



THE CONCEPT OF PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT IN IGBO SPIRITUALITY

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Abstract

It has been an undeniable fact that man is a social animal. Thus, without a social environment, whether it is the home, or the community or the state, one cannot attain the stability required to be considered an individual. It is crystal clear at this point, therefore, that man lives in a network of relationships and can only survive and thrive in a symbiotic arrangement with other individuals or/and with the society in which he/she finds himself/herself. As he/she endeavors to stand out in politics, religion, culture, or even in economics, man's development is impulsively tethered towards a deep-rooted sense of belonging and oneness with both animate and inanimate things. However, in a techno-scientific era where the world is fast becoming a global village, the need to once more reinforce the vertical-horizontal dimensions of man's peaceful co-existence with the living and non-living things becomes paramount. Employing the expository and methodological tools of hermeneutics and focusing particularly on the African perspective, this research work x-rays the homoafrikanus' (particularly the Igbo) appreciation of nature/the environment in which he/she lives and in whose life he/she shares. Findings in this work, is the need to note man's harmonious encounter with environmental givens and with other human persons. Also worthy of admiration in this work, among others, is the role of environmental care and respect for the human person in Igbo spirituality which is capped in the commensally-oriented attitudinal approach to life. It is a thought-out work purposed to enrich students of life, environment and cultures with the Igbo understanding of the society and the dwellers, and how the application of the spiritual enhances peace, unity and process with its communities.

Keywords: Spirituality, African Worldview, Igbo, Peace, Environment

Approved

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my Mother, (late) Mrs. Benedeth Ezeagbo Okafor



DECLARATION

I, Emmnuel Nweke Okafor, hereby declare that this thesis is solely mine and it is original unless specific acknowledgements verify otherwise.

Signature:

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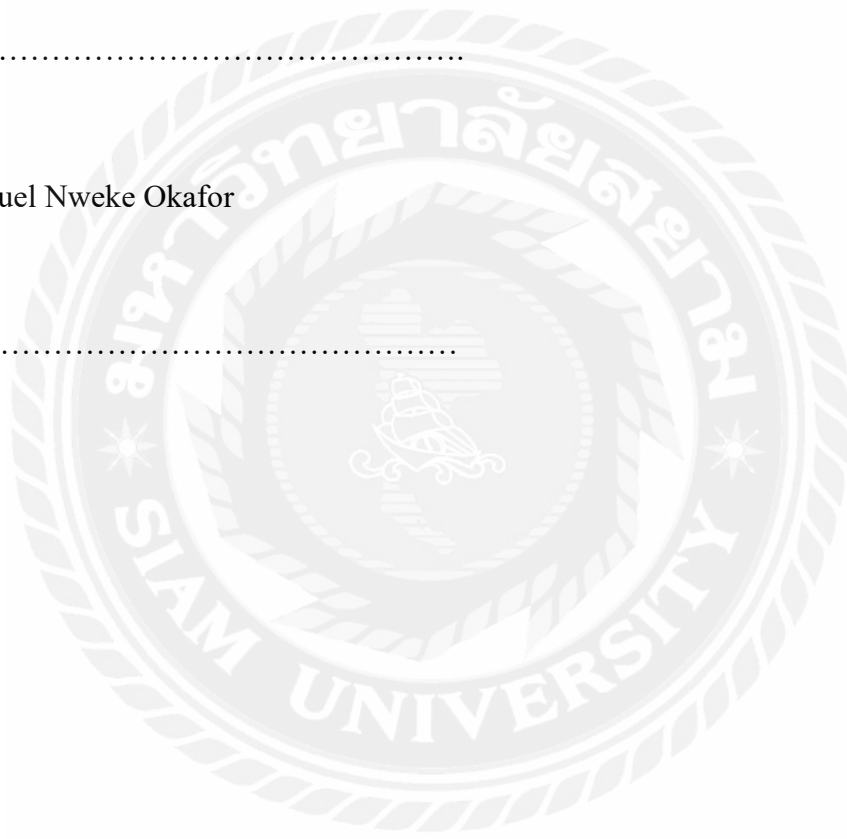


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The perennial role of the environment in the formation of the human person is classically historic. Psychologists, among other scholars, have strongly argued in favor of the functionality of nature and nurture in human formation (McLeod, 2007). John Dewey, for instance, in his work *Experience and Nature*, x-rayed the influential power of the environment in molding the character of every human person (Dewey, 1958). However, within the African worldview, the term “environment/nurture” is conceived as the Mother Earth which is an embodiment of numerous values.

Understanding the symbiotic unanimity between man and his moral responsibility towards his natural environment remains a major area of interest for exploration. In recognizing and appreciating well known multidisciplinary approaches to these global ethical-ecological concerns, this research focuses on the *Concept of Peaceful Environment in Igbo Spirituality*. Consequently, the terms *peaceful* and *the interrelationship between human persons and the natural world* are greatly taken into consideration because they mutually enrich each other. Man who does not exist in isolation basically counts so much on these natural givens and on the communalistic sense of living with other human persons. Furthermore, there are world-wide clarion calls for the conservation of nature and care for the environment. Within the African perspective, this call goes beyond the mere care of the environment to reveal equally the great profound African sense of value and respect for “Mother Earth”, natural realities and the order in the natural world.

In line with Igbo cosmology, the earth called *Ani*, is the handwork of God, the Creator and Maker of all things, as F. A. Arinze rightly opined, “after Chukwu who is the *primus modum* of all existence, comes the great Ani, the Earth Goddess, in the Igbo hierarchy of beings” (Arinze, 2008, p.27.). It was a common practice among the forebears to venerate and worship God symbolically in created natural things like trees, water bodies, some animals, et cetera. This belief is characterized in the various religious rituals of the Igbo in an attempt to attain spiritual growth and communion with the existing world. Thus the conservation and preservation of these sources of their spiritualities have remained an intrinsic part of their way of life. There is need to appreciate and to sustain the Igbo cosmology in a fast-drifting world where conservative culture is relentlessly conflicting with post-modern civilization. There is more to understand in the relationship that exists between the Igbo Spirituality and her natural environment. It is a well-known fact that Igbo spirituality is rooted in respect for nature and, as a result, negates the nature-culture and the rural-urban polarizations evident in some discourses.

Noteworthy is the fact that the nature of the Igbo spirituality underlies and accommodates the exigent need for a sustained symbiosis between the man and his natural world. To appreciate the cordial relationship between man and nature is also exigent for the survivability of all living things, and the elongation of our world through conscious engagements to conserve life in all its forms. By such active human engagements, there will be little or no danger of bio-extinction.

Therefore, this thesis explores the unalloyed sense of harmonious existence (between the human person and the environment from whose givens the individual derives the basic necessities of life) rooted in the Igbo spirituality. In this study of the Igbo spirituality with its constitutive elements like norms, customs and practices, the controversial arguments in favor for/against the growth of the Igbo Spirituality are taken into consideration. Nonetheless, Igbo

spirituality is anchored on the human person and his environment. If it is true that nobody knows a story better than the actors of same story, then the African historical and contemporaneous narratives can more be valid from an afrocentric angle than if native history were told by the western observers. Deductively, the latter cannot comprehend the Igbo Spirituality better than those who own it by right and by nature.

For the above reason, this thesis explored how far mankind has also properly utilized the natural environment. A pile of works exist which have examined the relationship between man and his natural environment. A general consensus posits that human is *numero uno* in the natural matrix and as a result, nature must not only be understood by humans, it must both be controlled and embraced through adaptation for survivability. The adaptation and survival of humanity is largely dependent on conscious symbiosis that exists between human and their natural world. Scholars agree that the conscious effort to live in peace with nature is necessary for human advancement and our earth's survival.

The Igbo Spirituality enjoys a highly esteemed reverence for the natural world. The earth (Ani), for example, is sacred in Igbo cosmology because it is seen as the mother of all nature. The earth is responsible for life by its very central role of providing food and habitat for all living things in their different natural environment (Adibe, 2008, p.42). Consequently, it is expedient to harness the natural world in a way that will sustain both the human life and the life of plants and other organisms. This mindset is central to Igbo spirituality which promotes nature through conscious practices exemplified in their system of worship, tradition, culture, and through other values they project to the world. This work is countervailing to previous derogations associated with the black race prior to the Whiteman intrusion into the continent. It is necessary, therefore, to reiterate that Africa as a continent was not discovered or invented by anybody. Archeological

evidences suggest that the black race is perhaps the oldest *Homo sapiens* that walked our planet. This thesis intends to refute the claims that the historical black man is barbaric, crude and unread (Conrad, 1982, pp. 95-97). Of particular interest in this work is the attempt to repudiate claims by other schools of thought that Igbo spirituality was a low-grade of socio-political, economic and religious knowledge. It is true that the Igbo spiritual heritage was mostly undocumented but it is not entirely true that there was no history of Igbo spirituality in both oral and written records.

Among other aims, this research also gears toward testifying that Igbo spirituality permeates the entire Igbo society as a medium for viable environmental care, education, and law and order in the human society. The Igbos are well known as highly religious people. Their religious experience is both historic and post-historic. The latter is evident in their total embrace of the Christian religion. Coming from a well rooted traditional religious experience, it would have been difficult to imagine a people well cultured in religious rituals to embrace Christianity, almost with the same intensity with which they poured libations, consulted the oracles, offered animal sacrifices and revered their good ancestors. However, the Igbos still make room to understand the western religion from indigenous perspective, and by so doing could retain such values that further encourage environmental preservation and good living. Thus, long before the advent of climate change awareness, the Igbo spirituality had nurtured practices that support preservation of natural environment for a better habitable world.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives are:

1. To explain and recognize the importance of African Spirituality as it relates to socio-political and communal experiences in Igbo traditional society in relation to peaceful environment.
2. To identify and appreciate the contributions harnessed through indigenous methods of environmental protection and sustenance within the Igbo traditional worldview.
3. To explore the possible grounds where indigenous values can be shared and utilized effectively in the global world.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The rapid evolution brought about by western inversion into Africa, and the consequent westernisation ushered in a change of perception in African way of thinking. Everything foreign seemingly began to glitter more than our indigenous products. Material and immaterial cultures became endangered products. This negative mind-set largely informs the argument of some writers who maintain that Africa had been backward religiously, culturally, politically, economically, socially, et cetera from the onset. The Igbo spirituality was not left out as it suddenly was labelled as old-fashioned, and their values as crude, and extraneous. There were recorded testimonies of incessant communal crises and tribal wars, blood sacrifices usually involving human blood (Forbes and Jones, 1962, pp. 23-29), twins' rejection or possible killing of both, the Osu caste system which was popular until late twenty century, et cetera. These practices were recorded by some authors as evil, diabolic or crude. It is pertinent to ask questions

that bother on the authenticity of such claims, given that they were mostly written as observed by the colonial observers. This research also seeks to address whether the Igbo cultural practices were entirely barbaric, diabolic or evil as posited by some of these authors (Conrad, 1982, pp. 95-97). Does Igbo traditional cosmology contribute to the emerging global mind-set and consequent advancement? What is the essence of human dignity from Igbo traditional worldview? Is the comprehension of Igbo spirituality possible considering the affirmative cultural values inherent? Sadly, the comprehension of inherent positive values of Igbo spirituality was greatly distorted by the western influence during the colonial days of 19th and early 20th centuries. The early Christian Missionaries believed then that Igbos were idol worshippers, who had no true knowledge of God. This thesis attempts to answer the above questions and also excite future researchers to probe further into the subject matter to attain a credible factual history on Igbo Spirituality.

1.4 THESIS STATEMENT

The outstanding fact in this research is that to this day, Igbo spirituality is still practiced in bits across the Igbo society. One may suppose that contact with the western cultures and other spiritualities could have made the unique Igbo spirituality to wane, given to the fast and furious approach with which Africa embraced foreign values, practices and cultures. These surviving elements of Igbo spirituality act as a bedrock for the sustenance of life, harmony, development and hope in the Igbo society. The values they enshrine act as guide to individuals on how to live and coexist with one another in their peaceful communities. The sustainability of the environment in Igbo society through the re-assessment of Igbo spirituality is a means or vital tool to addressing current environmental challenges that besiege the world. Consequently, Igbo

spirituality treasures the human person and the environment in which he or she lives and operates.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs the methodological tools of exposition and analysis of the sources of the Igbo spirituality vis-a-vis the environment. In light of this, available works of Igbo intellectuals and scholars were consulted. Expository methodology which presents researchers with the best tool to explore concepts that have deep-rooted significance, and also offers a wider scope to study and understand such concepts was adopted. The Igbo spirituality is no doubt a very wide concept and as such, the choice of expository methodological tool for this study was adopted because it will help to understand the Igbo culture in respect to global civilization and development.

1.6 PRECEDING RELEVANT RESEARCHES

Many works are available in volumes which throw deep insights into African values and their way of life prior to westernization. Among the contemporaries include the work of Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, published in 1958. The work gives a reader a quick grasp of Igbo traditional philosophy and their way of life. The characteristics of the text, is the appreciation of the lovely African values and practices in contra distinction to the assumption that Africans have no history and no education or culture worthy of appreciation. Therefore, the environmental values and peaceful co-existence between man and his environs, stressed in this thesis are pointers to a better understanding of the running themes of the text.

African culture was not widely spread and was suppressed due to Western-colonial oppression. To this effect, it was dismissed and declared inferior in its nature by Western

descriptions (Hegel, 1975, p.190). The popular opinion during colonization was that European culture was superior to an underdeveloped, illiterate, and identity-lacking African culture. The British and French colonial masters not only proceeded to suppress indigenous African culture, but also aimed to rewrite the African traditions with the European ideas and perceptions (Betts, 2005, p.8.). But then again, the efforts to erase African culture and replace it with theirs unfortunately backfired at some points because it created in the mind of some Africans the need to retrace African culture and to revive its spirit by the Africans themselves (Lambert, 1993, pp. 239-262). The abrupt ending of colonial occupation represented basis for this need. Thus, the newly taught European culture, such as language, beliefs, and political ideas, were then perceived as slaveholding oppression. The withdrawal of this colonial oppression and resulting cultural void unleashed the strong will among native Africans to trace back their origins for the sake of fighting their deracination that has been caused by Europe's racist, exploitative, colonial slavery.

Based on this, Ruch and Anyanwu had wondered in their book "why should Africans search for their identity?" (Ruch and Anyanwu, 1981, pp.184-85). For the duo, it is because colonialism did pave the way for racial discrimination, exploitation, and slavery, all of which contributed to the great suffering among Africans. Consequently, the result is that it enabled some Africans to realize that the colonial masters actually implanted doctrines and cultural traits that were not Africans and cannot be Africans.

Historians, authors, philosophers, and scholars participated in recreating African culture and identity. Writings and literary publications were initiated to invalidate Western doctrines, teachings, and theories and their self-conception. James claimed in his 1954 published writing *Stolen Legacy*, that the true authors of Greek philosophy were not the ancient Greeks themselves,

but the people of North Africa. It was said that the Greeks wrongly received reward for the philosophical approaches for centuries and that this reward would belong to the North Africans and therefore to the African continent. James said:

In this way, the Greeks stole the legacy of the African continent and called it their own. And as has already been pointed out, the result of this dishonesty had been the creation of an enormous world opinion; that the African continent has made no contribution to civilization, because her people are backward and low in intelligence and culture... This erroneous opinion about the Black people has seriously injured them through the centuries up to modern times in which it appears to have reached a climax in the history of human relations (James, 1954, p.54).

Consequently, this sway of African legacy by the Greeks led to the erroneous world opinion that the African continent did not contribute to world culture and civilization and that African natives are illiterate by nature. This misrepresentation triggered prejudice, which affected all people of colour and needed to be corrected. However, even though there were works that provoked a rethinking of traditional Western positions with an overwhelming possibilities that North African culture holds the origin of European philosophy, the very issue of racial degradation of people of colour has not been extinguished in that first course. Black Africa was not evidently connected to North Africa. James concluded:

This is going to mean a tremendous change in world opinion, and attitude, for all people and races who accept the new philosophy of Africa redemption, i.e. the truth that the Greeks were not the authors of Greek philosophy; but the people of North Africa; would change their opinion from one of disrespect to one of respect for the black people throughout the world and treat them accordingly (James, 1954, p.153).

Therefore, redemption had to be proven differently. In subsequent approaches, trying to construct a redeeming inclusion of Black Africa in African philosophical history was furthered. Other African scholars strike at the foundations of the European intellectual model and deconstruct Eurocentrism in the African origin of Greek Philosophy. Egypt, characterized as Black-Africa, is depicted as the principal source of Greek philosophy and civilization and

therefore, Black-Africa represents the mother of Western civilization. Yet, contradictions regarding Egypt's ethnic heritage that can be found in Onyewuenyi's explanations weaken and invalidate the theory of Black Africa to be the origin of Egypt's and, hence, Greece's philosophy. This is due to the fact that it is not retraceable that at any time Egypt's natives were of fully dark ethnic. Thus, Black-Africa still was not affiliated to Egypt's origins in philosophy.

In Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy* (1949), African philosophical culture is put on an equal footing with European philosophical culture. Hence, African philosophy was awarded an equal status as Western philosophy, contrary to the downgrading nature of Western perception of African culture. It was argued that traditional African culture has a distinctive and well-structured philosophy. In this philosophical approach, the way of dealing with severe life situations is pictured as a return to one's very own deep origins. He states that:

So the criteriology of the Bantu rests upon external evidence, upon the authority and dominating life force of the ancestors. It rests at the same time upon the internal evidence of experience of nature and of living phenomena, observed from their point of view. No doubt, anyone can show the error of their reasoning; but it must none the less be admitted that their notions are based on reason, that their criteriology and their wisdom belong to rational knowledge (Tempels, 1957, p.51).

According to Tempels, the primary spiritual category in the thought of Bantu societies is force, and being is force. He defines being as force and puts the Bantu's approach, consisting of rationality, on a level with the European approach, consisting of equal rationality. Tempels argues that there are different possible views or categories of the relationship between being and force, and that Bantu culture holds one specific view of force, "being is force, and force is being", whereas European culture holds a different one. Based on this vital modification in classifications, the African worldview is structured around the definition of force, which contrasts strongly with the Western perception of defining being. Hence, by a Western view,

there can be a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Bantu philosophy, although it is said to be equally rational as the Western view.

To the same effect contributes Kagame in *The Bantu-Rwanda Philosophy* (1956). Both, Tempels and Kagame, narrowed down their theories based on the African view and thus, they support their philosophical theories ethnically, which was considered inappropriate in this context. However, Innocent Asouzu (2007) disproves Tempel's and Kagame's writings by questioning the origin and setup of their findings. In *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology* (2007), Asouzu critically scrutinizes the Western forces both Tempel's and Kagame's minds were exposed to while drafting their works. He finds that in Tempels' earlier work these Western impacts were predominant and that Kagame's subsequent work simply built upon this erroneous approach. Thus, according to Asouzu (2007), both authors did not attempt to accurately, logically retrace the concept of African philosophy because they predominantly focused on Western thoughts.

In *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969), John Mbiti systematically studies traditional African religious and philosophical ideas. In the field of philosophy – that was predominantly ruled by Western explanations because of the Western way of thinking that philosophical ideas could not originate elsewhere, he sheds light on the African thought's rationality. He argues that the African system of thought has not been patronized by Western ideas. For him, African philosophy has its own identity. Thus, "We shall use the singular, 'philosophy' to refer to the philosophical understanding of African peoples concerning different issues of life" (Mbiti, 1969, p.2). Mbiti delves into fundamental topics, such as religion, philosophy, or concepts of time in African culture in order to showcase the religious and philosophical views. He alleged that African tribal cultures – Kikamba and Gikuyu – as the central example of the whole African

thought and thereby generalizes the African thought. Focusing on the religious construction as well as focusing on the sense of community could then only reprocess the theft of African identity and philosophy. Hence, “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am” (Mbiti, 1969, p.108).

