military coups, the civil war, pestilence, flood, erosion and drought, or similar natural and social calamities.

Functionalists also emphasize the significance of social control as a mechanism of socialization. Social control, according to Dressler, is the *force* that encourages the individual to believe approvingly as custom and tradition prescribe.⁵ It is the compelling force that inhibits the individual from following his immediate and personal inclination, since to do so would lead to unfavourable responses from members of his society.

This functionalist view is most succinctly presented by George Homans who defines social control as the process by which the individual's behaviour is brought back to his existing degree of obedience to a norm, or would be so brought back to that degree if he deviates.⁶ This means that an Igbo is constantly, even if unsuccessfully, forced back into conformity through rewards and penalties.

Two basic mechanics of social control are usually applied to facilitate socialization even among the Igbo. These are:

- (1) *training*, the process whereby the prevailing social norms and values are inculcated with great emphasis on *social prescriptions* concerning what people ought to do, and
- (2) *restraining*, the process involving *social prescriptions* and the actual or potential use of force or coercion on an Igbo non-conformist or potential deviant, in order to enforce his conformity to customs and usages.

Igbo traditional agents of socialization include the family in the first instance; the neighbourhood; the peer groups; the kingroup; affines; nursemaid; town crier; patrilineal daughters (umuada); non-kinship groups such as age set/grade; various occupational associations of hunters; blacksmiths; herbalists; potters; midwives; rain-makers; craftsmen; fishermen; titled associations; secret societies; and various social institutions (economic, politico-judicial, religious, expressive and recreational, etc.). The contents of traditional socialization, of course, include folkways, customs and usages, folklores, techniques and skills, riddles and conundrums, traditional myths, rituals, traditions, basic health habits, taboos, adages, philosophies of life, cosmological beliefs, food habits, social positional roles and corresponding norms, body adornments, work habits, games, etc.

Social change has, however, extended the socializing agents to include modern schools and educators; churches and mosques; the mass media; work organizations; government institutions; private organizations like professional bodies; chambers of commerce; crime syndicates; labour organizations; voluntary associations like the Lion's Club, Social Club, Co-operatives, Rotary Club, Boys' Scout and Girls' Guide Movements, Boys' Brigade.

the WAI Brigade, etc; and new village associations as well as ethno-cultural and socio-political organizations. The contents of modern socialization processes now include complex scientific and technological knowledge and skills, new production and distribution techniques, modern communications and transportation techniques, new consumption habits and tastes, foreign business and managerial practices, sophisticated criminal techniques, and a whole gamut of foreign cultural values, beliefs and ideologies.

The functionalist approach to socialization presented above tends, in the main, to over-emphasize adaptation and conformity to established and prescribed norms and values. It is, nonetheless, a fact that Igbo traditions and customs (omenala) which generally develop creatively and often perceptibly from the people's collective experiences involving several generations, usually tend to endure longer than the life span of any one single Igbo individual. Individuals are thus born into various social situations whose normative and behavioural expectations were already previously set by preceding generations often spanning several centuries. Undoubtedly, the Igbo 'have to learn their 'cultural givens' to enable them fit somewhat into these pre-determined social situations. Consequently, socialization among the people does foster relative conformity, behavioural predictability, *esprit de corps*, and social solidarity and stability.

The radical school however, poses a viewpoint quite antithetical to the functionalist position noted earlier. According to the radical perspective, although men are unavoidably subject to various and continuous processes of socialization, they do not necessarily adapt ritualistically and unquestionably to established norms and usages like robots or 'Fela's Zombies'. As *homo sapiens* argues the radical school, men are creative, especially when the historico-material conditions within which they operate are less oppressive. Thus, as Levine empirically observed long ago,⁷ the Igbo 'manifest high achievement motivation in McClelland terms,⁸ and have continuously displayed an enviable record of creativity and ingenuity in transforming themselves, their behavioural patterns, their socio-culture, their worldview, their social institutions, and their physical environment. As a result, their society with its material and ideational culture has gained continuously in diversity and complexity, even while generating contradictory forms with discernibly destructive consequences.

These remarkably creative and transformative potentials of socialization, however, vary in the degree of their manifestation from one Igbo community to another, and even within the same community. Nonetheless, broadly speaking, the Igbo have unabatedly sought to conquer new frontiers of knowledge, to acquire new logistic skills and techniques, to evolve new if exploitative production, distribution and consumption patterns, to develop new and sometimes dehumanizing institutional and organizational arrangements, to establish new values, beliefs and symbols. Indeed, over the years, the Igbo have been constantly impelled by physical, social, economic, political and religious forces to instrumentally discard existing systems and practices, including extant idea systems, when these have become increasingly dysfunctional, counter-productive, problem-generating, alienative and moribund. In some cases, the resulting changes have been dramatic, even revolutionary. In this regard, old systems and their reinforcing values, beliefs and ideologies have often been swept away and new ones installed, as the civil war years easily demonstrated.

The radical school equally has its distinctive views on social control as a socialization mechanism. While the functionalists take the existence of social norms as given and, therefore, stress rigid conformity to the existing normative system in order to ensure social consensus among the Igbo, the radical school questions the origin and functions of these norms themselves. It argues that the existing normative order is usually superimposed by the dominant classes in the Igbo society who control the commanding heights of the operative political economy, with alienative consequences for a great majority of the Igbo dominated classes.

Again, by assuming constant equilibrium of social forces and the congruence of interests and values among the various Igbo groups and socio-economic classes, the functionalists consequently regard deviation from existing norms as disruptive and disequilibrating. Conversely, the radical school views the entire Igboland as consisting of contradictory social forces and interests; accordingly, social control as a socialization technique generally reflects these conflicting tendencies among the people.

Furthermore, while the functionalists view deviation as a basic problem of the individual Igbo's maladjustment to the group norms, the radical school contrarily pins the

problem of deviance on the existing power and property structure of the Igbo society and its contingent conflict-generating class system. Finally, while the functionalist school prescribes various penalties for deviance, since the individual is to blame, the radical school, on the other hand, prescribes a drastic structural (that is qualitative) change of the class-bound Igbo society, together with its alienative class-supportive ideological system. In sum, for the functionalist school, socialization and social control should essentially make for corporatism, domination and control, while for the radical school, they should foster and guarantee collectivism and co-operation among free agents of history.

*Socialization in Traditional Igbo
Subsistence Economy:*

In the course of producing, distributing and consuming, the Igbo generally enter into special socio-economic relations with one another. These social relations of production are basically the attendant social, economic and political relationships that have developed among the people in relation to their productive and distributive activities. These relations, often unconsciously or otherwise customarily or legally enacted with respect to material appreciation at any given time are also called property or class relations which tend to acquire definite and specific patterns throughout Igbo history. These forms include the simple 'commodity' and communal modes and production relations found among acephalous Igbo communities and the semi-feudal type associated with Igbo Niger kingdoms studied by Professor Ikenna Nzimiro.⁹ Contemporary Igbo society is now dominated by the monopoly capitalist relations of production which coexist with the pre-colonial forms.

Whether these relations emphasize private or public ownership, they basically determine the way labour power is linked with the means of production. They fundamentally indicate who owns and controls production means and who does not, with what social implications and consequences. In the main, these property relations take various forms which include exchange of human labour in production, relations of distribution, relations of consumption, and international economic and political relations.