A similar focus on different tribal cultures to be sharing the same cultural concepts and political concepts can be found in William Abraham’s *The Mind of Africa* (1962), in which Ghana’s Akan serves as the lead center. It becomes apparent that Abraham uses the same way to explain a reprocessing of African identity as Tempels and Mbiti did. In his findings, he stressed that African philosophy is grounded in Africa’s culture; and Africa’s culture in turn is anchored in native African religious concepts which is “An essentialist interpretation of African culture” (Hallen, 2002, p.15).

Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Senghor, and Julius Nyerere use a different socio-economic and socio-political approach to achieve a restoration and reconstruction of Africa’s various nation-states’ social and cultural principles, being led by the issue of “What system of economic and social engineering will suit us and project our true identity?” The colonial repression, even though its wielders were no longer present, still existed and true African identity had to be found in order to break free on a complete level. African socialism is presented as one option to achieve this goal. Nkrumah explains that this socialism in Africa will merge all cultural traits and the consequential social and economic policies, structures, and ideologies while basing on Africa’s originating and traditional principles (Nkrumah, 1961). This view is also held by Barren Hallen. Nkrumah aims to reconstruct African society within the structures of socialism and to reconsider African society in such a manner that the humanism, morality, and policy of traditional African life are anchored in the present. This is also in tandem with Mbiti’s view. Nkrumah further

argues that the basic organization of native African societies manifested communalism, and that this socially strong built organization must be revived so that a modern identity is to be found (Nkrumah, 1962). Nkrumah further demonstrated his understanding African challenges in his *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965). In his efforts to unite Africans in order to pursue one agenda, he wrote *Africa Must Unite* (1970), and *Consciencism* (1954).

Another work takes its place alongside Nkrumah's statements and findings about the African sense of community – that contrasts European individualism – on which Africa's culture is based on. Thus, in books *Negritude et Humanisme* (1964) and *Negritude and the Germans* (1967), Senegalese author Leopold Sedar Senghor follows Nkrumah, Mbiti, Abraham, and Temples, and argues that Africa's very own identity is constituted of those cultural traits that were aimed to be annihilated by European colonialism and that this identity offers the breeding grounds to rebuild African society.

Corresponding with the approach to retrace African culture by means of basing the post-colonial newly built economic and political African identity upon the traditional community sense, goes Tanzanian Julius Nyerere in his works *Uhuru na Ujamaa: Freedom and Socialism* (1964) and *Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism* (1968). He as well alleges the necessity to break free from former colonial repression (Uhuru) by rethinking of the African society's native basic framework and rebuilding this framework. Nyerere, too, specifies the necessity to abandon the individualistic approach and to go back to the communal concept, calling it Ujamaa, "being-with" or "we" in place of "I-spirit" (Okoro 2004, p.96). To quote Hallen,

Nyerere argued that there was a form of life and system of values indigenous to the culture of pre-colonial Africa, Tanzania in particular, that was distinctive if not unique and that had survived the onslaughts of colonialism sufficiently intact to be regenerated as the basis for an African polity (Hallen, 2002, p.74).

Nyerere, alongside Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Amilcar Cabral, Janheinz Jahn and Marcel Griaule, shows a vehement opposition against individualism at the expense of the community and that individualistic ideas could not be reconciled with African values.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

To clear possible ambiguities that usually come with words usage, some keywords and terms as used in this thesis are identified for a better understanding of the subject matter.

Anthropocentrism: The word comes from ‘anthro’ and means man. Anthropocentrism makes human the centre of existence. It is a philosophical argument that propounds that mankind is superior to other forms of life and therefore must assume absolute control over life. Everything on earth is made for the wellness of man and their right to do whatever they think they have to do for their needs. Thus, the term “man” represents both male and female in most part of this work.

Bio-centrism: This theory is based on the fact that humans and other existing things on earth are equal and share equal needs for survival. So the theory propounds that all elements are equal and unique, and as such are interrelated in one way or another. Every environment is made of living things living together to serve different needs for collective ends.

Deep Ecology: This concept believes that humans are integral part of the ecosystem just as other life forms which add up to form a comprehensive bio-diversified existence. It is about experiencing nature in a deeper level and preserving it at all cost. This notion believes that modern life style characterized by technological advancements has put nature to a steady withdrawal towards extinction. The climate change and other natural maladies affecting the present world have been attributed to the careless attitude of humans towards other natural living and non-living existence. For example, the trees, water and its contents, animals and other living organisms

share a deep connectedness which gives all an equal right to survival and existence with the human beings. Deep ecology will help mankind to rediscover the true purpose of life by appreciating nature in all its forms, with the understanding that human beings are only part of nature, and not in any way better or superior than other forms of existence.

Eco-centric Ethics: This theory has a comprehensive viewpoint of the environment. The viewpoint assumes that all living things have intrinsic values which must be appreciated in whatever form they manifest. It shares a holistic understanding of the environment as one, and each part existing for the benefit of another. The core concept underlying ecocentrism measures life as one and indissoluble entity. The extinction of a part is necessary for the survival of the whole and the whole exists for the survival part. This concept implies that life is important as a collective experience and as such must be nourished and utilized in its diverse forms.

Eco-feminism: This concept posits that all life in nature must be cared and provided for irrespective of their gender or species. Eco-feminism grew out the concerns that man (male gender) seeks to dominate the entire life experiences. It questions the veracity of male-domination over every other life form, with special tendency to the female gender. It is basically a movement to restore balance, equality, care and love for all life forms for more advanced life experiences. Man and women depend on each other and they depend on plants and animals too and vice versa. This dependency is necessary for survival.

Ecology: It describes the study of the connection between plants and the living beings in an environment. It is about plants, animals and men which all together create an environment. Thus you can say that an environment is a mix of physical elements and influenced by other biotic environments (Mackenzie et al., 1998, p.1). For Thomas Mautner, ecology is a science that

studies natural systems of biological organisms and how they relate together (Mautner, 1996, p.156).

Environmental Aesthetics: This concept underscores the admiration towards life's beauty. It argues that humans must protect the beauty inherent in nature by taking care of their environment. Environmental aesthetics discourages cutting down of trees for frivolous excuses, killing of animals through hunting games and other human actions that are harmful to other existence in the environment.

Enlightened Anthropocentrism: This is rather prudent anthropocentrism. Unlike stating that nature is made for man and not man for nature, enlightened anthropocentrism argues that humans owe some measure of obligation towards nature to be able to enjoy the latter to the fullest. Unnecessary or careless harmful attitudes towards nature must be discouraged, and healthy practices to protect or enhance nature should be encouraged. Enlightened anthropocentrism encourage developing nature-oriented leisure parks, sight-seeing locations where natural environment are preserved. On the other hand, the concept discourages wasteful or harmful behaviours towards the natural environment. It strongly opposes the extreme position advocated by pure anthropocentrism.

Environment: Environment as used in this context stands for the interaction between living and non-living things within a given geographical setting. By extension, it includes the unseen elements believed to be present, and exerting some measure of influence in human lives and in the life of other physical realities, living and non-living alike. Bellamy opined that the environment is what we feel, see, touch, and relate with, in our everyday life activities. The environment is made of different elements which include the air, water, soil, temperature and

others organisms (Bellamy, 1995, pp 153-154). Patrick Hook argued that most of the existing things in our world are implied. For him, it is all about the things which influence parts of the environment such as its geology to fauna and flora and the changing weather conditions (Hook, 2008, p.77).

Ethics: In general ethics is how humans interact with nature in an environment. They are the moral codes necessary for the survival of any given society. It stands for how, where, when, and what things are to be done for the survival of life in an environment. Echekwube believes that the philosophical discipline is the main area which is exploring the human actions (Echekwube, 1999, p.14). For MacKinnon, ethics and moral are the bedrock for good living (Mackinnon, 2004, p.3). According to Ekennia, Aristotle had earlier argued that ethos is fundamental because it is responsible for all actions and it is an essential part of the human structure (Ekennia, 2003, p.1 Ethics therefore is the science of the morality of the human acts.)

Environmental Ethics: Environmental ethics as used in this work implies that all living things must co-exist and relate together in one way or another for the survival of life on earth. Life is a collective force and humans must harness their best potential by carefully studying other elements in the environment to adapt and to survive. This idea is probably best realised upon the conviction that we (humans) are not alone. Therefore it is our duty to study the relationships that exist between us and other elements in the environment to maximise life's utmost potential. Environmental ethics are codes or principles that underscore the relationship between human and other living things. Sarkar opined that environmental ethics is the reason for extending the ethical discussion about the non-human jurisdiction and thus essentially widens the scope of normative moral concept (Sarkar, 2005, p.75). This is a dimension of the Igbo belief too that cannot be overemphasised. Patrick Curry suggested that ecological ethics are not just about how

to treat other living creatures but also how to protect the environment with their own nature (Curry, 2006, p.1). Andrew Light believed that environmental ethics deals with the preservation and restoration of the environment to its best potential (Light, 2003, p.633). Joseph defined environmental ethics as the systematic account between the relationship of people and their environment (DesJardins, 2006, p.12). The theory of environmental ethics has to explain these norms and the categorical imperative character of moral demands. Environmental ethics can be viewed as constitution of human ethics, animals and ecological holism as posited by Robert Elliot. The human ethics are about how we see environmental problems which have impacts on us. The animal ethic has its focus on all living things outside of humans. Ecological holism is not only about human concerns but by extension includes the entire eco-system and the biosphere as well (Des Jardins, 2006, p.12).

Environmental Philosophy: It is a philosophy link between human and the environment. It sets the rules for humans in relation to their environment. Mainly, it is about the ecological system which puts the human and the non-human environment together.

Instrumental Value: Instrumental value is the practical concerns humans share among them. This is especially pronounced in African setting due to their collectivist culture of interactions. There is a deep reverence for human life, and a profound knowledge of the consecrated things (Chukwujekwu, 2007, p.1). This profound knowledge of unity and connectedness among African folks is viewed as both intrinsic and acquired through socialization.

Igbos: The word Igbo referred in this thesis means cultural group occupying the current south-central and southeastern of Nigeria with the population of over 60million. They speak Igbo Language. They are mostly farmers and traders.

Igbo Eco-thoughts: The economic thoughts of the Igbos invoke to their traditional knowledge which is existing in the Igbo society. They know about the things happening around them like the environment. So they have a ground overview over their world and how they must interact with the physical world. An example is that some trees were not felled down because of traditional belief. For traditional Igbos, every tree or plant has a natural or economic message and importance so they believe that harming them will directly or indirectly affect the whole environment. The Economic thought of the Igbos is transferred orally and it is also dynamic. The idea is that since the environment is not static, according to Igbo eco-mindset, that how they relate to their environment can change from time to time. A fine knowledge about the Igbo eco-thoughts helps to understand the environment better and to appreciate it, too.

Igbo Knowledge: Is a unique sense of Igbo perception about reality and about their relationship with reality. The Igbo knowledge is not documented or written but is mostly transmitted orally. It involves thoughts, music, idioms, history, and etc., passed through the words of mouth to the succeeding generations. Igbo knowledge is basically about the culture and traditions of the Igbo.

Philosophy: From its etymology, philosophy generally designates love of wisdom. Philosophy is a branch of social science that seeks to critic, analyze, and question about the world and how life is going. For J. Olubi Sodipo, philosophy is part of the critical thinking which includes concepts we normally use in morals, religion or in our social life (Sodipo, 2004, p.16). It is all about the search for a meaning which helps us to understand the world a bit better. For Omeregbe it is free exploration of nature and the impacts of reality (Omeregbe, 1993, xi).

Real nature: Are things that are not synthetic but retains their crude form. Unrefined, original or raw elements are considered as real nature. Humans are at the centre of the earth's nature and as

such control the nature and in other cases adapt to survive. Blackburn believes that nature is a changeable notion, which changes if our knowledge of the earth changes (Blackburn, 2005, p. 247). In his opinion the dog has to be friendly by nature. In this work, 'nature' stands for everything which is not made by man.

Spirituality: Usually characterised with non-material or supernatural reality. It is rooted with religion and involved the experience of living people with different heritages and idiom. The main part in the religious spirituality, is the belief to God as the highest creature, a decently and morally life. It is about living in peace with all other human beings irrespective of ethnicity, tribe, or skin. The target of spirituality is to include the feeling of devout, which should be a motivation for all human beings and offers a better understanding for all the different types of people (Barret, 1968, pp. 44-46). To point it out in a different way, you can say that spirituality becomes one with the culture which exists out of the human experiences and enhances it. The notion of spirituality is based on the understanding that the religious elements are part of every area of the African life. For the African people, it is important to live a fulfilling life; therefore spirituality creates a feeling which enabled them to be able to live a fulfilled life. This part of the person is the most important one because it is placed in the deepest point of the human being. And it is responsible for the entrance to the transcendental being and maybe for the feeling of reality.

1.8 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This thesis centers on the concept of peaceful environment in the Igbo Spirituality. This basic concern limits the scope already. However, it recognizes the vast nature of African Traditional Religion, but there is need to focus attention on given population which is the Igbo

society in Africa. This thesis cannot exhaust the entire body of knowledge inherent in the notion of peaceful environment in the Igbo spirituality because it will be too voluminous. In spite of these limitations, however, this thesis tried to bridge the gap in knowledge on how Igbo appreciates home-grown values and traditional practices based on Igbo worldview. Thus this thesis will be limited on building a logical platform for further works on the subject matter by providing insights into ethical communal values, looking at some notable existing practices and ideals as they relate peace. This thesis will also attempt to compare and contrast the Igbo spirituality in both African and Western milieu with the aim to finding a common ground for efficient adaptation, association or assimilation.

1.9 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

Although different research and studies had explored the Igbo way of life, there is still enough room for comprehensive studious data gathering on the subject matter and related topics on Igbo spirituality. However there is evidence of over generalization and insufficient statistics which over time have obscured or hindered in some cases the development, practice and acceptability of Igbo environmental ethics. This research thus calls for a reconsideration of these misconceptions. The study of African spirituality and values as a discipline is a noble undertaking which deserves a prominent status in African cosmology. Nevertheless, one can also appreciate the exigency of this thesis not only as a basis to broader knowledge on African spirituality, but as a means to enhance the desire to appreciate and utilize home-grown values and traditional practices to achieve a well structural and adjustable development within the local setting and the world at large.

1.10 RESEARCH OUTLINE

This research is divided into six chapters, and further into sub-topics for microscopic precisions in understanding. Chapter one introduces the case study and deals specifically on the tools, objectives and subjective of the thesis. Chapter two defines the African perspective of spirituality and the Igbo perspective in beliefs, customs, traditions and norms as it regards to spiritual realities with her communities. Chapter three deals with the Igbo approach to spirituality and how their beliefs are reflected in the things they do, the way they live in families and how they respond to outer forces and events. In chapter four, the concept of peace in Igbo spirituality is dealt with in relation to how Igbo respond to issues from spiritual perspectives and how they apply spirituality in relationship with others in their society. Chapter five deals with the idea of conflict, the United Nations, and African Union's resolutions and prevention mechanisms in Africa. It makes case, in relation to the Igbo method of spirituality in peaceful coexistence, of the need for Africa's leaders to do more in situating unbiased and lasting structures which will ensure agreeable outcomes for all involved. Chapter six will critically evaluate and conclude all that have been said in the research. Every chapter has been carefully treated to provide a reader with the concept and practicalities of Igbo spirituality. It is a thought-out work purposed to enrich students of life, environment and cultures with the Igbo understanding of the society and the dwellers, and how the application of the spiritual enhances peace, unity and process with its communities.

CHAPTER 2

SPIRITUALITY FROM THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEWS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is a dynamic and gregarious concept. Owing to this dynamism, the concept can be applied to every religious system. To this regard, the traditional religions of Africa are said to have *spirituality* and this spirituality is essentially pluralistic. This is evident in the diversity of African religions that results in the different perspectives of what constitutes spirituality as eminent in human practice. Thus, this chapter sets out to explore the concepts of spirituality from the African standpoint, to identify who is a spiritual guide, and the possible roles of the spiritual guide in the attainment of spiritual excellence. It further discusses how spirituality is viewed and practiced in the Igbo traditional framework. The main task here is to critically expose the Igbo belief system and how such belief system can enhance a tranquil and ethical environment in the Igbo world and in Africa by extension.

2.2 THE TERM ‘SPIRITUALITY’

The term *Spirituality* is a major attribute and an important pillar in the foundation of every genuine living religion in action. There is nothing cerebral or esoteric about spirituality; it is the core of religious experience, the encounter with the transcendence in real life and action. It is a general consensus, especially among religious circles, that spirituality transcends material realities in ways most unique and personal, is understood and accepted with profound faith as real beyond human comprehension (Koenig, 2012, p.36). The nature of spirituality is such that it is transcendent in character and can never be fully exhaustive given the finitude of human knowledge. To this end, the word *spirituality* has attracted numerous conceptions and can be

controversial in its definitions because many people define spirituality from their varying perspectives and experiences. As a matter of praxis, it is quite glaring and evident that the quintessence of spirituality and the constitutional spiritual heritage of a Hindu, Muslim, Traditionalist, Shintoist, et cetera, are obviously different from that of the Christian. Thus, for Cullifford, “spirituality has no frontier because it is subjective and as such cannot be subjected to statistical manipulations or measured scientifically” (Cullifford, 2011). Cullifford’s view of spirituality reveals its metaphysical dimension. He is also of the opinion that spirituality must be free of any formal or structural binding and control because it is immensely developed through individual convictions and experiences. He rather argued that spirituality is basically a unique expression understood, cherished and shared by the individual through his innermost being which prompts how he thinks and behaves. Spirituality helps one find an accurate and valuable place in one’s community, beliefs, and in the flora and fauna. Ehrlich’s standpoint is synonymous to Cullifford’s synthesis. For him, spirituality is:

A belief in a power operating in the universe that is greater than oneself, a sense of interconnectedness with all living creatures, and an awareness of the purpose and meaning of life and the development of personal, absolute values. It’s the way you find meaning, hope, comfort, and inner peace in your life. Although spirituality is often associated with religious life, many believe that personal spirituality can be developed outside of religion. Acts of compassion and selflessness, altruism, and the experience of inner peace are all characteristics of spirituality (Ehrlich, 2011).

As an addendum however, Ehrlich points out more critically the distinction and interrelationship between spirituality and religion. Nevertheless, spirituality and religion are not water-tight compartments but are mostly inseparable. On the same visionary thought, Burkhardt affirms:

Spirituality is that which gives meaning to one’s life and draws one to transcend oneself. Spirituality is a broader concept than religion, although that is one expression of spirituality. Other expressions include prayer, meditation, interactions with others or nature, and relationship with God or a higher power (Burkhardt, 1989, pp. 60-77).

According to Larry 2005, human beings are intrinsically drawn, almost automatically, to forces beyond the physical dimensions. He is of the opinion that overwhelming majority of the human population believe in abstract super forces or the divine powers. Religion quickly reminds us about the existence of an overall intelligent force mostly referred to as God in English. Other languages have other names by which they identify this conscious spiritual reality or force. Spirituality acts as the common vessel through which mankind connects with God. It is not strange, therefore, that humans try to understand life's mirage of mysteries by utilizing spiritual concepts in order to understand and to solve human many problems. This lack of answers to the world's many problems is an enough prompt to always seek for knowledge and solutions. Hence, spirituality is not only a vessel to reach religious understanding, but also to solve life's practical problems. This implies that spirituality is not an exclusive property of the religion; it is an introspective aspect of corporeal realism that strives to understand and solve practical life problems. Alex Andrei summarized spirituality to suit the above view:

By non-religious spirituality, people generally mean a spirituality in which a person is not guided by the framework of a particular religion/belief-system, and is conducting a more personal "inner search." It is thought of as more individualistic, and more open to a variety of ideas and influences [...] Religious spirituality usually delves into deepening and strengthening the faith one has in a particular religion/belief-system. The big questions about life are sought to be answered within the confines of the said belief system (Andrei, 2010).

To this end, the juxtaposition of spirituality and religion would be partially correct. Spirituality is part and parcel of most religions in the world. In other words, conformity to the convictions and traditions of a particular religion is a consequence to the mode of living that is apparent in their spirituality. Hence, the variety in religion showcases variety in spirituality. Therefore spirituality can be rightly viewed as a means to reach a connection with the supernatural. Spirituality as an invisible phenomenon is thus indispensable in any society or community. Every religion has a

spiritual dimensional act practiced by their adherents. Of interest here is the spiritual consciousness among the Igbos in African cosmology. This spirituality is highly significant in the foundational communal system of living common in the Igbo society, and which radically forms the object of their beliefs. Doubtless to say, this communal practice is quite unique among the Igbos in Africa. It is in this light that one appreciates the peculiar nature of the various rituals obtainable in many African communities as a means of expressing their spirituality. Thus the deep nature of spirituality is realized in their value system and practices. It is characteristic to note at this point that the spiritual values of the Igbo community existed from antiquity, before the dawn or advent of modern civilization. Anyiwo makes the case that:

The spiritual system of Ndi Igbo (the Igbo people) is one of the oldest on Earth. The roots of Igbo spirituality is the same as the roots of every other African community. Igbo spirituality predates Islam, Christianity, Judaism and every other -ism that one can think of. If there are any similarities between the traditional practices of the Igbo and those of other religions, it is because they were borrowed from our ancestors, and not the other way around (Anyiwo, 2013).

Additionally, as opined by Wakefield, spirituality controls perceptions, beliefs, mindset, knowledge and practices in a way that makes super-sensible realities possible to humans (Wakefield, 1983). Also, spirituality integrates different related phases in human development which may include how humans do things, learn, and master their environment to achieve close-to-perfection which may be described as enlightened anthropocentrism (Principe, 1983, pp. 127-141). Spirituality can be experienced in group or collectively by the people as long as they share the same vision and mission or goals with unifying mindset, made possible by different structural practices and traditions.

Commenting on the concept of values, Ilogu (1974, p.119) observes that values are the qualities of things that make them more or less desirable or useful. It expresses the significance

which is ascribed to a particular experience, activity or life in general. This significance guides behavioral traits and the decisions taken in daily life. Thus, there are variations of values: moral, religious, social, political, social, economic, et cetera. In the Igbo community, these various values are subsumed in their religious system which is the basis of their spirituality. In other words, the spiritual values of Ndi Igbo permeate all aspects of their lives: socio-economic, political, moral, psychological, eco-environmental, et cetera. All members in the Igbo society embody these values with conformity of actions. Oraegbunam expounds more on the concomitant role played by each positive value:

Their spirituality embodies their whole life such that there is no duality between life and religion. They believe that sin/evil harms the individual and public good hence periodical purification rite in order to promote public welfare. The seasonal cycles and stages of life are spiritually sanctified, while ritual attention is given to crises situations. The sacred and the secular are unified to make a balanced reality. There is respect of individual dignity as each person has his inalienable Chi/guardian spirit. Justice, peace and honesty are upheld as very important virtues. Education of the young is a community duty. Hospitality is a duty extended to both strangers and family members. Marriage is an agreement and strong solidarity between families (Oraegbunam, 2004, pp.42-60).

Commenting more on this, another prominent writer, Izibili, succinctly highlights how certain values guide social interactions with members of the society:

Respect –this is the fundamental attitude of giving value to somebody or something. It demands none destruction of the being or functioning of the other being who has right to be and operate within communal values governed by rule of law and healthy customs. The second is *solidarity*, which demands togetherness in good deeds, plans and reflections as characterized by sharing (giving and receiving) of human good qualities of productivity. The third is *liberty*, which demands not inhibiting human person to self-development and expression (Izibili, 2001, p. 61).

The correct and authentic interpretation here is that African spirituality is enveloped with the idea of respect not only to the living things but non-living things as well. In all, each community does things collectively and with the required freedom and happiness with the directives of the spiritual guardian. What then is seen as spiritual guide in African society?

2.3 THE NOTION OF A SPIRITUAL GUIDE IN AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

Spirituality is central to human experiences and every spiritual tradition provides the guidelines and the situation in which humans learn, understand, and put into practice the required values. This is mostly achieved through the aid of documented traditions as well as oral traditions, and the durability of such traditions is not independent of those guidelines. Through them, traditions and values are handed down from one generation to another, usually through a selected few whose duties are primarily to be models, teachers and custodians of those traditions. The Christian religion is a good example of a spiritual school with written tradition. Their spirituality is contained in their Holy book. The latter has an authoritative insignia by the virtue of canonical approval. And as such, the Christian scriptures act as point of reference and direction for the Christian community.

According to Smithers 1987, the Christian bible serves as moral guide to the Christians, and the latter are bound by the scriptural injunction to behave or act in specified manner. The custodians of Christian faith are labored with sacred responsibility to admonish, teach and protect the originality of the Holy Bible. These custodians or teachers of Christian faith also act in different capacities of which intercession is basic. In most African settings, similar spiritual structure is being practiced. Other religions also emphasize the need for guides. Religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam are known for instrumental values which they teach and project through their leaders, offering spiritual guides to the adherents to achieve real nature spirituality (Smithers, 1987, p. 8709). According to Hui-neng, the sixth Patriarch of Chan on spiritual guide concerning a human being:

He must obtain a good teacher to show him how to see into his own self-nature. But if you awaken by yourself, do not rely on teachers outside. If you try to seek a teacher outside and hope

to obtain deliverance, you will find it impossible. If you have recognized the good teacher within your own mind, you have already obtained deliverance (Yampolsky, 1971, p. 152).

Different world religions share common similarities in terms of spiritual guidance on the grounds of environmental ethics but which has a bearing on their unique system of worship. The essence of a spiritual guide is highly significant in any religious spirituality. It is not restricted to one particular religious tradition. It is found in Christianity, Judaism, Islam Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism and other such world religions.

Spiritual exercises are regarded as experiential journeys toward an absolute being in conformity with traditional guiding principles. Hence, the role of the spiritual guide as a companion is indispensable. Spiritual traditions provide the basis and the means through which spirituality is expressed. Written and oral traditions constitute the basis for the transmission of these guides while designated individuals are empowered or chosen to effect and/or enforce them on the people. These spiritual leaders are instrumental in helping individuals to gain wisdom and knowledge about the unseen, and to live according to the dictates of the higher realities. The Christian community uses the Holy Bible in the quest to be in touch with esoteric realities, and the Bible also acts as their *vade mecum* while the Igbo traditionalists hold on to their customs and traditions. In actual sense, these spiritual guides who often make up the inner circle of discipleship act as mediators between the physical world and the sacred realities. They are the indispensable 'live-wire' that sustains and prospers the spiritual growth of members in such world religions. As indispensable as this mediation is, so are the guides in the practice of Igbo spirituality. To qualify as a guide, an individual must not have questionable character among the people; the individual must be deeply rooted in spiritual matters, and can be looked up to as one worthy of emulation. For instance, Christians in their own parlance refer to a guide as a "spiritual

director.” The Igbos sometimes use the general term “Nnaukwu”, in social or academic setting, “a mentor” is used to describe the guides.

In the African spirituality, the duties of those who act as spiritual guides or role models cannot be undermined because they act as guarantors and guidance of morality and the social order. Igbo spirituality is particularly laced with strong attachment to the ancestors who have lived this life well and successfully transited to the next world. The ancestors act as guide to pass through this life experiences with the common good mindset peculiar to Igbo spirituality. The ancestors are laden with the responsibility to protect their living families from any form of dangers or misfortunes, and also provide dictates which the living are bound by tradition and loyalty to observe for their own good. The living, on the other hand, is duty-bound to preserve the relics and legacies of their good ancestors, and this gesture is commonly represented in their reverence to their ancestors through different channels. Some of these reverences are marked by annual or periodic festivals, respect for life of trees and some animals in the community, good moral conducts, animal sacrifices, cleanliness, and other remarkable gestures for common good to thrive among the living. Spiritual guide is appreciated best in the context of discipline of character, which basically characterizes the African spirituality. There are indeed unique peculiarities in different spirituality but their guides share striking level of similarities across cultures and traditions. Basic among the spiritual guides are sense of sacredness, call for holiness and moral discipline (Smithers, 1987, p. 8709).

It is noteworthy to observe that the Igbo spiritual experience is utilitarian in nature. Those who can pass for ancestors must have lived a life worthy of emulation, and they must have contributed in one good way or another for the development or good of their communities. A man whose sons are notorious criminals who menace the community cannot be awarded an

“Ozo” traditional title in Igbo society. And, consequently, such person cannot be respected at death. This applies too to his notorious children. They cannot pass to ancestors upon transition to the next world. Therefore the Igbo spirituality encourages common good with strict reference to the community welfare more than the individual wellbeing. The individual is a product of the society. Hence, the community must first and foremost be good so as to give birth to good individual. On the other hand, the ancestors are expected to protect the lives and properties of their living children from harm or danger. Therefore it is expedient to understand that the Igbo spirituality is a commensalism between the living and the dead. According to Bediako, good moral life-style and conducts modeled towards self-actualization and generativity; that is the desire to give back to the society, is the basis for ancestral ascendancy. This conscious awareness is a common knowledge in the Igbo society (Bediako, 1990, p. 38). The ancestral worship is constantly modeled and enforced by the leaders through teaching and advocating. Thus, in a particular sense, spiritual guidance can be identified with certain persons in the society.

In a general sense, important to the purpose of this work, the notion of a spiritual guide extends broadly to embrace the reality of established religious traditions in Africa which is encapsulated in the body of knowledge that is expressed in that particular tradition. It has been established that Igbo spirituality flows from their traditional religious system. In this sense, the traditional religious system of the Igbos becomes and remains their ultimate spiritual guide and point of reference albeit having recognized mediators like ancestors and elders. The traditional religious system becomes the canon for Igbo spirituality. As earlier stated, it is this guided spirituality that essentially determines or informs “perceptions, insights, views, beliefs, and practices” (Wakefield, 1983) inherent in the formation of persons, incorporating as it is a variety of interrelated phases of known factors which may include how humans think, behave, and act in

line with their spirituality and common shared values. This reference plays out especially at communal level, guided by designated religious institutions responsible for its survival and relevance (Principe, 1983, pp. 127-141). Some African scholars expound this standpoint:

Indigenous African spirituality involves deeper human values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices based on various African worldviews. These stem from the experiences of black people from the south of the Sahara, articulated and lived in the African context, shaped by African problems, needs and aspirations, expressed using symbols derived from the immediate African environment, and handed down by African forebears before colonialism. However, these worldviews are changing with the times due to the influence of secularization and modernization. Consequently, a new hybrid of African spirituality has been developed consisting of traditional African beliefs and practices, Christianity, Islam, and the culture of modernization (Gumo et al., 2012, pp. 524-525).

Thus, the African traditional religions continue to control and exert influence on peoples' lives today thereby confirming that it is dynamic and not static. Mbiti notes that, in spite of the strong influence of Islam and Christianity on African traditional society, the African religion still dominates with essential practices which foreign religions cannot afford. The survivability of African spirituality is mainly sustained through strong traditional structures established by practice and by transmission (Mbiti, 1970, p. 34). Traditional, here, should not be understood in terms of being old-fashioned and ancient. Traditional, as used here, means that it is unable to welcome alterations because it is environmentally, historically, and socially coded or conditioned (Bohm, 1980, p. 11). As a belief system, it is acknowledged and emulated by African people as their guide irrespective of the various religions each of the African society practices. As Uka has suggested, African spirituality is embedded in African culture; and Africans are born into it, they observe it and cherish it to their hearts (Uka, 1991, p. 56).

On the other hand, the idea of God in Africa is devoid of a fixed standard agreement on the logic that spiritual experiences differ according to different understanding and climes. Mbiti remarks that:

Africans are notoriously religious. Wherever the African is, there is religion. He carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to the beer party, or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician, he takes it to the house of parliament (Mbiti, 1969, pp. 1-2).

The multiplicity of African spiritualities in many diverse practices is enough proof to maintain that our earth is inherently religious. There are overwhelming possibilities that suggest that all living and non-living things on earth share common ties of destiny. Humans share in many ways with other existence and realities in the cosmos. This eco-thought attitude is unique among the Igbo tribe in Africa, with strong reference to enlightened anthropocentrism that points to a deeper meaning that can best be understood in spiritual knowledge. The spiritual knowledge is the God-awareness in religious realm. The orderliness that characterizes the interconnectedness of the elements in the cosmos gives credence to God-reality. It is believed that everything starts and ends in this common reality called God. Noteworthy here, is the fact that African spirituality encourages deep reverence for the natural environment especially through having deep regard for non-humans like animals, hill, rivers, and forests, et cetera. Gumo et al state:

According to various African spiritualities, humanity lives in a religious universe, so that natural phenomena and objects are intimately associated with God. Accordingly, humanity, animals, and other natural phenomena not only originate from God, but also bear Him witness. Humanity's understanding of God is strongly colored by the universe of which humanity is a part. Humankind sees in the universe not only the imprint but the reflection of God; and whether that image is marred or clearly focused and defined, is nevertheless an image of God, the only image known in traditional African societies (Gumo et al., 2012, p. 525).

According to Mbiti 1997, African religious cosmology underscores God as the progenitor of all existence including humans who enjoys paternal protection and provision for God. It is a common belief in African spirituality that God is the Father of all human race (Mbiti, 1997, p. 66). It is a traditional understanding in Africa that every form of reality - plants, animals, water, stones, hills, valleys, et cetera - share a common heritage in a Supreme Being, God, who creates,

permeates and sustains all that is. This understanding is made possible through visible and invisible interaction and relationship that exist within and among these realities, with human being the *numero uno* in the grand utility web. Each reality is both functional and useful in relation to, and with another reality. It is a magnificent web of interaction that readily reveals and acknowledges the presence of divine involvement in the intelligent scheme of subsistence. Of particular interest are the Luhya people of Kenya. They show great reverence to nature. Trees, hills, water, animals, et cetera, are treated with special reverence and respect. The Kakamega forest in Kenya is remarkably preserved for its sacredness among the Luhyas. This gesture substantiates the deep spirituality common in African cosmology.

Apart from music, art and other means, communication through language is pertinent in comprehending spirituality in Africa because it is within its framework that the spiritual realities are conceptualized. Language is thus as an important factor in human co-existence and group relationship since man thinks, reasons, interprets information, and transmits same through the instrumentality of language. In effect, language moulds, shapes, projects and perpetuates tradition and spiritual values. Language is the basic tool necessary for understanding and transmitting the unique knowledge peculiar to different cultures (Achebe, 2008, pp. 4-77). The diverse languages in Africa could be seen as a major boost for spirituality thriving in this continent. Through these diverse gifts of tongues, knowledge and information could be disseminated easily from one community to another. Thus, African spirituality is encapsulated in environmental philosophy. As Ramose rightly suggested, the African spirituality is embedded in the environment in symbiotic relationship (Ramosé, 1994, pp. 67-74).

Ramosé on "*African Philosophy Through Ubuntu*" (1999) points to "ecosophical" aspect of the Indigenous African concepts. The author used the concept of "botho" to express his ideas

and how this concept contributes greatly to the protection of both humans and non-human entities in an African community. The author's idea is in agreement with the environmental values inherent in Igbo spirituality. He states that:

The loss of botho is purported to be compensated for by the somewhat disconsolate comfort and "easy life" brought about by technological advancement. Technological advancement continues to reaffirm the need to restore botho because more than ever before, humanity is faced with the threat of catastrophic ecological disaster. This is exemplified by the widespread air pollution, global heating, the destruction of the ozone layer, and the ever constant threat of nuclear homicide. Botho can make a significant contribution to the quest for universal peace now threatened by nuclear war, however remote such a war may seem (Ramose, 1999, p. 110-119).

Based on the author's view, African worldviews and the idea of environmental ethics can bring about peace and harmony to the entire humanity and the environment. His position is akin to the concept of "Chi" in Igbo spirituality which this thesis will refer to as one of the principles of Igbo spirituality that helps to protect nature. Ramose opines that African philosophy of nature is better understood from "*the principle of wholeness*". Hence, he stated:

The principle of wholeness applies also with regard to the relation between human beings and physical or objective nature. To care for one another, therefore, implies caring for physical nature as well. Without such care, the interdependence between human beings and physical nature would be undermined. Moreover, human beings are indeed part and parcel of physical nature even though they might be a privileged part at that. Accordingly, caring for one another is the fulfillment of the natural duty to care for physical nature as well. It is thus the constant strife to strike and then maintain a balance between human beings and physical nature (Ramose, 1999, p. 120).

For the author, Africans do not only care for the human beings but also the physical nature because African world is not only bio-centric, eco-centric, but also eco-feminist in nature. Thus, one can argue that African spirituality is also central to the idea of enlightened anthropocentrism. It has been also argued by most African scholars that most African communities followed both the instructions of the spiritual guide which is seen on how they are spiritually disciplined.

2.4 AFRICANS AND THE REALITY OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

In African spirituality, the role of a spiritual guide is necessary because of the responsibility to guide and direct communities in line with the common good and the center of the community life which is providing improved better life to every individual and taking care of the environment. There is evidence of nature-nurture interplay in African spirituality. Using the Igbo culture as a yardstick, culture is usually the outcome of intrinsic values of natural order. This is known as Igbo knowledge; a strong sense of awareness of the human natural endowment peculiar to the Igbo society. African spirituality is sustained when there is harmony between culture and nature. Environmental aesthetics is a vital factor in understanding how this relationship works in African spirituality. The relationship between culture and nature is mostly effective with the application of disciplinary guides and total submission to the will of the gods. Many African cultures are centered on beliefs in supernatural powers and the necessity to strictly follow specific spiritual rules to maintain the world in equilibrium and keep the evil away. They believe that a spiritually disciplined lifestyle will lead to perfection.

Spiritual discipline can be understood as a process whose aim is to understand the connection between the divine and the secular (McBrien, 1989). Therefore, a spiritual guide shall provide instructions on how to live virtuously and piously in order to achieve perfection (Mahoney, 1987, p. 8699). The rules of spiritual discipline arise from a higher, divine authority, appealing to the spirit of man, who feels an inner urge to follow the path of virtue. This process is described as a conscious interplay between the individual and guides (Mahoney, 1987, p. 8700). The goal is to discipline body, soul, and spirit, with the purpose of retaining a harmonious relationship between God and humanity (Mahoney, 1987, p. 8701).