Labour exchange in production process may be based on private ownership, thus involving various forms of exploitation and competition. Relations of distribution are, of course determined by the relations of production. Thus, if the means of production are monopolised by certain groups or classes, the latter usually tend to appropriate the lion's share of the material goods available, while the producers among the workers and peasants in particular tend to receive less than the minimum necessary for reproduction of their species and their labour power. Relations of consumption are essentially the main purpose of reproduction. Accordingly, the volume of consumption, the types and variety of goods and services produced, distributed and consumed, and the general nature of the requirements for existence and self-reproduction, all depend on production. In an exploitative society, therefore, parasitic forms of consumption exist, while the producers are often obliged to consume the cheapest goods of inferior quality.

On the other hand, in a society based on public ownership of the essential means of production, exchange of labour activity proceeds more or less in a spirit of voluntary cooperation and mutual assistance. In such a society, where the production instruments, and consequently all the material goods produced, belong to the people, these goods are usually distributed in the interest of the society or community as a whole. In this instance, asymmetrical distribution of goods and services is avoided, and distribution is made according to contribution and need.

These different aspects or production relations form an integrated system in which, in a dialectical sense, all parts influence and are influenced, by one another. However, relations of production play the dominant role in the system of production and distribution, for they tend to bind all economic and non-economic relations into a whole, and basically provide the main profile of a historically given social formation as either capitalist or socialist, for example. This is specifically what Marx and Engels mean when they regard the economic substratum of society as ultimately determining, and in turn is influenced and reinforced by, its ideological superstructure.

Socialization for Production and Reproduction:

Like any human group, the Igbo always pre-occupied themselves all through the ages with the production of food, shelter, clothing and other basic necessities for sustaining life, and for reproducing their own kind. They produce not only goods and services for material sustenance, but also non-material culture consisting of values, beliefs, norms, ideas, ideologies, philosophies, ethics, laws, as well as diverse social institutions through which they meaningfully interpret and organize their world of realities and satisfy their spiritual needs.

Among the people, success in the production and self reproduction struggles has largely been a function of their ability at any given time to effectively harness their immediate socio-physical environmental resources. However, since raw nature is not simply resting out there for the plucking, the Igbo of necessity have had to domesticate it, and to ultimately marry the available resources to their own needs. And since all forces of production—skills, techniques, tools, infrastructures, land and creative labour for harnessing nature are equally not always available and ready-made, the Igbo have equally had to constantly fashion, develop, refurbish, preserve and continuously apply them in wresting from nature the wherewithal to sustain life. Thus, at any historically given time, the level of development and sophistication of available productive forces associated with the Igbo, generally tend to be reflected in the volume and types of artefacts, goods and services they produce, exchange and consume, as well as in the nature of the non-material cultural values and institutions which they concomitantly develop to satisfy both their socio-material and their aesthetic-spiritual needs, respectively.

Pre-colonial Igbo people produced virtually all they needed within the circumscribed context of their relatively self-sufficient subsistence economy. Generally, the kin-group and the extended family were the central units of production, distribution and consumption. The inclusive community constituted the all-embracing sociophysical nexus within which social production and reproduction took place, and in which the individual spent almost all his life and satisfied all his needs.

Labour-intensive agriculture was the mainstay of the economy in which all able-bodied men, women and children, including relations and friends, were both co-producers and co-consumers. Agricultural and craft production was based on a simple division of labour organized around age and sex. The means of production were directly owned, controlled and employed by the producers and consumers themselves who immediately determined the volume, quality and variety of goods and services produced. Production instruments were simple and rudimentary, and were as a matter of course, augmented through intensive labor utilization and communal relations of production. Specialization was low and therefore limited. Consequently, available skills were highly diffused so that a man was simultaneously a farmer, a tapper, a fisherman, a hunter, a weaver, a sculptor, a herbalist, a trader of sorts, a titled man, the community historian-orator, a member of the village gerontocratic cabinet and judiciary, etc. Skills and behavioural dispositions associated with these occupational roles were easily passed on to one's children. An Igbo producer, thus fitted into a broad-based occupational system which recognized his productive skills and capabilities, and accorded him social esteem as a whole rather than an atomised personality.

Land was easily the most important object of labour. Generally held in trust for the dead ancestors by the living elders, it was communally owned by the community or lineage group which distributed it to adult males (and sometimes females) for direct cultivation. Land parcellization, fallowing and shifting cultivation, rationalization of agricultural activities to take advantage of nature, labour-intensive production, and simple division of labour, as practised by the traditional Igbo, reflected in part, and thus augmented somewhat, the simple and rudimentary agricultural skills and technology available at the time.

Regardless of the glaring deficiencies of the prevailing subsistence economy, intense *socialized* production and distribution were maintained. Thus, shifting cultivation and fallowing, now described as primitive by modern agronomists, for example, not only aided nature in replenishing the land in the absence of modern fertilizers and other new farming techniques. These practices also ensured that:

- (a) farming activities were physically concentrated at any one time in any one place, thus ensuring the collective security of the producers at any given time;
- (b) labour reciprocities and good neighbourliness in various forms were promoted and sustained in bush cutting, mounding, planting, weeding, harvesting, and storing; and
- (c) labour, land and other scarce resources required in the productive enterprise were rationally and economically utilized.

Because socialized production highlighted the *collective* nature of the activities involved, members of the production units who contributed labour skills and other scarce resources in aid of their coproducers, also shared in various ways as co-consumers the fruits of their creative labour power. Thus, even where a superordinate class emerged as was the case in the semi-feudal Niger Kingdoms of Onitsha, Oguta, Ossamari and Abo, or where, for example, the acephalous, gerontocratic, age-grade-based democracy existed among the Ehugbo (Afikpo) Igbo, tradition and custom reinforced by religion still prescribed that wealth somehow collectively generated should intermittently be distributed and consumed. Consequently, important life-cycles such as birth, naming, marriage, burial and title-taking, as well as other significant communal events and anniversaries like investiture and new-yam, wrestling and termination of rites-of-passage festivals, were almost always marked with collective feasting, merry making and gift giving. Socialized consumption arising from collective production, thus, ensured that wealth was redistributed to those whose labour power created surpluses in the first place. It further ensured that one's material wealth was not recognized as the sole determinant of one's power and social worth in the community. Finally, it guaranteed that perishable food items which formed the bulk of the products were not unduly wasted, given the near absence of adequate storage technologies and facilities.

The 'sense of community' easily associated with socialized production, distribution and consumption has been captured by the author in another context, as follows:

A measure of intense and close relationship was established between purely economic and religious, political and other non-economic activities. Individuals who performed community-wide functions such as the rain-maker, the community votary, the bone-setter, the historian-orator, the midwife, the emissary and the town crier, were duly accorded special social recognition as specialists in the prevailing production mode. Individuals were important because of the concrete contributions they made towards their community's self-sufficiency and moral excellence. The slothful was gossiped and satirized, while the thief was ostracized or banished (or even sold into slavery).¹⁰

The prevailing system of distribution and exchange equally reflected the collective nature of Igbo subsistence production Markets, though underdeveloped and less specialized, were nonetheless periodized and rotated to facilitate easy circulation of goods and services, and to regulate communication between and among communities. Exchange was both by barter and through existing currencies such as the cowry and manilla. Markets served not only exchange and distribution purposes in purely economic terms, they were also socially-important media for diplomatic activities involving communities, for consolidating extra-community kinship and lineage bonds for settling intervillage disputes, for fostering cultural miscegenation, and for organizing cultural competitions and recreational displays.

Traditional Igbo socialization processes were, in the circumstances, highly consistent with the imperatives of the prevailing subsistence, non-capitalist economy in which the family, the neighbourhood, the peer group, the community, members of the semi-structured, extra-family/lineage organizations and associations like occupational guilds of hunters, herbalists, dyers, potters, weavers, musicians, sculptors, carvers, blacksmiths, etc, and other community-oriented institutions like age-sets/grades, *isusu* (savings associations), title holders and secret associations, etc, served either as primary or secondary agents, functionally *relevant socialization*. Learning processes in every case were, as a rule, highly *practical*. The processes focused on the cultivation and *practical application* of general and specialized skills and techniques acquired in daily and seasonal production and distribution routines.

Every technique or skill was acquired through direct application of labour in concrete productive activities. Whether the activity was bush-cutting or burning, building, mounding, planting, weeding, damming, bridge-making, fencing, fending, harvesting, storing or cooking, or whether it involved the intricate arts of sculpturing, weaving, pottering, painting, carving, smithing, or whether the occupation required specialized skills and creativity as in hunting, fishing, traditional healing and midwifery, priesthood, rain-making, etc; the skills and techniques involved were directly acquired in practising a trade first-hand. Only in this way was the Igbo producer led into the secrets and unfathomable complexities of nature. The amazing array of food crops and vegetables which today constitute the enduring legacy of the Igbo menu, and the dexterity with which they were produced and orally handed down from generation to generation, could not have been discovered and developed otherwise.

Every situation for the individual was either a learning or a teaching situation. Every situation involving human activity was interlaced with prescriptions and proscriptions, the do's and don'ts, Youths acquired skills and creative energies from childhood in those occupations and vocations with which their parents, lineages or even communities were generally identified and associated. Through reinforcements and penalties children were taught early enough to acutely apply all their senses in direct communication with nature in deciphering animal body odours, birds, shades of light, leaves and shrubs and their uses, edible and poisonous insects and snakes, animal faunas, location of springs, movements of strangers and suspicious characters, different kinds of home and farm implements and their uses, folklores, idioms and sages of the people, etc. through direct association with parents, siblings, agnates, affines, peers, compound and lineage elders and age mates. Sex and age-bond rites-of-passage also created semi-structured contexts for introducing the youth to the adult world and its attendant privileges, obligations and responsibilities. The seclusion period usually provided by these rites enabled male initiates to learn and acquire specific skills in weaving, sculpture, carving, farming, dancing, etc, while young females assimilated home-making roles associated with motherhood and child-rearing.

In summary, although famine and other physical disasters frequently created difficult problems for the

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Igbo traditional social welfare and humane living were inseparable phenomena directly linked with the prevailing production and distribution scheme earlier discussed. No elaborate, codified social welfare policies, schemes and programmes executed according to a carefully systematized community development blue-print existed. Yet, as Ifemesia has elaborated, "every single routine activity of individuals and groups generally carried a strong social welfare overtone both for the individual, his kin-group and his community. The emphasis was always to provide social welfare services and opportunities for individuals and groups to enable them live an acceptable, normal and satisfying lives within the integrated, stable and self-sufficient community.

Generally, social welfare services were informally provided as part and parcel of the people's routine and normal way of life, and indeed, as the end results of the productive routine. Caring for one another was the essence of living. Accordingly, social institutions of the family, kinship and marriages, and those of education *per se*, polity and religion, all provided social services and amenities as their customary *raison d'etre*. Prescriptive and proscriptive norms determined and guided the performance of these institutions, and thus more or less ensured that services provided not only met traditionally expected standards, but, more importantly, also satisfied the basic human needs of the citizens within the context of their community.

Individuals, the extended family, the kin-group, the peer group, agnates, the neighbourhood, the age set/grade, the political organization, the secret society, the title association, the *isusu* group, the *umuada* (patrilineal daughters), etc., acting both as production-consumption organs as well as socialization agents, were all bound by the over-riding norms of mutual reciprocity, functional interdependence and cooperation, intense informal and close interpersonal contacts, and collective responsibility for groups' welfare, security and survival. As Item people of Bende Local Government Area, the author's inlaws, graphically put it: "Onye agbala nge nge; onye e gburu egbu ka a hi ya anya", meaning: Nobody should hunt (or move) in isolation from others so that, in the event he is killed, his corpse will at least be found.

For analytical purposes, traditional Igbo welfare services which underscored the people's humane living may be categorized as those intended for the direct benefit of the individual, and those intended for the good of the larger inclusive community. In practice, however, only a thin veneer separated both, since the individual Igbo lived for his community which in turn existed for his personal good and those of his immediate and distant relations. Sickness, poverty, ill-fortune, accident, specific offences against the land, the ancestors or some deities, or even death, are not just the concern of the individual Igbo and his immediate family and kin-group; each affected the entire community which grieved sorrowfully in commiseration of the affected family.

The individual was never alone since he was socialized to consummate his humanity only as a member of various groups. In consequence, an individual's joys and sorrows were reciprocally shared by others with whom he was variously linked.

This dialectal link between the individual and the group was constantly evidenced by the routine contributions in cash and kind made by kin-group members in the event of a member taking ill, sustaining an accident, falling under the spell of a witch or an evil spirit, bound over by a disappointing 'Chi' (personal guardian spirit) or the machination of some plotters, becoming involved in a feud, or having trouble with his uncompromising inlaws, preparing to take a wife, to build a new house or to undertake a new venture such as title-taking, being accused of a serious crime, etc. This reciprocity was usually intended to provide material sustenance to the poor and needy, to recoup and boost the commendable achievements of a hard worker, to popularise the group's *esprit de corps*, to extend psychological succour to the alienated, to restore health to the sick, to minimize the pangs of bereavement, and overall, to provide organizational security to members of the group both in times of trouble and plenty.

Individuals learned from childhood to recognize from whom to expect favours, and to whom to extend similar favours. They knew what sanctions to expect for failing to fulfil one's obligations towards one's relations and other community residents. They knew, for they had learned to appreciate, the accolades associated with altruism, as well

as the opprobrium that goes with selfishness. A selfish man in Unwara (Unwana, Afikpo Local Government Area) is contemptuously described as "Akankpo a naghi eri eri" (The poisonous toad nobody eats). A blemish indeed! Thus, regardless of the present day Igboman's rugged individualism, one still feels the gusto with which he receives his relative just back from the whiteman's land; the zest with which he identifies with another who has recently bought a brand new car or just opened a newly completed house; the satisfaction he expresses over the release of a relative from police detention; the boastfulness with which he disseminates the news of the graduation of an uncle's son from a Nigerian University; the promptness with which he contributes to welcome a villageman on delegation to his urban-based village union; the willingness with which, at personal risk and great cost, he volunteers to usher home the corpse of a deceased villageman; or the consternation he gloomily expresses at the news that a townsman has been declared missing. In all these, the traditional Igboman's sense of reciprocity boldly concretizes the great adage to the effect that:

Man cannot live by himself alone,
In others' good he finds his own!