Spiritual discipline is closely linked to education and morality in general. For that reason, it is indispensable to differentiate between Western and African ideas of appropriate education and moral values. For a long time, there was a great misconception in the western world, which, based on different ideas of values and morals, assumed that the African population had neither an educational system nor a protective culture (Smith, 1934, p. 319). The West assumed that Africans go through life without structure or a goal. In fact, there were structured education systems in Africa before the colonial eras which, however, were not recognized as such by the West (Achebe, 2008, pp. 45-6; Busia, 1964, p. 13). The West had the presumption that education consisted solely of the ability to read, write, and calculate (Castle, 1966, p. 20). In Africa, however, the expression “education” implied the doctrine of man's holistic being and was not confined to the attainment of skills.

According to African comprehension, education can take place everywhere and at any time, whether it is at home or during a walk-in nature (Achebe, 2008, pp. 70-105; Butts, 1973, pp. 38-39). There are no such places that are predestined to teach a lesson of life. However, there are special sacred places, such as shrines and temples, where the living ones believe to get in contact with the deceased on certain occasions. There is a strong believe among Africans, that spirit dwells in any physical object and existence, (Achebe, 2008, p. 81). Hence, physical facilities play an important role within the African spiritual doctrine as they represent a kind of meeting place (Busia, 1962, p. 77). A meeting place can for example be a regular house or a tree, that is used for rituals. However, the facilities are often needed only temporarily and destroyed after the ritual has ended (Butts, 1973, p. 39).

In African communities, the male relatives traditionally look after the raising of boys, while female family members care for the girls. Consequently, boys learn about the functions of

God and the spirits, while it is a girl's sole duty to become a good wife. Since the goal of an African is to "adhere to the traditions and norms of the community" (Achebe, 2008, pp. 37-38), it is everybody's task to teach one's descendants about the respective duties and responsibilities to keep away the evil. One always should be aware of the impact personal actions have on the entire community. In case some community member commits an immoral act, the person will be made accountable for his or her actions and a sacrifice is brought to soothe the gods. (Iwuoma, 1992, p. 86). To better understand this concept of spiritual discipline, one needs to also understand the concept of a personhood in African world so as to have a full grasp of African environmental philosophy.

2.5 THE AFRICAN NOTION OF PERSONHOOD

The word "person" is said to express the entire reality of a human being. It is the comprehensive name given to man's being to showcase his uniqueness, unrepeatability, sacredness and possession of an absolute value. In ancient Greek and Latin cultures, the understanding attributed to the word person, was that of a 'mask', a 'disguise'. For the Christian culture, person refers to the idea of "imago Dei" – an image of God, hence the equality and dignity of all persons. The concept of 'person' has been defined, not just from the ontological perspective, but from both psychological and dialogical perspectives. Ontologically, Augustine, Boethius and Thomas Aquinas see person "as an individual being of a rational nature," and this definition highlights the autonomy of being and the individuality of every person. A person is, thus, a bearer of all human actions. An individual's personal identity is made manifest in the above definition.

Descartes defines person in terms of self-consciousness: “cogito ergo sum – I think, therefore, I am”. For Descartes, self-consciousness is a person’s distinctive or essential nature. Dialogically, certain existentialists such as Martin Buber, Emmanuel Mounier, Karl Jaspers, and others defined person in terms of intersubjectivity or interpersonal relationships. Here, the nature of the person is made manifest by the understanding of his dynamism and I-Thou relationship in communication with others. From the foregoing, we can deduce that a person is a subsistent, rational, self-conscious and communicable being. As a social being, a person naturally yearns to identify with a group. In this case, the person is involved in a set of values and goals that structure one’s life, the loss of which is his being and meaningful existence. Such set of values and goals are embedded in the people’s culture, customs and traditions.

Again, in the historical epoch of man, the Greeks first understood man on the plane of nature, (cosmocentrism). In the medieval era, it was understood on the plane of God (theocentrism). In the modern era, man was understood from the anthropological perspective. The study and the understanding of man in modern times has gained more knowledge with focus on what defines a man more from within than from without. Before now, humans look up to God to understand the things we see, feel or touch. This theistic query into nature has gained less popularity due to scientific breakthroughs and technological advancements. Man is, to some extent, viewed as the center of existence. Anthropologists believe that there is more to know about human within the visible nature more than to be found in the abstracts. Hence the anthropocentric approach in human life studies. This concept was emphasized by Kant when he posited that man can only understand himself through moral codes and natural laws. Humans can be better defined by what they do than by what they are (Kant, 1969, pp. 41-77). Throughout history, there have been numerous explanatory approaches to determine what constitutes

personhood. Even ancient Greek philosophy was concerned with understanding the nature of nature, the cosmos, and the world as a whole.

The theocentrism was also widespread, which signifies a religiously shaped worldview that sees God or one or more deities in the spiritual center of the world. God or a divine being is in the midst of the world and man was modeled on the image of God (Gen 1:27), that is, the way of life and thought of men is religion-oriented. Referring to the Catholic Church, Christians' purpose is to praise God, act as servants to him and be with him in the coming world. Essentially, this view also reflects the traditional view of Igbos.

The opposite of theocentrism is anthropocentrism, according to which no transcendent authority is the center of the world, instead man sees himself as a central point in the world. The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, delved into the question "*What is man?*" (Kant, 1969, pp. 41-77). Kant dealt with the question of the nature of man and his relation to the environment. For Kant, man is a "creature of the center", both temporally and spatially. Man is therefore to be understood as a point of space and time, which lives in an environment that surpasses him in power and which offers him protection as well as dangers. He lives in and with the cosmos. In consequence, man is subject to cosmic laws - to natural laws. Man, however, unites in himself not only physical and biological, but also spiritual. The interactions of these different influences and their connection develop the "person" of man. Through the spiritual, man is superior to other living things, but the trinity of physics, biology, and spirit also gives him weakness, hope, and tragedy. For the Senegalese poet and politician, Senghor, an African was more emotional and not rational than a European (Senghor, 1964, p.24). He understood the African people as a participatory society, whose existence is tied to communalism (Senghor, 1964, p. 74).

In the mid-twentieth century, the community spirit of the African people in Tanzania led to the spread of the so-called "Ujamaa socialism". The aim of president Nyerere's societal model was the voluntary, later forced, establishment of village communities (Nyerere, 1960, p.149). For Nkruma, human beings are preprogrammed to strive for progress and growth in harmony as the end rather than the means following the primary features of egalitarianism. In Maquet's view, however, an African defines oneself through one's relatives and ancestors, as well as being in equilibrium with one's surrounding.

So, Africans in general see themselves less as an individual than as a group, so the community is a central theme in one's life, 'I-We Relationship' (Onyeocha, 1997, pp. 159-60). Community life mainly encompasses living and working together within the community, where a "member of the community claims autonomy to affirm himself as a being, but feels and thinks that he can develop his potential, his originality, only in and by society, in union with all other men" (Senghor, 1964, pp. 93-94). This means that, personhood in Africa is determined by participation in the community, and self-determined action and individuality are inconceivable (Asogwa, 2000, p. 53). Additionally, African people believe that a person is in possession of a physical and a mental component - body, and soul. Besides, they are accompanied by the spirit "Chi" incorporating the personality and determining one's destiny by providing guidance through life (Asogwa, 2000, pp. 52-53).

For Igbos in Africa, the individuality of the person is discovered in communality, that is, in relation and communion with others. The communality of the person derives from the conception of the community as the widening out of the family by the natural process of growth even as the family is a widening out of the person by the process of expansion and inclusion (Kenyetta 1975 p.31). Aja further develops the vital idea that communality involves the

communion of members of a community (Aja 1998 p.380). This refers to the insufficiency of the self wherewith it is said that no man is an island. In an attempt for a person to assert his individuality, autonomy and freedom among the Igbos and Africa in general, one discovers that the 'I' is contesting with the 'They', the other by which this 'I' is made possible. In other words, individuality is only achieved on the ground of communality. In this situation, the individual verily feels 'I am because we are' (Mbiti 1969 p. 108).

From the literatures reviewed so far, one can agree that African spirituality is embedded in supernatural reality, acknowledging the central role of Supreme Being who is generally identified as God, and the functions played by God-components (little gods or angels or spirits) which include the good and bad gods, ancestral worship, omens, life beyond, incarnation, et cetera. The reality of evil is not exclusive to humans alone; nature is organized and preserved in total uniformity and order which anything contrary to that is considered as evil. Hence what is good for humans ought to be good for other realities both living and non-living. This process can be described as deep ecology, a concept that assumes that humans are integral part of the ecosystem just as other life forms which add up to form a comprehensive biodiversed existence (More, 1986, pp. 5-7). Having reviewed the concept of African spirituality, it is essential to discuss the identity of the Igbos as this is central to the thesis, and to also examine the concept of "person" in Igbo cosmology, which will be instrumental for a better assimilation of the Igbo spirituality. It is necessary to buttress here that Igbos have interesting eco-thoughts embedded in their spirituality.

2.5.1 THE IGBO: IDENTITY AND BELIEF PATTERN

The Igbo is an African ethnic group – alongside Hausa and Yoruba – of over 30 million people in Nigeria, mainly living in the savannah-stricken rainforest east of the Niger River. The Igbo language belongs to the Igbos and enjoys the status of a national language in Nigeria. “*Igbo enweghi Eze*” – the Igbo people have no king. Most Igbo groups live in autonomous settlements without central authorities; each large family stands for itself as an independent entity under the leadership of one or a family. An elders’ council decides the affairs of the village community (Achebe, 2008, p. 21).

In the traditional religion, the "Lord of the Earth", called “Chukwu”, has the highest religious standing. He cannot be communicated directly but through minor deities who are inferior to “Chukwu”. There are numerous divine sub-powers and spirits, including the gods of richness of soil, the sky, and the sun (Njoku, 1990, p. 150). The Igbo of the ancestral cult also has special significance. Funeral ceremonies and ceremonies are held to pay homage to spirits and gods (Ogbaa, 1995, pp. 40-52).

In an African society, individuals exist for themselves and others. The reason is not far-fetched. The Igbo person is largely dependent on the common structure of the society for both their wellbeing and development. The society forms a person. One advances the course of the society by contributing positively for the society’s survival and advancement. According to Senghor, the individual is only free and independent within his or her community. It is within the community that the best of individual’s potentials can be harnessed and utilized. But this sublimation does not take away the individual sense of freedom; rather it boosts his self-consciousness for the betterment of the whole community. In other words, the individual is both the product and maker of his or her human environment (Senghor, 1964, p. 94). In Africa, the

community personhood consists of the qualitative presence of an individual. This in part, demonstrates in greetings as it is taken very seriously. This explains why one takes offence when he or she is not greeted. It is the duty of the younger ones to greet their elders irrespective of their family, clan, village, or community. To be an individual implies willingness to integrate oneself into the community. The older one grows, the deeper is his integration and the wiser he becomes (Nnoruka 2009 p.237). Hence, the proverb: “What an older man sees while sitting down, a younger man may not see it while standing up - *ihe okenye nodu ala hu, nwata kwuru oto, ogaghi ahu ya.*” The older man is wiser because his experiences have been constantly enriched by active participation in the life of the community. Old age has both quantitative and qualitative characters. Greetings and participation in life of the community are therefore ways of manifesting the We – relationship among the Igbo. In a similar thought, Nnoruka writes:

Man as a distinct individual is not complete nor fulfilled. To be complete and fulfilled, he needs the Other. It means that both himself and the other make available their respective traits and qualities for mutual development and enrichment. For the individual, his *raison d’etre* comes from the other. By *raison d’etre* here, we mean the realization of the full meaning of his existence (Nnoruka, 2009, p.176).

This means that one does not lose his identity in the group but retains his personal identity and employs it for the good of all. In Igbo cosmology, the sanctity of human life is revered. And equal credence is given to procreation. Procreation and preservation of life is fundamental to Igbo spirituality. Hence, marriage is a very important value system in Igbo society. It is through marriage system that life is generated and preserved. Munonye argued that the woman is useless if she is childless. For him, the beauty of womanhood lies in child-bearing. Like the proverbial fig tree in the Christian Bible, she must bear fruits or face extermination (Munonye, 1987, p. 99). The passing of the individual does not mean he/she is no longer a part of the community for he/she will remain as a personal entity within the community.

Marriage is of great importance among Igbos, since it assures the survival of the clan. There are similarities to Islam, since a man can and should have more than one woman, while a woman is mainly regarded as an incubator. In Munonye's opinion, a woman is not worthy to be called a wife as long as she does not bear a child (Munonye, 1987 p. 99). According to Igbo tradition, there are four steps that have to be followed by an Igbo man to enter the bond of marriage: asking for chosen woman's hand, having the intermediaries negotiate, analyzing the chosen bride's personality, and paying of the dowry.

In Igbo culture, a premature death is considered as unpleasant, and in order to comprehend it, the ancestors are addressed in an anguish expression. Consequently, a death at great age is seen as a blessing and will be honored by burial rites befitting the age of the deceased. A deceased man and household head usually is buried beneath his parlor - *Obi* - in short time after his passing, often times, a day after his demise. Age and gender have great influence on interpersonal relationships between Igbos.

Music takes an important role among Igbos. The proverbial expression 'uwa bu egwu na amu' implies that, with ease and laughter, it is much easier to pass through the daily hurdles of life. Indeed, Igbos are so keen on music that they developed various distinct musical instruments, among them the 'Ugene' (a whistle) and the 'Ubo-Akwara' (a guitar) (Njoku, 1990, p.152). Furthermore, music accompanies occasions like child naming, marriages, prayers, blessings, and other festivities. A famous sports event done with music and dancing, is wrestling which shows that a man "achieved fame as the greatest wrestler in the land" (Achebe, 2008, p.21). With this in mind, an attempt to grasp the idea of how human person is perceived in Igbo society is needed.

2.5.2 THE HUMAN PERSON IN IGBO COSMOLOGY

The nature of the human person is that of one who engages in spiritual practice. As with other aspects of life, the Igbos' notion of a human being is related to spirituality. The term 'mmadu', derived from the words 'mma' ('goodness'), and 'du', meaning 'exist', is assumed to be spoken out first by the Igbo God, 'Chukwu' in the moment he created the world. Figuratively, the expression "mmadu" can be translated as 'let goodness exists' (Arazu, 1980, p. 114). Although the term 'mmadu' is used to distinguish persons from other beings, spirits are still referred to as persons in Igbo culture, more specifically spiritual persons (ndi mmuo). They are supposed to be invincible complements to human persons ('ndi mmadu') incorporating the personality and therefore the relationship between a human and spiritual person is like brave man and his guiding figure (Metuh, 1991, p. 109).

The Igbos' perception of 'mmadu' in the framework of life is similar to those of other religions, which constitute mankind as the summit of creation. With the expression 'mmadubuisi' Igbos emphasize that man is ruler over the earth and thus superior to all other creations on earth. There are two sayings emphasizing this statement: 'maduka' meaning that man is in charge of other created things (Nwala, 1985, pp. 43-44) and 'mmadubundu' stating that humans are a symbol of life.

A great similarity to other cultures can also be depicted in the separation of body and soul, or physical and mental component of a human being. The body is referred to as 'ahu', which is also used in daily conversations. The question "Ahu gi kwanu?" for example can be translated as "How is your body?" – a way of asking after a person's condition or wellbeing. The perception of a human's soul, however, is of spiritual nature. Every person is believed to have a

soul that specifically defines his or her personality and subsistence and has neither shape nor form. Nevertheless, there exist discrepancies in the apprehension of the soul.

The writer, Edeh, adduces three different conceptualities to explain the existence of the soul: 'Mkpuruobi', 'Chi', and 'Mmuo'. Moreover, Edeh assumes that everything that exists but is not visible is subject to immortality and hence, any perceptible action that cannot be felt or seen has bearing in the metaphysical (Edeh, 1985, pp. 80-82). For instance, Edeh employs three terms in identifying the soul- 'Mmuo', 'Mkpuruobi', and 'Chi'. They all mean soul according to Edeh. Immortality is defined as a state of "undying", and as such, the soul which is immortal cannot die. And the soul goes beyond the physical since it cannot be destroyed or die (Edeh, 1985, pp. 80-82). This view is not, however, conclusive as some other scholars like Metuh have other notions. Another description of how the relationship between body and soul is perceived by Igbos can be found in Metuh's abstract on 'Obi', 'Chi', 'Eke', and 'Mmuo':

Obi is a man's life-force, the animating principle which links man with other life forces in the universe. It is also the seat of affection and volition. Chi is the destiny spirit believed to be the emanation of the creator in man. Eke is the ancestral guardian which links him to the family. Mmuo is the spirit which comes from God and goes back to God at death (Metuh, 1991, pp. 110-111).

In a further attempt to explain the notion of the soul, Nwala divided the human being into three components: Body ('ahu'), soul ('mkpuruobi'), and spirit ('mmuo'), of which the soul is the place of life-creation, namely 'ndu' (Nwala, 1985, p. 43). Several other approaches try to find evidence for the existence of a soul and so it is not surprising, that the triangle of body, soul, and spirit is even considered by traditional medicines. Ukaegbu identified three different components of human wellness and the different measures of healing. The human physical ailment (ahu mgbu) is handled by 'Dibia Ogwu' (body physicist) where 'Dibia Afa' (para-psychologist) is responsible for emotional and mysterious human problems, which also includes dream

interpretations and strange ailments that have no direct or immediate physical implications. Lastly is the 'Dibia Aja' whose primary duty is to consult the oracles or the gods as well as mediate for the living by offering sacrifices to the gods. He is concerned with the spiritual needs of humans (Ukaegbu, 1992).

In Igbo belief, a human person has diverse facets which indicate that 'mmuo' is assigned to immaterial matters. Thus the spiritual realm is 'Ala Mmuo' or 'Ndi Mmuo' (Madu, 1992, p. 166). Consequently, the idea of 'mmuo' is heavily dependent to its context, as it includes the elements of spirit, emotion, and consciousness (Nwala, 1985, p. 42). It is believed that there is a mutual dependency between body and spirit of catering of another with justice and neatness to ensure an orderly live in an orderly environment.

As mentioned above, to the Igbos 'Chi' is the major driving force for personal success or failure in life and therefore, closely linked to the relationship of body and soul. 'Chi' is referred to as "the divine spirit that animates human beings" (Madu, 1995, p.33) and, similar to Christ, 'Chi' is to judge whether a person will be granted access to eternal life through reincarnation or will be condemned forever. Since 'Chi' is responsible for a person's destiny, it can be assumed that the main objective of living the way of Igbo spirituality is to live in harmony with one's 'Chi' and the surrounding environment (Madu, 1995, p.34).

According to Ekennia, every single person is in possession of 'Chi', which is meant to give personal spiritual guidance through life determination of one's destiny. Besides, it is believed that every person is in possession of an individual 'Chi', since each person is an individual himself (Ekennia, 2003, p. 27; Ojike, 1955, p. 183). The saying "Onye na Chi ya," meaning, "Each with his own Chi," eminently highlights this belief.

In addition, Igbos see themselves less as individuals than as a group, so the community is a central theme in the life of an Igbo. The approval by society is essential for a human being to be considered relevant. He or she should contribute to and participate in community life, this way the human's character is disclosed to the Igbo spirituality. A popular Igbo adage describes the importance of communalism among Igbos, saying that "a single tree does not make a forest (otu osisi anaghi emebe ohia)." This also suggests that one needs to have deeper understanding of the meaning of peace in entire African traditional religion. However, by the virtue of this work and its limitation, it is proper to narrow down this universal concept of personhood, and peace to that of an Igbo person. Thus, Chapter four will properly address the concepts.