The traditional Igbo's commitment to his village was even legendary. Chinua Achebe's characterization of the traditional life of Umuofia in his *Things Fall Apart* (1958), and Obiechina's reinforced idealization of it in his *Culture, Tradition and the West African Novel* (1975), provide a lucid and detailed, but by no means a romanticized, view of the highly integrated institutional patterns and social processes that sustained the typical Igbo traditional community. The *sense of community* among the traditional Igbo stressed a relatively small, highly integrated, autonomous and self-sufficient locality where members, intimately related either by blood or marriage, resided in segmented patrilocalities. The close physical contact among members of this inclusive group, the pervasive and enduring character of the social contacts, the relative similarity of the member's mode of thinking, feeling and acting as prescribed by the substantially homogeneous cultural values and beliefs, and the relative fusion of the material and ideological interests of the members, all conspired to guarantee relative social integration and community identification. This sense of community, in Obiechina's view, is a major conceptual fulcrum for understanding the traditional Igbo.

The second major element in understanding the Igbo is, according to Obiechina, the sense of 'traditionalism' which explained the individual's identification with his highly integrated and inclusive community, his inclusive-exclusive perception of this community in terms of who belonged to it and who did not, and the central ideological relevance he attached to the supernatural and the magical as pervading every aspect of the people's life. Because of the importance the traditional Igbo attached to their community, individuals, families and extra-lineage groups were variously obligated to safeguard it from harm by providing many social welfare services which, while ensuring the relative stability of the community, equally served the interests of individuals and groups within it.

In what follows below, an attempt is made to itemize the most important of these social welfare services which defined the level of development of the traditional Igbo community, the main objectives for providing these welfare services, and finally, the type of instrumental action processes that were generally undertaken to deal with the basic problems. What should be borne in mind here is that individuals were socialized to assume responsibility in providing these welfare services to their community within which they lived most of their lives.

Traditional Igbo Commonweal Social Welfare Services:

These commonweal social welfare services which were extended to Igbo traditional community as a whole include:

1. *Those intended for the physical security of the community against external aggression, encroachment, wild animals, unpropitious physical and natural events, witchcraft, and angry deities and spirits.* The basic aim was to avoid and to counter forces constituting grave physical danger to the community and its citizens. Instrumental action processes involved in providing this welfare benefit to the community included: constant surveillance by responsible age-grades, local militia and hunter; engagement in feuds, reprisals and wars; placation of deities, spirits and other supernatural forces; divination and the conduct of ablution rites with respect to the desecration of collective taboos; safeguarding and maintenance of community shrines and holy places and the sustenance of oracles, diviners and priests.

2. *Those aimed at securing, on continuous basis, the maintenance of essential means of production communally owned.* The essence was to avoid and to counter forces tending toward the depletion and destruction of communally-owned means of production and sustenance, under conditions of low technological and socio-economic development. Instrumental actions normally undertaken to achieve this included: guarding jealously communal lands, springs, etc. From encroachment; organizing a simple division of labour by age and sex highly complemented by reciprocal labour exchanges; seasonalizing agricultural activities to take advantage of nature's bounteous gifts; periodization of market days interspersed with farm and rest days; providing security for, and encouragement of, specialized craftsmen and other occupational groups—weavers, blacksmiths, carvers, potters, bone-setters, midwives, hunters, diviners, priests, rain-makers, herbalists, etc., and the generality of farmers; replenishing arable land through shifting cultivation and following to ensure ecosystem balance; maintenance of springs and streams and farm roads; propitiation of Ala (Earth), Fijioke or Ahiajoku (yam). Amadioha (Thunder) and other notable deities and ancestral spirits; collective maintenance of yam farms; and proscription of stealing and destruction of farm implements and farm crops within the locality.

3. *Social welfare services that guaranteed, on continuous basis, the material satisfaction of the economic needs of the citizens.* The central objective here was to ensure regular availability of food, clothing and shelter for all, thus avoiding hunger, famine, general material scarcities, institutionalized social class distinctions, distributive inequality, injustice, and class antagonism. To ensure these, the community undertook the following instrumental actions: relatively equitable distribution of community-owned land and other resources among kin-groups; provision for the needy and the poor—orphans, old people, the sick and the infirm, the widowed, etc; routine exchange of gifts; frequent organization of social and festive occasions in relation to marriage, birth, naming, title-taking, wrestling and new yam ceremonies, etc., for purposes of redistributing wealth among co-producers; arranging labour exchanges; production for social need satisfaction rather than for profit maximization; encouraging and rewarding hard work and denigrating laziness; and maintenance of community yam farms.

4. *Communal social welfare services that ensured the demographical continuity and self reproduction of the group.* The main objective was to avoid and to counter forces which could potentially endanger the survival of the group, either by depleting the numerical size of the members, or by depreciating their quality of health. Some instrumental action processes involved included: encouraging polygynous and exogamous marriages; enforcing incest taboos; prohibiting illegitimacy through right of primogeniture, levirate and fostering; ensuring continuous link with ancestors through propitiation and conformity to sanctioned norms; regular propitiation of Ala (Earth goddess of fertility); prohibition of fratricide and suicide; establishing patrilineal residential pattern that ensured constant physical contiguity of kin-groups; enforcing quarantine of patients suffering from highly infectious and contagious diseases; enacting marriages between spouses from healthy families; sustaining community health specialists; conducting appropriate purification rites when necessary; ensuring quick disposal of refuse and dead bodies; observing ante-natal and post-natal taboos and prescriptions; promotion and encouragement of healthy, competitive sports; and maintaining cleanliness of springs, markets, village squares, rest houses, play grounds, historical mileposts, etc.

5. *Social welfare services which guaranteed the social-cultural identity and continuity of the inclusive community.* The basic aim was to avoid and counter forces that encouraged cultural dilution and miscegenation, social disorganization and anomie. Instrumental actions undertaken to ensure these included: continuous socialization of members to conform to prescribed values, norms and traditions which stressed cultural homogeneity of lineages; enforcing conformity through rewards and sanctions; sacralization of locality symbols, folklores, traditions of origin, historical landmarks, specific rites and ceremonies, and other significant oral traditions; provision of innumerable opportunities for participation in social occasions; within which socialization took place; predicating various aspects of community life on the efficacy of ancestor cult and religion generally; and observing minute cultural nuances in various areas of life.

6. *Finally, those social welfare services that ensured the psychological health and mental and emotional balance of members.* The essential aim was to avoid and to counter

aberrant social, physical, economic, psychological and other conditions that tended to foster mental ill-health, alienation and social anomie. Some of the instrumental actions undertaken to ensure these included: incorporating individuals into myriads of over-lapping but inclusive kin-group and extra-kin-group contexts such as the immediate and extended family, peer groups, neighbourhood organizations, age-sets/grades, patrilocalities, occupational guilds, secret societies and other voluntary associations; exercising corporate responsibility in providing social and psychological succour to members who were mentally ill, sick, bereaved, orphaned, aged, mendicant or otherwise; guaranteeing membership and democratic participation in various decision-making organs within which individuals gained social recognition and esteem; and providing recreational and sporting opportunities and festive occasions which promoted individual growth and self-actualization while ensuring community *esprit de corps*.

The above characterization of the communal welfare services of the traditional Igbo community by no means romanticizes the Igbo past. In point of fact, Achebe's Umuaro was already collapsing under the grinding strains of its own internal social contradictions arising from class tendencies which had begun to crystallize ever before the superimposition of the British colonial administration and its capitalist base which sharpened and reinforced these contradictions. In most communities, two discriminatory systems of Ohu (slavery) and Osu (sacrificial caste) coexisted with comparatively lower status accorded the womenfolk, minors, non-titled men, men without material substance, stranger elements, and families and lineages associated with abominable records of stealing, homicide and endemic diseases.

Additionally, the traditional Igbo did sacrifice human beings to deities, buried slaves with their deceased masters, killed children associated superstitiously with 'despicable' births (like twins), engaged in fractricidal inter-village warfare or feuds, and even participated effectively in the now calumniated trans-Atlantic slave trade which seriously depopulated several Igbo communities, and ultimately contributed to the subsequent pulverization of the Igbo for direct colonial subjugation. These they did, partly to assuage the emergent acquisitive inclinations of some interest groups, and partly to ensure the ultimate survival of the group.

On balance, however, the traditional Igbo who were confronted by the whiteman at the beginning of the twentieth century, undeniably organized an impressive humane and highly democratized social order where the people's general way of life, as Ifemesia concludes, centred on human interest and values.¹² This was essentially so, particularly because traditional Igbo social welfare practice was basically grounded in the prevailing community-oriented subsistence economy; it was man-oriented, and was addressed to the problems of concrete life experiences from birth to death; it was comprehensive, and radiated throughout every crevice of actual living; it was pervasively collective and reflected both the prevailing collectivized relations of production, distribution and consumption and a humane conception of man as a wholesome personality; it was routinely organized and served the social, economic, political, religious and psychological needs of day to day living; it boldly reflected a humane socialization praxis; and finally, although highly informal and 'unsophisticated' in modern parlance, the goals it set out to achieve, and the benefits this practice extended to members were clear, definite and concrete. These were the residual forces that sustained the modern Igbo to survive the 1966 pogrom and the subsequent civil war.

In the last section of this paper, we will consider the impact of the prevailing monopoly capitalism in Nigeria on the Igbo socialization pattern and processes, noting its development/underdevelopment implications and consequences.

*Socialization and 'Development' under a
New-colonial Economy:*

We observed above that socialization under Igbo subsistence economy was characterized by the following features:

1. The processes of socialization was directly tied to the on going subsistence economy whose communalistic and collectivistic tendencies pervaded every aspect of the people's sociomaterial conditions of life, especially in relation to production, distribution, exchange and consumption. These communalistic tendencies were in turn reflected in the Igbo normative and ideological system and its subsumed elements-values, beliefs, norms, philosophies, institutions, etc. This ensured a close interdependence of various aspects of the Igbo way of life. Socializing the traditional Igbo in the acquisition of economic skills and

techniques, for example, thus involved socializing him simultaneously to imbibe the political, religious, ethical and philosophical aspects of his culture. Traditional Igbo socialization overall made for economic self-sufficiency.

2. Socialization among the traditional Igbo was also tailored to the chronological and biological development potentials of individuals on the one hand, and to the prevailing climatic and socio-physical conditions which directly affected the on going system of production, distribution and consumption, on the other hand. Discernible cultural nuances which apparently distinguished one Igbo sub-group from the other tended to reflect this observation, among others.

3. Traditional Igbo socialization also took place under conditions of subsistence agriculture in which property as a critical and highly developed institution had not systematically evolved. Consequently, even though a simple commodity and communal subsistence modes did coexist, various antagonistic socio-economic classes who competed against one another over ownership and control of productive instruments, private property accumulation, and the manipulation and control of state power instruments, had equally not developed. In the circumstance, there were equally no competing socialization organs and values representing specific social class interests. The *Osu* outcast for example, was in the main, a socio-religious category rather than an economic class as the Indian caste system would suggest. And until the development of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the *Ohu* was not a slave in Graeco-Roman terms. Related to this was the fact that, among the traditional Igbo, wealth and property ownership was not the sole determinant of an individual's social prestige and influence; it therefore, did not always guarantee that an individual would assume pervasive socialization functions over and above others in every given situation. An individual performed several socializing roles simultaneously.

4. Agents of socialization among the traditional Igbo were many and even included persons of widely varying ages and experiences among both sexes who functioned in various walks of life. The functions of these agents were, more or less, diffused, while specialization was minimal. And in all cases, even where socialization functions were hierarchically ordered, as in the conduct of specific male and female rites of passage, the material and normative contents of these functions, the phases/stages through which the process was

executed, the linguistic logistics assumed, and the patterned programme of activities were generally repetitive, logically consistent, and well understood, even where esoteric language and symbols were employed.

5. The goals and objectives of socialization at various levels of the community in moulding the character of the good person and in shaping the image of the good community, were clearly identified. The normative system from which proscriptive and prescriptive norms guiding behaviour were abstracted, were relatively *homogeneous*, particularly since there was general consensus regarding what the values, beliefs and norms were, including their material and philosophical bases and the basic functions they were intended to serve. Among other factors, the relative autonomy, inclusiveness and self-sufficiency of the small community, and the people's highly practical and deeply philosophical identification with it, the homogeneity of its cultural values and beliefs, the pervasive impact of the supernatural on every aspect of the people's lives within the community, the continuity of socialization *per se* as an enduring aspect of the people's cultural heritage, all tended to render the task of isolating both the deviating individual and any emerging destructive contra sub-culture relatively easy. As a result of all these, the traditional Igbo community was highly integrated and relatively stable.

6. Finally, in the prevailing circumstances in which land was more or less collectively owned, the productive instruments were directly controlled and used by the people themselves in producing and distributing just what they socially needed, a surfeit of occasions was provided to redistribute goods and services among co-producers, communal welfare services were equally provided to ensure the continuity of the community, and caring and sharing were daily routines, proper socialization and resocialization were essentially the concern of all.

Contemporary Igbo society has drastically changed. It is now several decades away from what it was in pre-colonial times. Today, many individuals, whether defined merely as social categories or as socio-economic classes, appear to be 'dancing to distant drums', as it were. Men, women and children of various religious and other ideological persuasions now shamelessly scrounge and claw at each other, some barely eking out a living under the most damnable conditions imaginable, others strenuously and interminably amassing wealth now regarded as a self-sufficing value.

The content and moral tone of the once humane traditional Igbo superstructure (its ideological system) and its socio-economic base have been ripped wide open. There has been so since the successful but forcible incorporation of the Igbo subsistence economy into the international capitalist hegemony, first through 'peaceful' trade, then through the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, then subsequently through direct colonialism, and now through neo-colonialism. In the first phase which dates from the fifteenth century to the beginning of the 1950s, the dominant force was primarily mercantilist and colonial capital substructured on to the British colonial administration. In the second and more critical phase which properly began with the so called process of decolonialism (1950-60), the dominant forces included western monopoly capital, the Nigerian neo-colonial state (whether civilian or military), and the indigenous Igbo national and comprador bourgeois elements within the ruling clique.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) which sketched only the faintest glimpses of the capitalist holocaust that was to come, is indeed a prophecy not only fulfilled but still unfolding. One may quibble with Achebe's causal explanation of the drastic changes he saw systematically engulfing the Igbo. But there is little doubt that he quite timely captured the main profile and the devastating impact of this capitalist change whose structural implications and consequences for the Igbo society are extremely pervasive, even as its temporal limits are yet to be determined.