2.6 THE MEANING OF PEACE IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Every true religion guarantees and promotes peace which is desired by all community of human persons. Religion and peace have been bedmates from the pedigree of history. Africans have their religion and culture which are traditional and indigenous to the peoples. An understanding of what Africans mean by peace, its attainment and maintenance, is underscored and understood within the conceptual framework provided by African traditional religion and culture. This research highlights that understanding of peace vis-à-vis the spirituality that guides African continent and Igbo society as a case study, and argues that peace is embedded in the traditional worldview of the Africans. This worldview is present in African traditional religion and culture. To have a better perspective of how peace is correlated with religion in Africa, it is pertinent that we underline major concerns that confront the nature of African traditional religion, which is the indigenous belief system and practices of Africans. Understanding the nature of African religion is *sine qua non* to understanding the place peace holds in their worldview. This is the major part of the challenge faced. All values are culturally dependent and

inseparably attached to their religion. African Culture and Religion are inextricably interwoven such that the violation of the cultural values is equally the violation of the religious values.

2.6.1 THE NATURE OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

First, it must be acknowledge that African moral codes and spirituality have no written form but is transmitted orally through its basic foundational features and elements namely: belief, worship and morality, et cetera (Sarpong, 1989, p. 351). The religious tradition is handed down orally through myths, proverbs, folklores, et cetera, and preserved in the horizon of understanding, mindset and cultural heritages of African peoples. Their duty and obligation remains conformity, faithfulness, and living out what they already believe in and not in attempting to subject those beliefs and practices to a reasoning process. Scholars who usually research on religious belief systems did not still document them in writing till date. Such lack in documentation greatly reduced the level or amount of propagation of such intellectual insights and also their possibility of surviving in successive periods. The fact that oral tradition is dynamic, and not static, makes it impossible to deny how such fluidity greatly limits or challenges a scholar at providing or subjecting it to a rational discourse. Perhaps religion is best understood, and dealt with intellectually or scholarly if it has historically documented records. This challenge however does not mean that the often hidden intrinsic value of current day to day religious practices and experiences does not present itself in a way that is evident or vivid in the mindset of the adherents.

Secondly, religious issues and practices are characteristically communitarian. Therefore, it is not possible to have harmonized practices that are central or that cuts across the different ethnicities or tribes even though there are central religious ethos that are self-evident to all. This

means that each community may have slight variations about the meaning of same concepts in their belief system. The idea of a Supreme Being - God - for example, is homogenous to all Africans but he is called different names within particular village clans and ethnic identities. So the same self-evident truth realities are expressed differently in order to accommodate diverse experiences of these groups. Consequently, there is the difficulty associated with the differences and gaps that emerge from perceived western religious orientation and African conceptual practices viewed through academic lens. Given the influence of western educational and thought-frameworks, there is the tendency or danger of collapsing the independence of original ideas of African traditional religion that are similar in other religions.

2.6.2 THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF AFRICAN RELIGION

One of the most outstanding features in African Traditional Religion is the concept of “belief”. Africans believe in the existence of a higher spiritual world that directs, controls and governs human existence and affairs. The African traditional “Belief System” is central and hierarchical in nature. Beliefs embody principal dimensions: the belief in one Supreme Being called by different names according to dialectical expressions, belief in Divinities, belief in ancestors, belief in Spirits. Divinities are servants of the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is known with many attributes: He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. He is the Creator and sustainer of all things, he is powerful and the controller of the natural forces, the seasons (Sarpong, 1989, p.351).

Another important element is “worship”. All forms of worship are directed primarily to God though he is venerated and approached indirectly by religious functionaries through intermediaries, the cult of divinities, spirits and ancestors. These intermediaries act as mediators

and intercessors for the human communities. It is in worship that the religious tenets and outlook is given expression largely through ceremonial rituals and sacrifices, prayers and offerings, and libations. The ceremonies are usually carried out in household and public altars, shrines, temples, et cetera. In some places, natural endowments like big trees, waterfalls, mountains, wild forests, rivers and oceans, serve as worship sites or avenues (Idowu, 1973, pp. 180-182).

Next is “morality” which is inextricably connected with the religious worldview of the people and deals with human conduct in relation to God, the community of persons and the environment. There exist religiously informed codes which establish rules of conduct that are binding on members of a given community. Morality safeguards and promotes life generally in the setting of community living. John Mbiti pictures this: “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am,” (Mbiti, 1988, p.108). Morality imposes an obligation on members of the community to achieve harmony and the preservation of lives through “justice and sharing”(Magesa, 1997, p.65). Certain manner of acting and living are considered good in order to safeguard the ‘harmonious order’ in creation established by God. Any human acting that has been judged evil by the community of persons is considered and seen as abominable taboos that bring punishments from God (or the gods): suffering, diseases and pain to the community. The divinities and the ancestors who are guardians of the realm can be appeased through stringent penalties and rituals, in order to beg for their help in cleansing the Land. Taboos, thus, help to maintain law and order.

The idea of punishment is to help people to comply with norms because violating them is believed to attract the wrath of God who upholds morality through divinities and ancestors. Morality flows out of religion, and through this the conduct of individuals are regulated. Breaking the moral code is regarded as evil and a breach of peace and is ipso facto punishable.

There is thus a strong sense of justice operational within the community because it is believed that God hates injustice. The Akan people have a proverb that says that God loves justice and equity and therefore has given everything its own name (Sarpong, 1989, p.356). The above proverb summarizes the just nature of God. There is no peace and harmony without justice. Sarpong upholds that nemesis catches up with an offender who breaks a moral norm in traditional African societies because there are surely divine and human reprisals. The reason for this is that God has conformed in man, an “oracle of the heart...the ‘inner oracle’ whose purpose is to assist and direct man to ethically live well. This view aligns with conventional Igbo worldview about the inner workings of the God-Human-nature relationship. This ‘oracle of the heart’ is akin to the modern terminology which calls it an individual inner-guide or conscience, affixed into every person by God Himself, and which must be listened to. He lives in constant fear of divine punishment, on the contrary, when he disobeys this ‘inner oracle,’ (Sarpong, 1989, p.361). This understanding is captured and expressed in the Igbo proverb: “Ọbụ onye ñlụ iyi asi ka egbe igwe na-atụ egwu” (The one who commits perjury fears that the thunder may strike him/her). All these concepts will be better understood when one understands the worldview of African traditional religion.

2.6.3 THE WORLDVIEW OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

The world-view of African traditional religion centers on the consciousness of a higher spiritual realm and its relation or connection with the human and finite natural realm. This world-view is spiritual because there exist spiritual subsistent “beings” believed to be in constant action in nature and in the world of human persons. This fact was deciphered from lived human experience and age-long interaction with these spiritual forces and the forces of nature. The anthropocentric aspect is closely linked to the spiritual, depicting a vertical or horizontal reality.

All spiritual beings are constantly in communion with humans for their sustenance and for the preservation of their well-being. All the spiritual and human elements in the universe are intrinsically inter-connected. Every reality is believed to happen as ordered by God and not out of chance. God is the intelligent reality who is responsible for order and tranquility in the universe, and humans must ensure alignment because deviation is believed to be dicey. Rweyemamu thinks that, in this spiritual vision of the universe and Nature,

The African soul has perceived the moral obligation to collaborate with the Supreme Being, the divine creator and author of order and harmony, and the ordered harmony in creation so as to preserve that equilibrium which visible and invisible forces must maintain. It is therefore a serious transgression to attempt to break or interrupt the free, harmonious and orderly functioning of the god-given peace which guarantees life, growth, survival in creation (Rweyemamu, 1989, pp.391-394).

Therefore, networking and interconnectedness among all existing realities in nature and beyond to reach harmonious tranquility is always the goal both among humans and other living and non-living things in our cosmos. It is intrinsically evil to disrupt the moral order that sustains harmony and equilibrium. This moral order was indeed disrupted by the advent of the colonial masters. The stepping in on the foot of Nigerian soil by the colonial agents has a drastic effect on the Igbo culture.

2.7 NIGERIA AND ITS FORMAL COLONIAL MASTERS

Towards the end of the 16th century, agitations for the abolition of slavery and slave trade across the Atlantic heated up. The main reason for this was the denigrating valuation of human beings based on economic gains alone, and the subsequent subjection or dehumanized use of fellow humans as articles of trade. When slave trade was abolished, the emergence of industries created the need to search for cheaper sources of raw materials and labor as well as market for industries. These among other reasons gave rise to the race for colonies. Thus, most

African territories were colonized except the likes of Ethiopia. The colonial masters clashed over boundaries of territories they occupied. It was at the Berlin – West African conference of 1885 – that Europeans formally laid claim to Africa in their scramble to dominate the continent solely for economic interests. This is why Britain had the main areas of today’s West Africa such as Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana and sierra-Leone as her colonies. There was no Nigeria state by this time (Olisa et al, 1990, pp.56 -102).

The steps toward the Nigeria state was initiated in 1906 when Britain started looking for solutions to lessen the burden of colonial administration and to maximize the benefits of having such colonies. The then British authorities joined the colony of Lagos to the southern protectorate. Later in 1914, still in pursuit of profit maximization and, or efficiency in colonial administration, the British colonial administration joined the southern protectorate to the northern protectorate (Eze, 2001, pp. 56-89). This was the famous amalgamation which marked the birth of what is today known as Nigeria, as Orizu puts it:

A name that in error was thought to have been adapted for the river Niger. In actual sense it was adapted from the word “Niger” - a snobbish way of calling a black man courtesy of Lady Flora Shaw, the British lady who later becomes Lord Lugard’s wife (Orizu, 1999, pp. 30-101).

There were inherent problems – foreseen and unforeseen – in the amalgamation of what is Nigeria today. The British knew some of these problems such as differences in social, political and economic development, culture, climate, et cetera, but paid less attention. Their concern was already satisfied in lessening the burden of the costs of administration, facilitating a route to the sea from the north to the south and sowing seeds of perpetual existential epilepsy. Abraham succinctly submitted that:

Since the amalgamation, Nigeria has remained a geo-political entity, though a traumatized one. Agitation to opt out of the Nigeria state by its components has ever been

vehemently resisted, though it was not a Nigerian creation. The north in the era of cotton boom and groundnut pyramids (1962-1966) had tried its way out of the federation but was dialogued back to it (Abraham, 1966, pp.11-70).

The eastern part of Nigeria (Biafra) made a bold, ill- prepared, attempt to opt out of the federation between 1967 and 1970 but was unsuccessful in the civil war that ensued. All other attempts by other groups like the Ogonis have ever been resisted. All calls for a sovereign national conference, a call to re-write statehood, have never been easy for any state to undertake (Abraham, 1966, pp. 58-86). Bloodshed, wars, et cetera, normally paved the way for re-writing state-hood. Therefore, when a state comes into being, per chance, via social contract as discussed above, the sovereignty, authority and power it now wields on behalf of the generality must be vested in a certain agent. In Hobby's view, this agent should be an individual - a sort of monarch. In Rousseau's idea, such should be vested in the generality of the people - a sort of democracy. This agent or agency for appropriation of the state powers refers to Government (Olisa et al, 1990, p.27).

Hence the Nigerian government has full authority to better the life of its citizens. The government of any state harnesses the resources that belong to the state and must ensure national prosperity via efficient, dynamic and self-sustaining economy. As part of the economic functions of every government, it must ensure welfare, freedom and happiness of citizen based on social justice and equal opportunities. The government appropriates major and sensitive sectors of the economy where necessary and protects the rights of citizens to engage in lawful economic ventures. The government through adequate budgetary functions ensures promotion of planned and balanced economic development, harnesses and distributes human and material resources for the common good, avoids concentration of wealth in a few hands and provides the basic needs of the people. Any government must function in such a way as to regularly review ownership and

control of business within the state and provide means of checking excesses. Hence global trade agreement with other nations is very important. However, this very trade agreement was carried on without indigenous people's contribution.

Many scholars argued that, it is the cardinal function of every government to provide employment and other opportunities for securing viable means of livelihood which trading with other nations provides. In this respect, such opportunities ensure humane conditions and provide for leisure, religions, social and cultural life. Thus, it is a social function of every government to ensure provision of adequate health, welfare, medical, and safety facilities for the people. In other words, part of the social responsibilities of every government include ensuring equal wage for work, protection of children, women, the aged against exploitation and neglect, provision of public assistance in time of need, provision of good social amenities and promotion of family life which all inherent in African spirituality ever before the coming of the colonial masters.

Thus, for the government to be effective the concept of social ecology and Igbo knowledge will help to ensure equal and adequate educational opportunities, promotion of science and technology and eradication illiteracy through provision of free affordable education at all levels. The idea of environmental aesthetic will help the government to protect, improve and safeguard the environment, wild life air, water and land of the people.

Some countries cannot, however, enter into an agreement with the Nigerian government because of the basic system failures of not providing adequate security and electricity and tackling corruption, among others. To be relevant to global expectations, the Nigerian government must function to promote and protect the state's interest via promotion of international co-operation, as well as integration and membership of the state in international

organizations. It must ensure and uphold international law and protect the rights of its citizens living in other countries because foreign policy is very important in governmental functions. This area is necessary, but Nigerian government appears diplomatically weak since it lacks the basic negotiating power in its foreign policy.

What kind of relationship should then be between a former colony and its former colonial master? The answer is not straight-forward (Aribisala, 2014). There has not been any indication of strong ties between Nigeria and Britain. In fact, a recent study found that the only existing connection between Nigeria and its colonial master is the adaptation of the British system of government, educational system, common law judicial system, et cetera. Colonialism unambiguously endorsed and actively promoted the policy of class system that required the segregation of the colonial masters from the native population. In other words, the relationship between Nigeria and Britain is not cordial due to colonial scars. Duke II continued by clarifying that the local people were firmly placed in a servile and subservient position (Duke II, 2010). The relationship between Nigeria and Britain is sinuously matched as a result of Britain's inconsistent support of Nigeria during political dilemmas (Ujomu, 2001). Nevertheless, the Nigerian-British relations were cemented at the official level during the civil war, when Britain betted on the federal government winning the war and provided assistance against the secessionist state of Biafra (Aribisala, 2014).

In a recent study, Nigeria-British relations have reinforced economically rather than politically, with the recent increase in trade and investment between the two countries. Britain showcases its interest through interfering in matters of economy but stands aloof when issues arise in the political system of Nigeria. Billions of pounds stolen by former Nigerian officials and stashed away in British banks have not been returned to Nigeria. This attitude has kept the

Nigerian government away from the British government (Ihuegwu, 2013). It is also demonstrates Nigeria's lack of negotiating power.

There is affirmation and strong indications that colonialism was the root of the corrupt system in Nigeria because the colonizers came into the system with a rotten mind of exploitation and expropriation rather than the actual mission of positive transformation (Mark, 1996). The colonial rulers forcefully mishandled and destabilized the true foundation system and established standards of various existing tribes (Richard, 2007). Having destroyed and limited the traditional systems, corruption became institutionalized as a consequence. The colonial masters treated the colonized in a way that the colonizer would not treat its compatriots. And several research suggest that the colonizers knew the importance of their own people but mishandled the colonized for self-enrichment, imperialism, and despotism through repression and absolute dominance (Uka, 1991, pp. 25-60). The result is nothing but a corrupt system because the western life is alien to the core traditional values which never allowed corruption.

The key objectives of British colonialism included the opening-up of the country to British trade (Duke II, 2010). At this point, the British administrative style gradually became the governing style of the Nigerian state and the main influence on the local way of organizing things – politically, socially and economically (Kiggundu, 1991). It unsatisfactorily continued the political domination of the society, government, trade, religion and the social life of the peoples with structural and attitudinal implications for the existing public and private organizations (Jervis, 1976, p.25). Nigeria as the sixth largest exporter of oil in the world should have several International Corporations aligned for negotiations that will achieve economic benefits because few of the negotiations have not yielded much expected outcomes. The cause of these arid negotiable outcomes, perhaps, is the level of corruption which has been tormenting the

country since its independence in 1960 and its poor system of governance. The effect of poor negotiation and lack of International Corporation alliances lured some Nigerian government officials to question the ability of its weak, oil-dependent economy (Robins and Judge, 2009). The Britain came into Nigeria and discovered several natural resources like oil for exploitation (French and Raven, 1959, pp.150-167). Successive Nigerian governments abandoned other economic sectors focusing only on oil manufacturing, which reflects their unwillingness to engage in foreign negotiations for the development of other economic sectors in the country.

Nigeria has remained active in few global trade negotiations like World Trade Organization (WTO) and several others, and these organizations have set policies for its members. Nigeria encountered several controversies, starting with WTO's issue of lowering import tariffs to discourage trade block. Developed countries like the United States (US) and European Union (EU) agreed with this policy but it was the contrary for Nigeria. Another blatant controversy ensued when International Monetary Fund (IMF) deliberately advised other nations against cooperating with Nigeria in the project of expanding trade under West African Monetary Union. This move was because of Nigeria's state of corruption and the problem of uncontrolled government spending.

However, Nigeria has remained active in the policy of Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) by agreeing to export refined oil and to stop importation of refined products. It will be lucrative for Nigeria if it remains fully engaged in both global and regional trade deals, with a priority of gaining credibility in the international system. Another controversy was United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s trade agreement with Nigeria as sole exporter of agricultural products but she failed to execute proper strategies to continuously supply products to other parts of the African continent, and the Europe. Other EPA members

bade for agricultural products from other countries capable of supplying them because of this failure and EU retaliated over recalcitrant Nigeria. The European support and subsidies to its own farmers will frustrate Nigeria's trade capacity (Nwoke, 2008). Implementation of the EPA in its present form will represent major challenges for Nigeria in the areas of massive loss of government revenue, emasculation of the manufacturing industry, devastating employment losses, increase in poverty levels and erosion of policy space. In other words, Nigeria will suffer an economic blow for its recalcitrant nature (Ujomu, 2001).

In addition to this, the Igbo society has developed a common value system that is intended to provide guidance for a peaceful, responsible, and pious life within the community. The Igbo understanding of living a good life in equilibrium is closely linked to 'Omenala', the conjunction of traditions, customs, values, regulations, and religious beliefs. Since 'Omenala' shall provide guidance on how to live a pious and responsible life, it symbolizes a key part of reference in moral discrepancies occurring among the Igbos (Onyeocha, 1997, pp. 205-215). In the following, Parrinder summarizes the influence of moral and values on a society:

Search for meaning leads to faith in a power greater than the human, and finally to a universal or superhuman mind which has the intention and will to maintain the highest values for human life. There is an intellectual element in religion's search for purpose and value, and an emotional element in the dependence upon the power which creates or guarantees those values (Parrinder, 1983, p.10).

The concept of 'Omenala', which is the summation of Igbo Spirituality, is clearly outlined in the Igbo spiritual guide, specifying moral and ethical codes for behavior modification and conformity. Disobedience to the moral codes is disobedience to the gods (Wiredu, 1980, p. 6). Its importance can be depicted in several parts of the Igbo society. *Omenala* describes a spiritual source of inherited customs and values shared by every Igbo community which is traditionally passed from generation to generation. Advice and guidance can be received in numerous ways,

for example through dreams, prayers, relatives, or even by encounters in nature. Basically, it reflects a spiritual view of life and is believed to connect the kingdom of the dead with the realm of the living.