Modern Nigeria today is unquestionably under the sway of foreign monopoly capital. This fact has since ceased to invoke any counter argument from the Nigerian national and comprador bourgeoisie whose earlier preoccupation was to defend capitalism, right or wrong. Contemporary Igbo society is incontrovertibly a significant subset of this neo-colonized political economy. As such, it shares all the known pitfalls of a dependent, periphery economy.

The commanding heights of the economy in the Igbo enclave is foreign dominated and controlled. Igbo national and comprador bourgeois elements and their petty-bourgeois allies, with state assistance and sponsorship, now operate on-ground as *bona fide* agents of foreign multinationals with whom their material and ideological interests are tied. Now falsely parading themselves as 'industrialists' and 'manufacturers' against every available evidence that

suggests otherwise, that Igbo multinational 'pimps' and frontmen have clogged up every imaginable resource network which links every nook and corner of the Igbo enclave and the state treasuries of Imo and Anambra (the Igbo heartland), with the Central Bank of Nigeria and the international finance institutions. Whether acting as import-substitution or forwarding agents, or plain contractors, or even as kulaks, it is they who are now gobbling up the people's once inalienable lands and other natural resources in obedience to the capitalist principle of private accumulation.

The traditional Igbo subsistence economy has barely managed to survive the capitalist onslaught till this day. But it has definitely lost its pre-contact substance and resilience. The collectivist strands that once knit this economic base to every aspect of the people's life have become tenuous. The Igbo peasant society is now easily associated with the tendency towards primitive accumulation. Crisis of development under conditions of poverty and penury is now felt from one rural village to another, and this has been compounded by the country's endemic political instability, a good deal of which has seriously affected the Igbo society in general, and the peasant communities in particular most disastrously.

The now fragile and completely marginalized Igbo peasant economy now more than ever serves the interests of foreign monopoly capital and those of its Nigerian bourgeois and petty bourgeois allies. The Igbo traditional farmers are now full-blooded peasants, with their client status which this implies. The dispossessed peasants have equally become increasingly urbanized and proletarianized. With the massive concentration of industrial, manufacturing and service organizations in specific urban axes in the country, concomitant with the calculated neglect of the Igbo rural villages, Igbo peasants have had to flee massively to the urban centres in quest of scarcely available jobs. Yet, in the context of the now legendary Igbo community development efforts, the people have built community health centres, schools, and colleges, churches, roads, post offices, pipe-borne water, erosion control systems, cottage industries, town halls, recreational centres, electric installations, cooperatives, etc., some of which have been taken over by the government. In addition, proceeds from export sales of their primary products have traditionally been spent in developing the country's urban centres, notwithstanding that the Igbo peasants have generally been

maximally taxed and levied since colonial times. Whatever gains made in the Igbo agricultural sector before the civil war were clearly wiped out by the neo-colonially inspired civil war itself which heavily destroyed the people's agricultural base. And any hope of post-war recovery in this sector was soon to be wiped out by the country's oil boom syndrome and the attendant neglect of agriculture by the Igbo ruling class and its supporters among state bureaucrats and indigenous entrepreneurs.

What is more, Igbo peasantry and the urban proletarians they produced have recently been dealt another disastrous blow by the neo-colonial conspiracy of the IMF. The country's private interests and the Igbo neo-colonial state in collusion with its federal counterpart have massively retrenched Igbo workers to satisfy some of the Fund's obnoxious conditionalities, more often than not without compensation nor retirement benefits. Thus, once upon a time, the Igbo peasants took flight to urban centres in quest of scarcely available jobs, as rural poverty became unbearable. Now with the mass retrenchment of the proletarianized peasants who are being irrationally urged to go back to the land, a reverse urban-rural migration back to the once dreaded rural enclave has once again become the only option available to the retrenched Igbo.

The consequences of the prevailing dependent economy for the Igbo are too well known to detain us here. Suffice it to note, however, that the Igbo neo-colonial political economy, as in the rest of Nigeria, presents a lurid picture. Usually informed by capitalist theories and practice of 'development', the state in the Igbo heartland has been incapable of taking the presently battered economy out of the woods. The multinationals' control of the key sectors of the economy is assured as the present Imo and Anambra state authorities are daily wooing them into agriculture and manufacturing.

It is also known that the Igbo are basically running a trading post, consumptionist economy, with the greatest emphasis placed on distribution and consumption. Since the economy serves the interest of distribution, politics of distribution has generally tainted state decision making in a fundamental way. The quest for trichotomy, zoning of state appointments by LGAs, the denial of appointments to Igbo of one state by another Igbo state, the persistent conflict between the Ori-Azundus and Ota-Okporokos

(Non-Bende-Owerri vs. Bende-Owerri Igbo) in Nigercem etc., are general reflections of the on going politics of distribution prevalent among the present-day Igbo. And since distribution rather than creative production is the central 'development' problematic', the Igbo political economy did heavily contribute in the recent past in churning out the greatest concentration ever of political brigands drawn from the universities, from the government and the private sector who ultimately cleaned up the state treasuries, preached hate, perpetrated naked violence on the people, and finally ruined the economy, some escaping with their loot to their respective West European hideouts. Today the Igbo states and the country are too damned broke, and are neck-deep in local and foreign debts. Although some recoveries are tepidly being made, much of the great strain in reshaping the battered economy is now being borne by workers and peasants who have been the legendary whipping boys of all the country's past and present regimes.

Capitalist Socialization and Development Strains:

Of special relevance to our discussion is the impact of the extant monopoly capitalist relations of production on contemporary Igbo socialization. Contemporary patterns and processes of socialization among the present day Igbo are hereunder summarized:

1. The primary and secondary agents of traditional Igbo socialization have survived, however, with diminished influence. Several modern secondary organizations and institutions now include the church, mosque, educational institutions, the public service, judiciary, police, the military, prison, parastatals and other government bodies; the professions, mass media, commercial houses, trade centres, various work organizations, health institutions, consultancies, trade unions, cooperatives, social clubs, orphanages, remand houses, social clubs, youth organizations, market associations, recreational and tourist centres, as well as various secret organizations such as the Lodge, Roscierucian Order, Rotary Club and several under-world crime syndicates with international connections. This has meant increased diversification of socialization-functions with concomitant multiplication of skills and values imparted.

2. Diversification of contents of socialization also means that agents and instruments of socialization are increasingly highly structured and hierarchically organized, and more or less separated from the socialized individual's home or his immediate surroundings. In this regard the socialization process tends increasingly to be secondary, even from the individual Igbo's childhood.