According to the Igbo belief system, death is not equal to the end of existence. Each person is believed to have a spiritual aura that will assume another shape of existence after the individual has passed away. However, it is also believed, that only an individual who lived a pious life will be able to access the spiritual land of one's ancestors from where the soul of a person is still able to influence the earthly life of the surviving dependants:

The living-dead are bilingual; they speak the language of men, with whom they lived until 'recently', and they speak the language of the spirits and of God [...] They are the 'spirits' with which African peoples are most concerned: it is through the living-dead that the spirit world becomes personal to men. They are still part of their human families, and people have personal memories of them (Mbiti, 1990, p. 82).

The centrality of 'Omenala' in every single Igbo community clearly reflects why many laws and regulations abide.

Unlike the western world, the above insights coincide with the idea of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" common in Asian religions. The "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" pose the basis of today's relationship between the republic of India and the People's Republic of China. On April 29, 1954 both countries signed the agreement (with exchange of notes) on trade and relationship between Tibet and India which also featured the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" for the first time in formal code. These principles support mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. It agrees on mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit, and finally, peaceful co-existence.

The idea of the principles was that, after the withdrawal of colonial forces, the then self-determined nations could engage into new international relationships following the code. The Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, once even stated that “if these principles were recognized in the mutual relations of all countries, then indeed, there would hardly be any conflict, and certainly, no war.” Later, the five principles were applied in a statement of ten principles in 1995 at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, emphasizing the thought of great potential of post-colonial nations even further.

There are those who say that the five principles were firstly proclaimed by the Indonesian nationalist leader, Sukarno, in June 1945 – four years before the country reached independence. Unfortunately, there are also stories of failure to the five principles. China adopted them in their agenda, developed them into the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” and introduced them to the negotiations between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of India concerning the territory confrontation of Aksai Chin, largely known as South Tibet and India. After expiration of the bi-lateral treaty, the Sino-Indian War broke loose. Nonetheless, the five principles found application in the 1970s as important factor for the relation between China and India and has been adopted as the main principles for guidance.

2.8. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2

In this chapter, an attempt was made to analyze the concept of spirituality, spiritual guide, spiritual disciple, and the notion of a personhood in African worldview. This chapter attempted to portray African as a general body while singling out Igbo as ethnic group in Africa. The Igbo’s understanding of what makes a man as well as the significance of the commonly shared system of values and customs, ‘Omenala’ were covered. Similarity to other religions is found in the

representation of man as the coronation of creation, who is superior to all other beings in the world. Moreover, it is agreed upon that every person consists of both body and soul. While the body represents the physical component of a person, the soul, as the mental component, is meant to reflect the man's personality. However, there is disagreement about the exact relationship between the body, the soul, and the spirit, that is assumed to be the third component by some philosophers. Therefore, different approaches were focused on trying to explain the nature of the soul and the triangle. In connection with this, a person's 'Chi' that is closely linked to the relationship of body and soul plays an important role in respect of the spiritual part of the Igbo society. 'Chi' reflects the destiny of a person and can only be influenced by the God 'Chukwu' (Ocholor, 2003). When dealing with the Igbo society and its spiritual ideology, it should be emphasized that a community spirit predominates the fellowship. As the patriarchs pose as teachers or mentors in the subject of Igbo customs and traditions, it is ensured that the community develops for good, as only a faithful and obedient life pleases the spirits.

Nonetheless, the purpose of this chapter is to highlight and discuss in details the onus of Igbo spirituality and its undeniable positive impact on the outside world. It examines the contact of the Igbo world with external influences like colonialism and how this contact negatively impacted both the human and natural environment of the Igbos in particular, and Nigeria in general. It projects the positive values of the Igbo spirituality, especially environmental care and respect of the human person, as fundamental key to ensuring and achieving peaceful co-existence, thereby fostering the strong sense of solidarity needed for the common good - economic growth, progress, development of the community and the natural environment. The next chapter thus examines exclusively the Igbo approach to the spirituality.

CHAPTER 3

THE IGBO APPROACH TO SPIRITUALITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, Principe opinion was observed. He argued that spirituality incorporates various interconnected stages of developments in human socialization processes and religious affinity (Principe, 1983, pp. 127-141). This is why the interest here will be on what indeed makes up spirituality for the Igbo man. Since what counts as spirituality for the westerner vary indeed from what counts as spirituality in the judgment of the Igbo man, it becomes vital to specifically re-visit the Igbo approach to spirituality. This chapter will take a cursory look at the general information on Igbo people to enhance a better understanding of their spirituality, their identity as well as their belief system.

3.2 THE IGBO PERCEPTION OF SPIRITUALITY

Igbos, a major ethnic group in Nigeria, make their home in the south-eastern part of the country. Their territorial division covers the whole area from the coastline of the Bight of Benin, to the outskirts of the Ibibio and Efik territories in the East with its Eastern boundary being formed by the Cross River. On the Southern and Western sides, it stretches to the borders of the Ijaw, Jekri, Igado and other ethnic groups and then spreads across the Niger to the confines of Benin (Nnoruka, 2009, p.176).

According to Otternberg, Igbos constitute more than two hundred independent territorial groups composed of one or more villages or dispersed residential groupings. These groups are

organized on the basis of patrilineal clans and lineages. Even though their culture in most cases resemble, diversity of culture could be found among the various groups (Otternberg, 1975 p 130). Some writers claimed that Igbos belong to the Sudanic linguistic group of the Kwa division. The main characteristics of their language are its tonality, the monosyllabic root-words and an absence of inflexional endings (Arinze, 2008, p.2). Arinze further made a remarkable synthesis of the Igbo economy as a well as their system of government thus:

The Igbo are strong, tolerant, competitive and ultra-democratic. They believe in hard work and are skilled in commerce. The Igbo are unique among the other peoples of Nigeria in the decentralization of political authority in Igboland in the past. While the Yoruba had their mighty Oba and the Fulani their powerful Emirs, the Igbo's greatest political organization was often the town, village-group or commune. Only Onitsha and some towns had their Obi or kings, but the influence of these rulers was limited. Hence, there is a saying: Igbo enwero eze (Igbo have no kings) (Arinze 2008 p.12).

Religion has a prominent place in the life of Igbo people and hence their spirituality. Religion is the body of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendent Being . Arinze (2008) thus elaborates Igbo traditional religion in the light of this definition. He states: "Since every religion comprises beliefs, rites, and laws (dogma, worship and moral), the division of this treatment will be threefold: a. Objects of beliefs, b. Cult and c. Morality".

The objects of belief for Igbo people are God, non-human spirit and the ancestors. Fundamentally, the Igbo spirituality is anchored on the principle of Supreme God otherwise known as *Chukwu* or *Chineke* who lives in the sky. He is the creator of both the sky and the earth. His two messengers are the sun and the moon. The Igbos also have strong belief in the existence of non-human spirits. Non-human spirits are commonly represented symbolically with visible objects of the world such as the sun, moon, rivers, trees, thunder-jolts, hills, earth, et cetera. Earth, according to Arinze, is revered most in Igbo eco-thoughts as both the mother and the protector of the community; otherwise known as 'Ani' the earth goddess (Arinze 2008 p. 22).

All these could be viewed as the root of the Igbo culture. They also point to the fact that Igbos interact with physical and metaphysical realities around them.

The traditional Igbo perspective on reality and how it is perceived can be described as follows: The world consists of two parts which are interrelated to each other; the heavens, called *Eluigwe*, and the earth, called *Elu-Uwa*. The first describes the house of gods, benevolent and all-mighty being with his messengers. The latter is the host to other created beings like humans, trees, rivers, animals, et cetera. These two realms Heaven and Earth form a single reality that make up the world in Igbo spirituality. According to Nwala, the gods and other created beings interact in their different abodes. The gods abode is *Ala mmuo*. And human abode or the earth is *Ala mmadu* (Nwala, 1985, p. 30). In his writings, Metuh explains:

All beings known to African worldviews belong to either worlds - the visible world (*Ala mmadu*), and the invisible world (*Ala mmuo*). The invisible world is made up of the heavenly realm, said to be the home of the creator and deities; and the spirit land; the home of the ancestors (Metuh, 1992, p. 51).

Among Igbos, it is believed that deceased ancestors are still able to participate and to influence daily family life. This can exemplarily be perceived as natural phenomena. Besides, the Supreme Being is said to stay in interaction with every other creatures in their different types and forms. For that reason, Nwala observed that it is difficult to strictly distinguish the natural from the spiritual since both are in constant communication and also share common relationship as a single entity (Nwala, 1985, pp. 31-34).

According to the Igbo belief system, death is not equal to the end of existence. Dying is part of every individual's life cycle and, similar to beliefs in Buddhism, each person is believed to have a spiritual aura that will assume another shape of existence after the individual has passed away. However, it is also believed, that only individuals who lived a pious life are able to

access the spiritual land of one's ancestors from where the soul of a person is still able to influence the earthly life of the surviving dependents.

The home of the ancestors is regarded as an ideal model of how to live a good life on earth (Nwala, 1985, p.34). The Igbo understanding of living a good simple life is closely linked to 'Omenala', the conjunction of traditions, customs, values, regulations, and religious beliefs. Hence, 'Omenala' symbolizes a key part of reference in moral discrepancies common in Igbo land (Ekennia, 2000, p.166). It was described by Edeh as a comprehensive order of existence that is in line with nature and with the changing realities of our world. It encompasses all realities and perceived realities and provides a natural guide to way of life and social expectations (Edeh, 1985, p. 59).

However, Osuji describes the system of values and tradition as people's reaction to the perceived beliefs, customs, dos and don'ts, et cetera that were handed down from one generation to another as ancestral legacies (Osuji, 1978, p. 25). The importance of 'Omenala' can be depicted in several parts of the Igbo society. It can be seen as spiritual source of inherited customs and values shared by every Igbo community. Therefore, it is of supreme importance to preserve 'Omenala' which is part of the spiritual self-perceiving of the Igbo society:

It becomes the means by which traditional Igbo society enforces conformity. Culturally speaking, it is the means by which the ethics of the society is measured so that the values of society are furthered from one generation to another [...] harmony and equilibrium are in this way maintained simply by observing the well-known customary way of behaviour because 'Omenala' is derived from the guardian spirit of 'Ala', the earth god and sanctified by the ancestors. It is religious in nature although it fulfils social, moral, and cultural sanctions (Ilogu, 1974, p. 23).

When dealing with 'Omenala,' it is undeniable to think about the role of nature, which is meant to be the source of human cultural values and behavior. The highest achievement and desirable duty of an Igbo is to live in equilibrium with nature and to act responsibly and respectfully

towards all creatures in the cosmos. The concept of ‘Omenala,’ as the collective spirituality in Igbo cosmology, is clearly outlined in the Igbo spiritual guide. For that reason, it is inevitable to take the Igbos’ traditional norms into account when dealing with African Religion. This very Igbo spirituality has its main principle on the concept of chi.

3.3 ‘CHI’ IN THE IGBO SPIRITUALITY

Among the Igbo people, the Chi theory has raised much controversy. Igbo people have many concepts of what Chi is in their worldview. Some of these variant opinions, although diversified in approach but unified in principle, point only to an aspect of the concept of Chi. Adibe remarked on the Igbo belief on Chi and their variations thus: “Igbo people regard Chi principle as providential (beneficial), magnanimous (generous), dexterous (competent and skillful), ubiquitous (ever-present) and collaborative (providing understanding and mutual trust)” (Adibe, 2009, p. 66). Others include Chi as good and bad, Chi as Intellect (Ako na Uche), Chi as destiny (Akala aka), Chi as Fate, et cetera.

In many cases, these conceptions border on Igbo belief of predestination. The thesis of determinism has its core idea that everything is fully determined. This theory proposes that man is packaged into the earth to be packaged back to the spirit world at death without any active contribution from man (Adibe, 2009, p.82). The Igbo belief system on Chi touches on all that make Igbo human person what he/she is. Thus, all Igbo human success or failure is alluded to him – Ebe onye dalu ka Chi ya kwatulu ya (where one has fallen, there one’s guardian spirit struck one down), onye kwe, chi ya ekwe (if one agrees, one guardian spirit agrees). It is necessary to have a brief look at these conceptions due to the brevity of this research as it would enhance the Igbo understanding of spirituality. The existence of Chi can be that of success or

failure in Igbo land. The good chi is believed to be the creator of heaven and earth while the ajo Chi is responsible for bad phenomena or unfavorable occurrences (Ilogu, 1974, pp.34-38).

The great God (Chi-ukwu) is believed to be the author of heaven and earth who makes animal and plant lives grow. As the source of human life, he gives to each man at the time of his birth, that particular portion of divine being called Chi. Man is believed to be created by Chi-ne-ke, the creator, God who also is the Great Spirit. Whatever abilities, good or bad fortunes, success, failures or weakness possessed by any person is accredited to his or her Chi. Thus, children from the same family can have different types of Chi. Because individual Chi differs, every man is expected to prove of what kind his own Chi is, by various economic and social activities. This is the background of the strong achievement motivation said to be possessed by Igbo people. Although the endowment of one's Chi may be small and inauspicious, it is believed that a person through medicine, prayer and sacrifice, especially sacrifice to ancestors, can finish his/her life more successfully than his/her Chi originally intended. But, if after all such efforts have been expounded and the person finally ends ignominiously, then his/her colleagues would acknowledge that he/she had tried but his/her Chi had not helped him/her much.

Bonevac and Philips observed that the human history changed from cosmogenesis to Christogenesis with the advent of Christianity. Lord Bhuddha gave birth to the spirituality of Buddhism while Prophet Muhammed is the progenitor of Islam and its spirituality (Bonevac and Philips, 1993, pp. 238-306). Additionally, the unique background underscored in Igbo spiritual cosmology is recognized in this study. Anyiwo observed that:

The basis of Igbo Spirituality is the concept of "Chi." Similar to the "Ori" of the Yoruba, and the "Ka" of Ancient Egyptians, Chi was the fundamental force of creation. Everyone and everything has a Chi. Ndi Igbo, like other Africans, worshipped one Creator, who is known by many names: Obasi Dielu (The Supreme God), Chi di ebere (God the

merciful), Odenigwe (The Ruler of Heavens), etc. The two most popular names for Supreme Being used in Alaigbo were Chukwu and Chineke. The dominant name, Chukwu, which is a combination of the Igbo words “Chi” and “Ukwu”, literally means “The Big Chi”. Consequently, this shows that Igbo believed that the Supreme Being was omnipresent and all-pervading. Chineke, which most people translate as “God the Creator” actually has a deeper meaning. Chi is the masculine aspect of God and Eke is the feminine aspect. Ndi Igbo knew that it took male and female to create life. As such, the Creator of everything would have to encompass both parts (Anyiwo, 2013).

It can be assumed that the main objective of living the way of Igbo spirituality is to live in harmony with one’s ‘Chi’ and the surrounding environment. The relation to God is not a one-way with God being the supreme and undisputed being. It is interdependence; God is supreme but under a certain control of the mere man, like master and puppet. He is meant to serve the Igbo people’s interest in any way and therefore can be described as a “puppet god” (Onunwa, 1994, pp. 251-2). Ijiomah argued that an average Igbo man prays for his requests to be granted by god (Ijiomah, 2005, pp. 81-90). The final thought on the interconnection between god and believer is the prompting and inspiration of living a good life or, more specifically, living a spiritually grounded life in harmony and respect to Igbo’s beliefs. The concept of ‘Chi’ can be compared to the Christian belief about Christ who will serve and assist those who lived a faithful and pious life and will grant them absolution on judgment day. Similar to Christ, ‘Chi’ is to judge whether a person will be granted access to eternal life through reincarnation or will be condemned forever. Okeke pointed out:

It is in fact his Chi who has full authority from God to protect and guide him to negotiate and intercede on his behalf. Whenever this relationship is fractured usually by evil doing and pursuit of one’s free will outside the guidance of his Chi, one locks his Chi away from his affairs (Okeke, 2005).

According to Ekennia, every single person is in possession of ‘Chi’, which is meant to give personal spiritual guidance through life determination of one’s destiny:

Chi gives each person infinite possibilities to realize himself in the community and this personalized inner force in each individual, is always in harmony with the person. When

the person acquires mastery of himself or has attained certain self-knowledge, he examines the inner force and becomes fully in control of any situation. It is at this point that the Igbo say “Onye kwe, Chi ya ekwe” (Ekennia, 2000, p. 154).

Accordingly, the Igbo person sees his ‘Chi’ as the main driver and the reason for personal success or failure in life. Additionally, there seems to be a portion of predestination to everyone’s life since there will always be moments of failure despite great effort and determination by the person. He then considers himself unlucky (onye Chi ojoo) while outsiders consider him to be lucky and with good ‘Chi’ (onye Chi oma) (Mozia, 1982, p. 184). The Igbos share a common understanding or knowledge of God as ‘Chukwu’ with his spirits and ancestors. This belief is the reason for the Igbo people’s strong and inseparable relation to God and the other people which also spreads across non-Igbos. Mozia alleges thus:

Each individual has a unique bond with God because he possesses his unique ‘Chi’, the guiding spirit which assists him to make such a relationship possible [...] consequently; his religious commitment to this one God creates a personal bond between him and other members of the human community. But because of the special ontological dimension of solidarity with the members of the ‘umunna community’ which includes the ancestors, he feels himself is specially bond to this community. From the religious point of view, he believes that God is responsible for creating such an ontological bond and consequently, he feels religiously committed in a particular way to this community (Mozia, 1982, p. 212).

The described perception of religious affiliation is another dimension of Igbo spirituality. The relationship of Igbo believers to their gods is very practical. To every need of the Igbo man, there are many gods which care for the people’s needs. Nevertheless, it is crucial to be aware of the specific duties and tasks of each single god. If, for example, a god fails in his area of responsibility he will be demoted from his level of divine reverence. This conceptual notion is also embodied in the proverb “Ikenga adizighi ire, añaa ya oku” – “If one’s god is no longer active, it will be burnt to ashes.” Despite their deep faith and religiousness, the Igbo people otherwise think and act very practical and utilitarian. Since they traditionally pose an agricultural

culture, it is believed that their respect to Igbo deities strengthens the agricultural performance and financial success in order to satisfy one's needs (Ocholor, 2003). Consequently, most activities in life are directed to succeed in agricultural activities.

God or, respectively, the gods are the reason and source of justice, certainty, and direction in Igbo people's lives. That belief can be found in a material, mystical and moral overtone in all relationships with people and spirits alike. Any negative elements such as disorderliness, commotion, moral decadence and other abominable things or evils are to be avoided since they hinder the society from progress and living a good life and have to be solved beforehand. Spirituality can only flourish upon human and non-human realms whereas non-human spirits are considered mediators between the humans and 'Chukwu':

There are so many spirits in existence among Igbo people, and these are often the personifications of the natural phenomena; these are spirits of rivers, hills, farms, and lightening. The four days of the Igbo week are also personified. There are spirits of destiny of the household and destiny. Most of these spirits are local, but some, for example, Ani – the earth spirit, are almost universally worshipped throughout Igboland (Arinze, 2008, pp. 22-3).