3. Most agents of socialization among the modern Igbo are foreign in origin and content. The modern Igbo are not only more exposed to the way of life of other Nigerians, they have even become part and parcel of world cultures. Almost always; most of the new agents and instruments of socialization have developed as a direct consequence of capitalist development in the country. The contents, patterns of socialization, and the effects of socialization have, therefore, tended to be capitalist motivated, with serious implications. What is today known as 'colonial mentality' variously manifested by the Igbo 'been-tos', the teenagers, undergraduates, etc., attests to the on going capitalist-inspired socialization process among the modern Igbo.

Today, the Igbo practice various forms of received religions from the Middle East; their development framework is West European in form and content; the country's parliamentary and presidential democratic forms of political arrangements, both of which have been colossal failures are also from the West; present day Igbo formal education is equally patterned after the British and American systems from where most Igbo have received their higher education; the consumption habits of the high class Igbo are western-imbibed, and these include his pornographic tastes. The example can be multiplied *ad infinitum*. It is stressed, however, that even though the Igbo traditional way of life is still strong due to some conscious efforts of the traditionalists to revive various aspects of it, Igbo traditions and customs have increasingly tended to be reserved for recreational purposes, as capitalist values and skills now tend to dominate the Igbo's quest for wealth and social recognition.

4. The new agents of socialization have equally imposed strains toward the Igbo tendency to migrate away from their home base. As it were, the more exposed the Igbo to socialization processes through which they acquire

professional skills, the more readily equipped they are to migrate from home. And the more specialized these skills, the longer the distance from the home base, and indeed, the more commercial the skills, the greater their frequency to undertake inter-organizational mobility. These partially explain why the educated Igbo have tended to migrate from rural to urban centres, from the public to private sectors, from one work organization to another within the same sector, and from their home state to foreign countries. These unco-ordinated labour mobilities seriously hamper authentic development. In effect, therefore, capitalist-inspired socialization among the modern Igbo generally tends to undermine real development efforts among the people.

5. Modern socialization processes among the Igbo have also increasingly taken longer time to consummate, especially in so far as the imparted skills are becoming increasingly specialized. The result is that young men and women now go through more years in school, or stay longer apprenticing in a job. In other words, the number of years spent in anticipatory socialization away from the immediate family, is steadily increasing. Some of the consequences of this include delayed marriages among young people of both sexes and other forms of delayed gratification, increase in the number of nuclear and neolocal families among the modern Igbo, the consumption of more resources in the course of socialization, and greater and greater propensity among the young for independent decision making.

6. There has also been an increasing opportunity for groups which were traditionally marginalized to acquire skills arising from formal and semi-formal education. These include women, the Osu, orphans, the handicapped, the poor, and adults who were previously placed outside the purview of formal education. This has meant an enlarged pool of skilled labour. But it has equally intensified labour competition in the present circumstances of mass retrenchment and stagnation.

7. Since there is a direct correlation between the on going capitalist relations of production and modern Igbo socialization, socialization in the present context has tended to intensify the commoditization of labour with its domesticating, expropriatory and alienative consequences for the non-propertied Igbo class. In other words, modern

processes of socialization create tendencies toward (a) individual rather than group/class mobility, and (b) class conflict between Igbo property and non-property owners.

8. Modern Igbo socialization processes, in so far as they reflect capitalist free enterprise, rugged individualism and private accumulation, are extremely chaotic, and basically uncoordinated, while their aims and objectives are inconsistent and quite overtly contradictory. Fancy, for example, how many channels, agents and instruments of socialization there are in Imo State alone. How are they structurally linked? How do their socialization contents dovetail? How do their personnel complement one another? How consistent are their goals? How reinforcing or otherwise are their entire operations? How is the community and/or the state benefitting from the products of these socialization processes in each given case? How do these socialization processes which obtain at various levels of a state add up to authentic, revolutionary development at the macro level of Imo or Anambra State? Who is the new Igboman being produced through these processes, and how adequately equipped is he to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges?

These and similar questions are extremely critical, for they pose, in the first instance, the sensitive issue of Igbo identity, both in psychological and geo-political terms. Is the Pan-Igbo concept real or mythical? If real, are its sociocultural and territorial boundaries delineable? If so, what constitutes its rallying point economically, politically, culturally and psychologically? If real and concrete, is it self-directed or externally-prodded? Does it, as a coordinated system, have a goal and a direction; if so what is, or are, its motivating force? And, in its continuous unfolding, who constitutes its prime beneficiaries, Igbo producers or Igbo parasites? What are the economic, political, philosophical and cultural strands that historically and contemporaneously tie its subunits together? If, finally, there is a socialization process, which are the prerequisites for real development?

What is to be Done?

We define authentic development as a continuous social process of production and reproduction, according to which the creative genius, the productive energies of a people are mobilized and employed in establishing a symbiotic organic link between themselves and their socio-physical

environment, for purposes of understanding, controlling and domesticating it to their own benefit. It is essentially a humane process to the extent to which man is the centrepiece of these productive processes. It is equally a liberating process toward man's self-actualization, in so far as man is the historical agent of this dialectical social transformation. It is a revolutionary process to the extent that it entails a continuous struggle to neutralize and overcome all forces, be they physical, social, economic, political, religious, psychological or biological, that inhibit man's drive toward self-actualization within a socio-democratized community. Finally, it is a revolutionary social movement involving the application of the creative and productive energies to provide man's basic needs under a system of socialized production, distribution and consumption.

If the truth must be dispassionately told, it must be stressed that the contemporary Igbo of Nigeria are like members of a community in commotion, but nonetheless in quest of a rational sense of direction within a turbulent socio-economic and political environment into which history and geopolitics have apparently placed them inescapably. *MATERIALISM*, the normative behavioural manifestation of capitalist free enterprise, now pervades the thinking, feeling and action of the typical Igbo. Whether at the post office, the bank, the university, the petrol station, the hospital, the factory, the railway station, the airport, along streets, in school, the bus stop, at the police station, army barracks, within the prison gates, and at the motor parks, the celebration of the Naira pervades the air.

What options are open to the Igbo in the circumstances? Basically, three options present themselves:

- (a) retain the present situation as it is;
- (b) reform it as much as possible; or
- (c) drastically change it.

The first option is untenable in the present circumstance in which things have really fallen apart. The modern Igbo have apparently been doing what they have always done so well since coming into contact with the whiteman: waging capitalist war interlaced with ethnic and micro-ethnic hostilities against one another and against other ethnic

groups under conditions of perpetual scarcity and political instability. The consequence, has however, been grave for the Igbo society generally, and for the poor Igbo producing majority, in particular. In the end, the main beneficiaries have always been the Igbo representatives of the Nigerian ruling class and allies from other ethnic groups.

To retain the present situation is to leave things as they are: educational institutions should continue to produce unusable and quiescent graduates; the public service should be peopled by pen robbers; the private sector in league with the country's 'milibureaucracy' (military - bureaucratic combination) should go on siphoning the country's oil money into foreign vaults; Igbo young girls should continue streaming into despicable whoredom with private and public-owned hotels as their socializing agents; money-spinning sectarian organizations should continue to capitalize on the mass alienation of the expropriated Igbo producers; higher institutions of learning should continue to harbour charlatans who go by the glorified designations of 'profs' and 'dons'; the Western Atlantic Community should continue its second colonization process using the state and the indigenes to complete the exercise; the Igbo producers should continue slaving for foreign and indigenous capitalists who daily log in huge profits under state protection; and indeed, crimes should rage on unabated.