It is rather logical to think that humans are lesser in status than spirits in Igbo spirituality. This should be premised on the conviction that they (spirits) are God's divine messengers. Igbos believe that one's "Chi" which acts as individual's guard, even though it cannot be seen, must be held in high esteem since in their hands lie the blessings and the fate of their wards. Supporters of the traditional Igbo religion argue that there is a significant difference between 'Chukwu' and 'Chi' and so there is no mutual level of spiritual reverence. 'Chi' is considered to be a creation by 'Chukwu' and so he is inferior to him. A common Igbo saying sums it up in the statement *Chukwu kere gi, kere Chi gi*; meaning that God is the creator of humans and also assigns lesser gods to guide them. According to Igbos' belief, everybody has such a personal guardian spirit

and it is commonly considered to be responsible for overseeing the person's daily activities and accompanying him wherever he or she moves. The Igbo man values his spirit by praying to him and asking him to speak in his favor to 'Chukwu' expecting his 'Chi' to prevent and avert unpleasant situations. Usually, the man's 'Chi' is blamed for failing to do so: "Eh! Chi m egbuo m," which in means that one's Chi has disappointed him or her by not mediating for his or her needs to God the creator (Arinze, 2008, pp. 22-24).

When seeking justice, Igbos are very strict and commonly ask the accused to swear to a specific spirit. Arinze points out that, in serious incidents, the defendant probably chooses a strong spirit to swear to, one who has the reputation of acting swiftly without wasting time in getting at the offenders (Arinze, 2008, pp. 55-6). Besides, spirits are not visible to the human eye and bear super human powers to support or impair people. In his view on the African traditional religions, Meek argued that there is no clear distinction between law and religion since the basic moral and legal injunctions derive from the gods (Meek, 1940, p. 20). By acting out strong legal sentences and sanctions, the spirits maintain the law and order within the society. This way an ethical guide for Igbo people is formed. The Igbo people worship their gods and spirits in consequence of their fear of being punished by them. So, they live a faithful and morally true life to avoid such punishment.

Additionally, injustice is loathed in Igbo spirituality. Though, they are still skeptical about their future and what might happen down the road. Hence, they make sure they are keeping with the gods and are in their favor by living a lifestyle that pleases the deities. Moreover, Igbos have the assumption that subjects living upright in the society are rewarded by peace and serenity. They do not need to be afraid of harm by the gods or fellow humans since they are

blessed. Such blessing is reflected by agricultural success such as large farm productions and livestock and, by conquest, in battles and wars.

Igbo communities often have town-hall meetings or socio-cultural clubs which are platforms to address socio-environmental subjects concerning the people. These meetings help the community members to cope with their struggles in life and furthermore, they generate solidarity throughout the society. Hence, "*The oma di gi na obi mere ndi obodo* - Good mind is reflected in good gestures". Common good is a collective duty expected of every member of Igbo community to encourage and practice. It is the duty of the community leaders in Igbo spirituality and also the duty of the general members of the same community to safeguard their community against destructive aliens and other harms or danger. The community is formed by the habits of simply existing, living and acting together as one in a union with others. Though, traditional Igbo philosophy reads that a person is rational and social due to his social behavior, the community does not condition him. He retains his freedom of will and action but all actions have to be in line with the functional matrix of society and coincide with the ethical obligations, rights, and privileges of others in the environment. Hence, that way of living in a community has to subsist. Deism determines almost every step in the life of an Igbo. Thus, the fear of the spirit of thunder, 'Amadioha', contributes to a generally peaceful coexistence within the community.

Besides, the spirit 'Ani' together with other ancestral spirits shall protect those communities that live in sincerity, against moral, social, and environmental hazards. Hence, these gods are considered special guardians of morality. Unlike in modern Igbo societies, where a western lifestyle has increasingly established itself, in a traditional Igbo community, elderly people are accorded with esteem reverence for the status they enjoy due to age, and more

importantly, because they are considered as closer to their ancestors by old age factor. It goes to suggest also the Igbo cosmology is anthropocentric.

3.4 THE IGBO ANTHROPOLOGY vis-à-vis IGBO SPIRITUALITY

The major issue of value has been addressed by Rolston, who examined the origins of life and the order of the cosmos and accredited them to god, whilst he made room for the intertwined relationships of metaphysics, science, and religion (Lehr, 2011), Weir stated that: “Our planetary crisis is one of spiritual information: not so much about sustainable development, certainly not escalating consumption, but using the earth with justice and charity. Science cannot take us there, religion perhaps can” (Jack, 2001, p. 263). When discussing the grasp of Igbo anthropology and spirituality in the narrower sense, one has to consider the natural world as a supernatural religious reality. However, there is no relation to pantheism. God has to be viewed as the Supreme Being that ensures order and harmony within the natural world. Among Igbos, God is called ‘Chukwu Okike’. The Igbos believe that law and order governs the entire human world, and these laws are fixed and natural in most cases. Any tampering with the natural order of things in the world could result in disharmony and chaos.

Religious belief and faith are pointed to the natural world with all its complexities. The whole universe is constantly expanding infinitely with its components (Davies, 1984, p. 4). The illogicality of reality has since been theorized by Einstein and Schroeder (Schroeder, 2001, p. 87). This transcendent realm is what many religions refer to as “God” and, as Rolston alludes; religion is supernatural by context and content. Religion permeates human activities in such a way that gives credence to its deep essence of sacred expression (Rolston, 2006, p. 377). Rolston’s diverse knowledge on world spirituality has revealed significant gaps that exist

between biological and ethical realities as a hallmark for human's sole responsibility in guiding and controlling the natural world, since it is the humans who possess the rationality to bring nature under reasonable control (Rolston, 1995, p. 2). For Rolston, intelligibility is constant among all forms of life, although, humans are the only one endowed with self-consciousness and capable of rational thought. According to Rolston, especially nature is dependable, unified, and intelligible (Rolston, 2003, p. 18). Human culture is interconnected to its environment and ecology, lying within the matrix of nature. Culture is nurtured by nature and therefore cannot exist without it. Consequently, mankind is also depending on all elements of nature which may include the wind, water, sun, rocks, oxygen, trees, even animals and microorganisms, et cetera, for attached survivability purposes. This reality is the position of deep ecology. The latter underscores the importance of close relationship shared by humans and their ecological neighbors which they see as one in a collective natural order. The universe is guided by rule of nature; the latter which in turn is guided by the knowledge and the cultural realities unique to the community (Rolston, 1988, p. 3).

History provides direction, horizon, and scale for moral issues concerning the conservation and distribution of resources (Rolston, 1988, p. 7). The area includes history and religion but is centered on the human being that still takes its part in the diverse masses of biological life forms even though it is superior in intelligence. Since humans are dependent on their environment, they are bound to it through the process of social ecology. Social ecology defines the type of interactions humans share together in relation to their natural environment for the purpose of sustenance and advancement (Rolston, 2003, p. 515). This relationship between the people and the environment, and the results from interactions are what form ethical dimensions known as environmental ethics - leading to moral responsibility of caring for earth

and conserving it. Rolston expands human duties and responsibilities beyond their fellow humans to the natural world as a whole. He argues that inherent values are about duties:

Duties arise to individual animals and plants that are produced as loci of intrinsic value within the system [...] These duties to individuals and species, so far from being in conflict with duties to ecosystems, are duties towards its products and headings. The levels differ, but, seen at depth, they integrate. Perhaps on some occasions, duties to the products will override duties to the system that produced them; but-apart from humans who live in culture as well as in nature - this will seldom be true (Rolston, 1988, p. 118) .

Rolston affirmed that individuals who enjoy higher biological assortment should be guided by the instrumental values that will ensure sustainability and growth (Rolston, 2003, p. 459), in order to secure their environment. In line with this, Ramose found out that:

The concept of harmony in African thought is comprehensive in the sense that it conceives balance in terms of the totality of the relations that can be maintained between human beings themselves as well as between human beings and physical nature. On this reasoning, the quest for harmony and balance is the striving to maintain a comprehensive but specific relational condition among organisms and entities (Ramose, 1999, p.125).

Rationality is the key trait of human existence. It inclines to the pure idea of survival and avoidance of destruction as the human nature. In this trait, a human is connected to nature in the mutual way of preservation and sustainability. By indigenous ethics and from nature, the human role is characterized by a life of goodness in behavior and actions. Omoregbe identified some traits like obedience, hospitality, humility, civic responsibility, discipline, respect, et cetera as such actions and behaviors (Omoregbe, 1993, p.139). Since Igbos aim to live in communion with nature, they admittedly use the resources of the earth for agriculture, health and food, growth and development of their community, but do not lay claim to any land.

In addition, the Igbos see themselves less as an individual than as a group, so the community is a central theme in the life of an Igbo ('I-We Relationship'). Community life mainly encompasses living and working together within the community (Zvobgo, 1979, pp. 934).

As written by Ramose:

[...] to be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others, and on that basis, establish humane relations with them. Accordingly, it is both understood as being human (humanness/humanity) and having a humane (respectful and polite) attitude towards other human beings which constitute the core or central meaning of the aphorism; *motho ke motho ka batho*. Neither the single individual nor the community can define and pursue their respective purposes without recognizing their mutual foundedness; their complementarity. Wholeness is the regulative principle here since what is asserted is that the single individual is incomplete without the other (Ramose, 1999, p. 140).

As already described in previous sections, community meetings are held at regular intervals, during which important topics concerning the municipality are discussed and made decisions are even spread to the world outside of the community. To this, Peterson opined that:

Any African environmental ethic rests on the same base that supports all African traditions - that of communalism. In Africa, the community is imbued with certain bondedness. Bondedness entails respect, which in turn entails taking responsibility for one's fellow human beings, not as an atomized individual, but as a member of the common fabric of life (Peterson, 2008, p. 169).

It can be said that community existence is of central importance not only for Igbos, but also for other African people. Thus the idea of time in Igbo society needs to be given an attention.

3.5 THE NOTION OF TIME IN THE IGBO SYSTEM

Practically, the place of time in the spirituality of the Igbo is so significant that no aspect of the people's spiritual, economic, or even traditional exercise was done independent of time. For instance, some rituals like purification ritual, kola nut ritual, initiation ceremony, puberty stage with its rituals among others are reckoned with time in every Igbo society. These exert influences on the environment as they constitute the people's value system. For Africans, time or periods are of great importance. This is because all the traditional festivals and events that mark the Igbo spirituality are defined and exercised to suit such events. Descriptively, time in the African context wears a different mask for it greatly consists of the present, past, and future. Augustine described time thus:

It is not properly said that there are three times: past, present, and future. Perhaps, it might be said rightly that there are three times: a time present of things past; a time present of things present; and a time present of things in future. The time present of things past is memory; the time present of things present is direct experience; the time present of things future is expectation (Confessions, 11, XX).

The following paragraph underscores how Igbos understand time and its impact in Igbo spirituality. Among the indigenous people, time is highly dependent to specific events that happened in the past, the present, and the future. In order to better understand the Igbo concept of time, it is undeniable to take into account the various festivals and celebrations of the Igbo culture and how they are projected.

The Igbos' understanding of time can be said to be bilateral. Time has both individual and collective connotations. On the one hand, the individual approach determines one's role in a specific period of one's life and how the person engages his or her self with the community's objective. This, for instance, can be depicted in the Igbo segmentation of stages of life like childhood, adolescence, et cetera. The collective understanding of time in Igbo spirituality bothers on the community's collective goals. The individual is a final product of his environment, and as such, cannot be bigger than his community. The individual's survivability is chiefly dependent on the community's general welfare and values. And thus, the communal approach of time also encompasses spirituality.

The Igbos emphasize time and its relevance to their spirituality. They have four market days which make up the week "Izu" in Igbo weekly calendar. The four market days are Eke, Orié, Afo and Nkwo. These market days are relevant to time and events in Igbo religious spirituality. Seven market days "Izu asaa" make up a month in Igbo calendar. Sharing the western view that time is in continuous flux, the Igbos hold that "echi anaghi agwu agwu" – tomorrow does not end. This is a way of saying that the future is certain and everlasting and it

goes with hope for better things yet to come. Counting time with moon appearances in Igbo cosmology suggests that hope must be alive in spite of difficulties. Situation or condition may take a negative turn but the moon in the dark skies signifies illumination of hope for better days. Therefore, Igbos do not necessarily count days and nights as numbers but as a significant reality in Igbo spirituality that embodies hope for better days ahead.

Notwithstanding, the Igbo have a bilateral notion of time; they fix their periodic activities at different seasons to mark some major events. Traditional practices such as new yam festival, town dedication and annual meetings are fixed in different special periods. Under the assumption that any change is causing either positive or negative effects, there is always a need to constantly assess the welfare and development of the emerging communities. One cannot be certain that the Igbo concept of time is universally practiced in Africa, but that a similar concept applies to almost all African municipalities. It is to be noted that Igbos' concept of time covers economic, political and religious realities in Igbo spirituality. Hence, God is central to all that the Igbos do.

3.6 GOD IN THE TRADITIONAL IGBO BELIEF SYSTEM

Traditionally, Igbos believe in a combination of forces that give rise to a supernatural being superior to all other beings. It is the basis for the origin of terminologies like “Chi-ukwu”, “Olisa-ebuluwa”, as well as “Onye-Okike”. In Igbo belief, the “Igbo Being” will sustain all other beings. For Edeh, the conviction and belief in life after death, re-incarnation events, and other spiritual realities that manifest in one way or another as acknowledged in Igbo spirituality, is a proof that a Supreme Being is responsible for the order in the universe:

The earth did not endow herself with the power of fertility; otherwise, she would not need the force of other elements. Whence, then, comes the earth's power of fertility. Here, the Igbo make a spontaneous leap prompted by reason of a super human power [...] That

super human, super sensible power is the Igbo God, Chukwu, the ultimate foundation of all beings [...] the author of existence and all forms of life (Edeh, 1985, p. 16).

The notion that other forms of life, including the lesser beings, are under the control of a Supreme Being is central to Igbo spiritual cosmology. The Supreme Being is responsible for all life, including the individual's destiny. It is this conviction that prompts the great reverence and worship to God in Igbo spirituality (Mbiti, 1970, p. 8).

According to Arinze, the God of the Igbos is an almighty and omniscient god (Arinze, 2008, p.18). Although, this Supreme Being bears the name 'Chukwu', it is also known by three different names, which portray the dimensional functions of 'Chukwu': 'Chi-ukwu' represents the Great Spirit that is superior to all other spirits. The spirit of creation is personified by 'Chineke' who is responsible for the genesis out of nothingness. Additionally, the title 'Oseburuwa' also suggests that the Supreme Being controls all earthly activities including the living and non-living realities (Arinze, 2008, p.15).

The local names for these supreme beings are often picked on the basis of the Igbo people's apprehended relationships and deeds between humans and gods as an expression of their spirituality. Noticeable is that 'Chukwu' symbolizes the Supreme Being, that is superior to all other spirits Igbos believe in. Besides, Arinze emphasizes that there are three entities which are part of the Igbo's traditional belief system: The God (Chukwu), the non-human spirits, and the ancestors (Arinze, 2008, p.15).

The above mentioned 'Chukwu' is impossible to be worshipped directly by humans, hence Igbos are required to send their prayers to the inferior spirits which act as intermediaries between human beings and 'Chukwu' (Arinze, 2008, p. 18). Abanuka summarizes the perception of the universe by the view of Igbos and noted the existence of the two worlds, "uwa ndi di ndu"

(land of the living) and “uwa mmuo” (land of the dead ancestors). While ‘uwa nke a’ distinguishes the world of the living, ‘ala mmuo’ describes the land of the non-human spirits of deities and ancestors (Abanuka, 2004, pp. 70-81). This suggests that the Igbo notion of God is polytheistic. In “*Things Fall Apart*,” Chinua Achebe aptly described the Igbo notion of God:

We make sacrifices to the little gods, but when they fail and there is no one else to turn to, we go to Chukwu. It is right to do so. We approach a great man through his servants. But when his servants fail to help us, then we go to the last hope. We appear to pay greater attention to the little gods, but that is not so. We worry them more because we are afraid to worry their master. Our fathers knew that Chukwu was the overlord and that is why many of them gave their children the name Chukwuka (Achebe, 2008, pp. 143-4).

From the above-mentioned literature, it can be inferred that African spirituality is centered on the worship of one Supreme Being who delegates powers to lesser gods in different capacities to control the affairs of humans and the natural world. The high valuation of life and the avoidance of evil can be observed on all beings, humans and non-humans. It is therefore considered to be an ecologically inherent element of nature (More, 1986, pp. 5-7).

Thus, the social stability among Igbos attracts their respective forces mainly from the Igbo belief system embedded in their spirituality. This equilibrium helps in promoting peaceful coexistence in the land of Igbos. Their concept of religion supposedly has similarities to the Aristotelian theory of Act and Potency: only God is a Supreme Being who is in “act”, whilst all other beings are in “potency” and merely contingent beings. It implies a certain unrenounceability of religion to Igbo life.

Consequently, the spirituality of the Igbos center on their belief system and religious practices such that the three levels are greatly intertwined and cannot be separated comfortably. As a result of the above, the social controls among the Igbos draw their respective forces mainly

from the Igbo belief system embedded in their spirituality. It helps in promoting peaceful co-existence in Igbo Land.

3.6.1 MUSIC

Music takes an important role among Igbos. The proverbial expression ‘uwa bu egwu na amu’ implies that, with ease and laughter, it is much easier to pass through the daily hurdles of life. Indeed, Igbos are so keen on music that they developed various distinct music instruments, among them the ‘Ugene’ (a whistle) and the ‘Ubo-Akwara’ (a guitar) (Njoku, 1990, p.152). Furthermore, music accompanies occasions like child naming, marriages, prayers, blessings, and other festivities. Also, dancing styles vary within the Igbo society and relate to events and groups. It is an integral part of all Igbo activities including the burial of a loved one. Through different songs and dance patterns, moods are expressed and tensions are released. Most especially wrestling which is one of main sports in Igbo tradition is always characterized by dance steps (Achebe, 2008, p.21). Thus, music connoted peace in a traditional Igbo society.

3.6.2 HEALING

Unique in Igbo culture is their understanding of ailments. Basically, every ailment in the Igbo culture has both physical and spiritual dimensions. And the process of healing must include the understanding of these dimensions. According to Adibe, there are mystical ritual practices that are commonly observed during healing process. The first is ‘iwa anya’. This is a form of examination into the spiritual dimension of the ailment. That is the ability to see beyond the presenting physical ailments. The second is ‘ima ogwu’ which is the ability to have the healing skills and to have knowledge of the herbs or cure. Another dimension is ‘igba ala’. This is the process of consulting the gods through divinations to further understand the ailment and to find best solutions for it (Adibe, 2008, pp. 95-96). The practice of healing in Igbo culture is all-

embracing and deep. Drugs or substances for healing are chiefly herbs and mixture of concoctions based on the healing knowledge of the traditional doctor. It is a common belief in Igboland that some persons are genetically gifted with the ability to heal ailments. Also, apprentices who are dedicated to learn healing methods from their masters also become experts in the field. The prospect of using natural substances in healing method is in line with the belief that mother nature has all the answers human seek. And there lies the spirituality of healing in Igbo cosmology. The earth gives life by yielding foods (including medicines obtained from tree roots, leaves and other herbs in the environment). Every form of ailment has its cause and effects and possible solutions in Igbo spirituality. Ailments with no possible solutions are usually ascribed to fate. Sometimes sacrifices are made to the gods for answers in cases such as barrenness or famine due to aridity of the soil. This also points to the peaceful nature of Igbo society because since sickness demonstrates sadness and a situation of unrest, the entire Igbo community will do all within its power to make sure that the sick member is cured with mostly herbs that are medicinal. Here the instrumental value of the nature is invoked. Thus the entire family unit is at alert.