The second option, usually advocated by the liberals and the national compradors, normally calls for reforms here and there that will apparently give the Igbo community a humane face-lift.

The basic though erroneous assumption here is that exploitative capitalism, even in its most vulgarized form as practised in Nigeria, can be humanised. Accordingly, high hopes are usually placed on modifications that have the appearance of revolutionary changes, when in fact, the existing system of power distribution, and the on going exploitative relations of production that reinforce the former, are still left untouched. Thus, with all the WAI campaigns, the return to traditional attire and the establishment of a war museum recently embarked upon by both Imo and Anambra States, hunger, mass unemployment and inflation against high corporation profits have continued unabated.

In the same vein, such innocuous reforms as the revival and systematization of the Igbo language and culture in

whatever choreographed form, indigenization of some sectors of the economy, the rationalization of basically irrelevant educational institutions, retrenchment of workers from fundamentally corrupt public and private establishments, banning of disco among an essentially traumatized and alienated generation of young people, hosting of trade fairs to advertise goods produced from ill-gotten wealth and in league with white sponsors of South African apartheid, banning foreign goods and smuggling under circumstances of spiralling inflation and unemployment, etc., have been known to be mere verbiage.

The third option which calls for a drastic change of the present Igbo society, has always been deadily opposed by the prime beneficiaries of the status quo. Yet, it is about the only option available in the circumstances, and with the greatest potentials for guaranteeing:

- (a) collective ownership of essential means of production and distribution; taking advantage of the Igbo kinship and village structure.
- (b) production and reproduction as a socialized, collective enterprise;
- (c) continuous production for the satisfaction of human needs, rather than for profit maximization, squandermania, and ostentatious consumption;
- (d) distributive equity ensured according to one's contribution and social need;
- (e) emancipatory and critical education as a means to creative production, self-realization and socio-physical environmental control;
- (f) *direct* (or genuinely representative) participation in all decision-making processes affecting every aspect of the lives of the producing and consuming Igbo population;
- (g) the establishment and coordination of regulatory agencies to guide individuals, and to facilitate their social and psychological growth, and their continuous self-actualization;

- (h) the systematic development of the entire people's aesthetic culture as a reflection of their creative genius;
- (i) the direct control of mass media of communication by the producing masses, and
- (j) mass mobilization of all-able-bodied Igbo (men, women, youths) from all walks of life to:
 1. constantly discuss and debate issues raised in this and other Ahiajoku lectures;
 2. seriously consider undertaking a census of all Igbo and Igbo-related persons in Nigeria and the Diaspora, noting their demographic characteristics, and their usable skills,
 3. launching a post-civil war debriefing festivity involving all Igbo people in order to systematically determine just who are the Igbo; what are their deficiencies and potentialities; what they have achieved, what lessons can be learned from the civil war, and the use to which these lessons in creativity and transcendence could be put for the benefit of themselves and Nigeria; and what interdisciplinary researches should be undertaken, and how the fruits of such researches could be meaningfully applied.

The main thrust of the third option should by now be obvious. I am restating the case of a socialist Pan-Igbo Society. I am proposing a scientific socialist movement that will incorporate the best and the most progressive and humane elements in the past and present Igbo social order. This movement should aim at changing the present power base which mainly serves the interests of an entrenched Igbo few, at the perpetual expense of the producing Igbo majority. The new power structure should ensure that power *actually* belongs to the *PEOPLE, the Igbo PRODUCING MESSES*, all of the time, not just symbolically some of the time, come elections. This proposition is preempting the declaration of a new political order by President Babangida sometime next year or thereabouts. As *an* autochthonous, emancipatory movement, it should be *steeped* in a clearly articulated HUMANISTIC IDEOLOGY

that is wholly grounded in, and reflective of, Igbo humane living in a scientific socialist framework since the Igbo subsistence past is virtually irredeemable. This movement should avoid the sad mistakes of yesteryears; the tragic mistake of trusting the destiny of millions of the Igbo repeatedly in the hands of anti-people leadership.

The options are, therefore, decidedly clear. It is now left for those Igbo who are willing to bear the brunt of this humanistic crusade to step forward and be enlisted. The success of this crusade which is open to all and sundry (military and civilian, old and young, men and women and children, formally and informally socialized, etc.) will ultimately be shared by succeeding generations of the Igbo in particular, and other Nigerians in general. The consequences of failure to act while there is still a little time is difficult to contemplate. If no action is undertaken now, the chances are that tomorrow, the vaguely mooted PAN-IGBO concept will have been no more than a mirage. Worse still, the Igbo, once vibrant, enterprising and comparatively self-reliant, will henceforth lumber dangerously as a marginalized pariah group vis-a-vis their more visionary, more rationally organized and more powerful counterparts with more socio-economically and politically viable leverage for real, authentic development.

In the final analysis, the future of authentic and real development will lie in the effective link between progressive Igbo elements imbued with this revolutionary fervour and their counterparts in the rest of Nigeria. For no development as a liberating enterprise within the Pan-Igbo sub-region will succeed in the circumstances, except when pursued within the macro context of the larger Nigerian society. A key to this revolutionary praxis is emancipatory, not adaptive, socialization in all its ramifications.

CONCLUSION

We craved the indulgence of the audience to relate Igbo patterns of socialization to their socio-economic and development correlates. In conceptualizing socialization as a socio-cultural process, both the functionalist (adaptive) and radical (transformative) perspectives with their implication were presented. Traditional Igbo socialization patterns and processes were clearly shown to be dialectically related to the communal relations of production which characterized the prevailing subsistence economy. Various aspects of

contemporary Igbo socialization processes were similarly shown to be linked to the prevailing neo-colonialist, monopoly capitalist relations of production in present day Nigeria. In order to transcend the present suffocating tendencies in contemporary Igbo political economy, a socialist alternative path to development bolstered by an emancipatory socialization praxis, is advocated.

F O O T N O T E S

1. Chieka Ifemesia, *Traditional Humane living Among the Igbo: An Historical Perspective*, 1981.
2. The problem of conceptualizing the loosely used term Pan-Igbo Society is not pursued. It is, however, recognized that beyond the Igbo concentrations in Imo and Anambra there are also other Igbo in the Rivers and Bendel States. Our discussion has, in the circumstance, been limited to the Igbo of Imo and Anambra, with the prospects of incorporating the Bendel and Rivers Igbo in future Pan-Igbo movements where practicable.
3. See the 1979 Presidential Constitution, Chapter II on Fundamental Objectives particularly the arguments presented by both the 'mixed economists' and the 'federalists'.
4. O. Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics In Nigeria*, 1978, Chapter 1.
5. D. Dressler, *Sociology*, 1969, p.88
6. George Homans, *The Human Group*, 1950, p.301
7. Robert Levine, *Dreams and Deeds: Achievement Motivation in Nigeria*, 1966.
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10. Inya A. Eteng, "Changing Patterns of Socialization and Its Implications for National Development", in E.C. Amucheazi, *Readings in Social Sciences*, 1980, p.350.
11. C. Ifemesia, *Op. Cit.*, 1981.
12. C. Ifemesia, *Ibid.*

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