3.6.3 FAMILY STRUCTURES

It is claimed that the deep and systematical integration of Igbo belief into the family structure contributes to the family's stability. In Igbo culture, the concept of family is mostly communal. Hence polygamy is a common practice alongside monogamy. The family structure gives credence to the collectivist Igbo society. The individual is the product of the community and not just a daughter or son of his father or mother respectively. Emphasis is placed on collective ownership of the individual. And no individual is bigger or lesser than another. Igbos share a common ancestral heritage. 'Umunna' is a collective symbolic knowledge that Igbos are

from one father. ‘Nwanne’ or ‘Nwanna’ is usually used both as greeting and a reminder that Igbos are brothers and sisters in spite of different families which they belong to. The concept of family in Igboland is also sacred. One must never forget where he or she comes from. Every family is an extension of peace and sacredness. When there is peace in the families, there is progress and happiness. Peace and harmony is usually encouraged in the families and this is summarized in the Igbo adage: “*A na esi n’ulo mara mma were puta na ezi*”. In other words, a peaceful society is a good reflection of peaceful homes that make up the society. Sometimes, gods are even called to settle differences that might cause communal clashes, whereas the communities appreciate the benevolence of the gods with hard work. Nwankwo said:

A lot has been done to discredit the worship and belief systems of the Igbo in its entirety so as to make the easy assimilation of our people into other people’s practices and religious philosophies. Everything has been done to erase our belief system from the face of the earth but whether this is the right thing to do at this time when every group is desirous of making its heritage available to the world as its contribution to the development of religion, philosophy, occultism, science and for general understanding of the environment in which we dwell, is a matter for posterity to pass judgment on the Igbo (Nwankwo, 1987, ix).

Nwankwo describes the importance of spirituality and religion within an Igbo family. It is true that there are illogicalities and forms of disbelief and criticisms in the Igbo’s spiritual system. Nonetheless, it has a place in the history books. Contradiction to this attitude arises from the direct comparison of Igbo religion to other religions and the consequential reveals of their contradictions, strengths, and weaknesses. Usually, this is the case when Igbo spirituality is confronted with Christian religion. Consequently, what the western world consider evil is not necessarily evil in Igbo culture and eco-thought.

3.7 THE DILEMMA OF EVIL AMONG THE IGBOS

The reality of evil in the world has been a thought-provoking issue for the Igbo man especially in his practice of spirituality. For the westerner, the perennial challenge is how to reconcile the ambiguities that emanate from the knowledge that God who is all good and perfect is also the maker of that which is diabolic, evil and repugnant.

The perception of good and evil among Igbos differs from the definition of the western world that discerns good and evil being present at the same time and are mutually dependent. The Igbos, however, perceive evil as a force entering life from the outside world and being able to take two different kinds of shape: individual or communal. A famous Igbo proverb vividly describes that an offence committed by an individual will have an impact on the entire community: “otu aka luta mmanu, o zue oha onu”. For that reason, it is believed that offences against the Igbo gods, customs, laws, or fellow individuals will cause evil incidents like “nsoala” or “aru,” both meaning a taboo or abomination. Moreover, the Igbo beliefs categorize ‘evil’ into different classes, including physical evil like natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, landslides, et cetera) or moral evil. Also, certain abnormalities such as still births, barrenness, diseases, et cetera, could easily be attributed to evil forces (Edeh, 1985).

Even nowadays, the fear of evil is still present, so that Igbo people persistently adhere to specific rituals and prayers to propitiate the respective deity and ask for forgiveness if they had acted disrespectfully towards any creature. Faulkner conveys this sense of respect in his work when he opined that he had been fair, just and unbiased in his relation with other created things. His eco-thought mindset is exemplified in Igbo concept of good and bad. Faulkner claimed that he never denied even the birds of the sky their freedom of expressing their loyalty to the

Supreme Being (Faulkner, 2005, p.134). Faulkner's view represents the eco-feminism school of thought which argues that every creation must be accorded equal opportunity, privilege and freedom to express their unique given identities. So, to be free, you must not offend any creature in the universe and thus, any form of evil must be settled with the spirits.

3.8 THE MYSTICISM OF DEATH

The reality of death cannot be over emphasized, although its depth is shrouded in mysticism. In Africa, there is the common belief that death is not a definitive end, but a transition to another state of existence. At death, one rejoins his ancestors. It is from this perspective that one understands the funeral rites popularly practiced by the Igbos. The titled men drinking together in the compound of the deceased symbolize solidarity and peaceful co-existence with the ancestors through the deceased. This is particularly manifested by the act whereby one of the titled men (normally appointed by others) pours a good quantity of wine on the grave of the deceased asking him and the ancestors to drink them (Nnoruka, 2009, p. 216). In the African setting, death is normally a bad and sad thing, but for the Igbo it could be a good thing too. The kind of the death and what happens after it depends on the life the person has lived. If you lived a good life with relationships and you acted well you will have a good death because your life determines your death. A good funeral is important too and makes it easier to get a member of the ancestor's ritual. Death is a passage into the revered land of the dead and, as such, passage into this lofty abode is often regarded as a special moment. The dying person is expected to make peace with his dead ancestors as well as with the living at the point of death to guarantee a successful voyage into the bliss of the dead. In *Things Fall Apart*, the traditional importance of death is symbolically represented by the killing of the python:

They say that Okoli killed the sacred python, said one man. "It is false," said another. "Okoli told me himself that it was false." Okoli was not there to answer. He had fallen ill on the previous night. Before the day was over he was dead. His death showed that gods were still able to fight their own battles. The clan saw no reason then for molesting the Christians (Achebe, 2008, p. 129).

Some instance of death that could disturb the tranquility of the community like murder is highly forbidden in Igbo society. Thieves and burglars or people who died in case of a disease like leprosy will not be laid to rest accordingly. On the other hand, those who lived a good life and died a good death are expected to join their good ancestors and to re-incarnate in some cases for a second life. But those who lived a bad life are not welcomed. They are not allowed to come home to the spiritual world and as a result, it is believed that their unrest spirits are tormenting the living beings. Metuh declares:

Now you are big. Never be rude to anyone older than yourself, especially, not your mother, father's brother, and mother's sister. If you do this, your mother and father will die, and you will be poor [...] and no one will care for you. This is a very evil thing. You are big now! Do not do these things; to us Luguru, they are taboos. Never lay down with young girls. If you do, you will die (Metuh, 1987, p. 207).

The Igbos believe in the principle of "live and let live" which is very common in their socio-political engagements (Callicot, 1994, p. 172). The concept of live and let live is so pronounced in Igbo society to the extent that a stranger to Igboland is welcomed as long as they would not alter the traditional practices in the land. In situations where such practices must be altered, there would have been a superior logic or knowledge to unseat the status quo. However, whatever practices that are being introduced inter-culturally should meet the good noble standard practices inherent in Igbo spirituality. Such practices include respect for God and for the gods, and respect to the ancestors; respect for sacred places, et cetera. Other human values that must be observed include good conducts of morality and ethics, integrity, peaceful co-existence with neighbors, hardwork, and regards for the green environment or nature (Leopold, 1966, p. 240).

Another part of Igbo traditional belief about life after death is the concept of reincarnation. According to Igbo spirituality on death, reincarnation is the coming back to life of dead ancestors through the normal process of childbirth. Not every dead ancestor may be reincarnated. And there are criteria to enjoy the privilege of coming back to life. One of such criteria is how well and reputable one was in life before demise. Such reputation must be tied to a necessity in the family or community and coming back would mean to fill the gap that had been made upon demise (James, 1928, p. 131). For getting the acceptance to entering the ancestral world, they have to absolve these tasks. All these tasks are summarized in their traditional ethic (Achebe, 2008, pp. 98-117). It is also believed that ancestors who returned to the world of the living through reincarnation also exist in the world of the dead. Their coming back to life does not make them absent in the land of the dead. Rather through those whom they chose to reincarnate are remembered and venerated as ancestors. This also points to the fact that there are numerous challenges associated with the Igbo spirituality despite its good sides.

3.9 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH IGBO SPIRITUALITY

One of the main areas of criticism of Igbo Spirituality is that it made no room for criticism and logical discussions or debate. This is a basic weak point for African spirituality in general. And as such, some scholars have perceived African spirituality as archaic, harsh and lacking objectivity; hence the assimilation and association policies introduced by the French and British colonists respectively during the colonial periods. It is common among the Igbo society to ascribe talents, craftsmanship and industriousness to God, as a result, such exportable potentials are not maximized to the fullest nor rewarded. This self-limiting attitude is perhaps the reason science and technology is slowing not only in Igbo society but in Africa at large. It is a common sight in Igbo spirituality to relegate such human efforts like expertise and the human

inventive tendencies to the dictates of gods, thereby giving little or no room for logicity, crystallization and optimization. A usual, an Igbo artist will thank God for his skills, believing that the skills of his craftsmanship are guided by supernatural powers. The inability to be successful in life is attributed to bad fate or evil spirits, leaving no room again for scrutiny and self-evaluation.

As Ilogu observed, it is common in Igbo traditional society to blame the gods or other humans for one's incompetence. Sometimes, some avoidable misfortunes are believed to be bad lucks or in some cases seen as the will of the gods. Ilogu argued that these self-limiting tendencies necessitated the introduction of science and technology in the school curriculum starting from the primary education (Ilogu 1985, p. 94). The modern western achievements in the area of science and religion have impacted the African ideology in diverse ways both positive and negative. The exigency created by the loopholes identified above resulted in an unstable nature of African spirituality compared to the spirituality of the west which is built on relative systemization.

3.10 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3

This chapter presents an extensive literature review concerned broadly with the environment and the nature of Igbo spirituality in particular. It examines the conception of personhood, Igbo understanding of time, the notion of God, evil, ancestors, death, family structure and the problems associated with Igbo spirituality. The review furthermore covers in general how the Igbos treasure and cherish peaceful environment through their respect to nature, God, and fellow human beings. Despite the rich and extensive knowledge that exists on the issue of spirituality and the environment, this study observes significant gaps in the literature. While

some studies review made reference to some illustrations of environment and spirituality of the Igbos, most of the studies did not engage in extensive systematic analysis of specific aspects of environmental ethics in Igbo spirituality. In contrast, this chapter attempts to fill this critical gap in order to better assimilate the “Concept of Peaceful Environment in Igbo Spirituality”.

This chapter also highlighted how the individual shares a personal relationship with the supreme God in Igbo society. This personal communion is seen in their daily prayers and actions towards their “Chi” in symbolic activities. Their Chi is invoked or called upon every now and then to intervene on their daily affairs and to intercede on their behalf to “Chukwu okike” God of all creation. It is believed that “Chukwu, Olisa kere uwa” holds the destiny of every man. The deep spirituality of religion among the Igbos overwhelmed a colonist (1895-1905), which made him to observe that:

They are, in the strict and natural sense of the word, a truly and a deeply religious people, of whom it can be said, as it has been said of the Hindus, that “they eat religiously, drink religiously, dress religiously, and sin religiously”. In a few words, the religion of these natives, as I have endeavored to point out, is their existence, and their existence is their religion (Leopold, 1968, p. 409).

The ineluctable and necessary fact is that the centrality of Igbo religious spirituality is fallible in some instances and therefore needs constant scrutiny and criticisms. Next chapter will then attempt to highlight how these religious tenets feed into the Igbo concept of peace and personhood.

CHAPTER 4

PEACE AND PERSONHOOD IN THE IGBO SOCIETY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the exposition so far, the emphatically intertwined practicality of Igbo notion of spirituality and the desired pursuit of a peaceful environment depict two sides of a coin. In addition, the discussions highlight the instrumentality of the human person in the peaceful maintenance of the environment. The human person is one of the nature creations that appreciate the essence of peaceful co-existence. Human life functions best under some form of order because order is one of the indices of rationality. By all indications, nature herself is intrinsically ordered. Thus, this very chapter capitalizes on the idea of peace and its relationship to the person, the thirst for peaceful environment and approach to conflict resolution in traditional Igbo society.

4.2 SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND A PERSON IN THE IGBO SOCIETY

The notion of spiritual guide in the traditional Igbo society comprises of the institutions traditionally set up by the people themselves. This allows for the maintenance of law and order in the society. Therefore, the functionality of the government of the Igbo society is built on the workability of institutions like societies, age grade, Ozo titled men, Otu Ada (or Umuada - daughters of the land) among others. These social setups are not far from the religious aspects of the people's lives and practices. In this same line of thought, one can talk of spiritual guide and the human person in a traditional Igbo society (Zartman, 2000, p.9).

The societies constitute spiritual guides since they deter the community members from committing crimes against the land. For the sake of clarification, a society in traditional Igbo

community is largely made up of the elders or old members. In most Igbo clans, it is usually referred to as “Onyekulie” group. Literally, it means *who invited him*. The members normally visit those who invite them - those who commit crimes secretly thinking nobody saw them. For instance, in committing adultery, stealing of yam seedlings, goats, sheep, et cetera, they would narrate the crime of the offender stating where, when, and how the offence was committed and warns the culprit. The psychological effect is that each person makes effort to conduct himself according to the law of the land. This prevents the disintegration of the community hence the existence of peace.

The age grade as another spiritual guide is a common phenomenon among the Igbos. It refers to people of the same age group. They usually accomplish community functions together. The group performs certain symbolic functions that are in accordance with the norms and traditional belief of the Igbos. They can act as police in apprehending offenders and are present at their presence at trial. The age grade can also act as a check on those in authority to prevent abuse of power. These members help in the maintenance of peaceful environment in the Igbo society. Nnoruka opines:

The members of an age grade also manifest solidarity within the group. This could take the form of: helping their members who want to marry but are unable to meet up with the requirements of the in-laws, helping a sick member to do the work in his farm before the favorable seasons runs out; helping their bereaved members to defray the funeral cost; provision of the basic needs of life for widows of their deceased member (Nnoruka, 2009, pp. 220-221).

The role of the age grade in fostering peaceful co-existence is also signified by the names which the different groups assume. A glance at these names will make this clearer. Nnoruka articulates it thus: *Njikoka* – it means that unity is more precious than any other thing. Every member of the group should be ready to make sacrifice and make his talents available to all for purposes of

unity; *Obinwanne* – it means fraternity. Members of the group should regard themselves as belonging to the same family. They therefore practice mutual help; *Udoka* – peace is an indispensable precious value for true solidarity to exist. Maintenance of peace among the members should be the priority of every member of the group; *Igwebuike* – there is strength in number. Number does not imply the amorphous conglomeration of people but the coming together of people who wish to improve the quality of their lives in an effort to achieve common purposes. *Ofuobi* – unity of mind. Unity of mind is opposed to discord, hatred, envy, enmity and gossip. But with a united mind, the members mutually develop and improve the quality of their lives and the sky is the limit to what they can achieve (Nnoruka, 2009, p. 222).

Again, *Ozo* titled men is another group in traditional Igbo society that acts as spiritual guide in maintenance of peace. The symbolism of *Ozo* title is to promote peace and unity in the Igbo society. Therefore, an *Ozo* titled-man is a symbol of peace, unity and truth. He is a man of impeccable character. A person accused of a crime would run to an *Ozo* titled man for protection. The *Ozo* titled man would normally grant it and acts as his surety. However, it is generally believed that an *Ozo* titled man who breaches his oath of office faces instant death.

In all the forms mentioned above, strong reference is always made to such values and ethics that are rooted in fundamental historical realities like wisdom gleaned through life experience, customs, heritage of myths and folklores. In this instance, it is very paramount to consider the historical antecedents of a people as that serve as the bedrock upon which morality and good behavior are encultured to enable a sustainable preservation of resources and how to distribute them equitably in juxtaposition to the environmental ethics. As Rolston stated, man is in the centre of nature and the human nature cannot survive outside of the natural environment.

As such human must endeavor to protect the natural environment by maintaining a positive friendliness with nature (Rolston, 2003, p.515).

It is the duty of an individual to abide diligently and pay total obeisance to the unwritten moral and ethical prescriptions otherwise known as *Omenala* in Igbo society. Nwala conceives *Omenala* as the paradigm that consolidates conformity, social harmony and peace: it is the practical and theoretical instrument for social control and hence could be regarded as the support of what is conservative in Igbo traditional thought. It is a moral order for good behavior, for practice of customs as it applies to social and ritual life binding on every member of the community (Nwala, 1985, pp.58 -62). 'Omenala' as Onyeocha pointed, ensures special moral ethics to ensure equitable distribution of justice and to create order and balance in the community. It prepares and projects the members of the community toward sustainable development and balance by stipulating how to associate and assimilate noble experiences into the existing order (Onyeocha, 1997, pp. 205-215). It is through the keeping of *omenala* that Igbo people aspire to maintain a healthy balance with spiritual and material forces within their environment. When *omenala* is broken by an individual or the community, it is believed that disaster of all kinds would be unleashed on the community by the divinities and ancestors who would withdraw their protective shield for breaking allegiance. To go against *omenala* is a taboo, that is, *Aru*, or *Nso-ala*. Ilogu (1974, p.207), asserts that *Ala* deity and the ancestors developed *omenala* to check human excesses and evil practices so that the kite can perch and the eagle can equally perch. Those who commit crimes against *omenala* are either ostracized or banished from the community. Some of the crimes that receive serious punishment are poisoning someone (*inye nsi*), and homicide (*igbu ochu*).

Among the Igbos, there is strong sense of morality; as such the guides are necessary to ensure moral behaviors. As pointed by Wiredu, “immoral conduct is abhorred by the Creator, and punished by the little gods or *Chi*” (Wiredu, 1980, p. 6). Guides are paramount in Igbo society because it ensures morality and good ethics. Guides come in many different channels especially through led down rules by the elders, sage, wisdom, divinations, dreams, signs and wonders, and other natural realities like air, wind, thunderbolt, rain, et cetera.

4.2.1 ANCESTORS AS GUIDES

Ancestors play significant roles in the Igbos’ notion of spiritual guiding. Ancestral belief is not exclusive to the Igbo people only; it is common among different cultures spanning across the world. Igbos trace their origin down their ancestral line and they share a common belief that life originated from their ancestors. As a result, ancestors are accorded with sacred reverence among the Igbos, and the latter looked up to them for spiritual guidance. The primary and most vital role is the assurance that every Igbo person is protected by their ancestors from any form of physical harm or otherwise, and also, brings good fortunes and lucks. Ancestors in Igboland are laden with great responsibilities which include protection and preservation of life and properties to provisions of basic needs for survival such as fertile lands for farming, rich harvesting, protection of family members from evil forces and deadly diseases, protection from natural disasters, aiding in war times, long life and other good things of life. These benefits are strictly tied with necessary rituals meant to please the ancestors and to conciliate them whenever there is crime or taboo of any kind in the land.

The Igbos hold their ancestors in high esteem and reverence. Their respect for their ancestors is shown in their ritual practices characterized by titles and praise-singing. Symbolic

terms are commonly used to address the ancestors to signify their zenith relevance and historical importance. Terms like *Ndi mbu na ndi abuo*, *Ndichie*, *Ndi gboo*, (those of antiquity, those of old, people of long ago respectively) are few, but not the least of such symbolic nomenclature to describe the ancestral importance. Ancestors are believed to be alive in the land of the dead. Not everyone who is dead can reach the land of the dead or be elevated to the ancestral status. Only those who had led a good life in their lifetime, and others who have contributed in little or big ways toward sustaining peaceful community deserve the ancestral respect, and may be accorded with the privilege of ancestorship upon death. Arinze pointed out that “the cult of ancestorship is a strict heritage reserved for the forefathers” (Arinze, 2008, p. 34).

According to Arinze, those who deserve the privilege of ascendance into ancestral line must have lived a good life and died a noble death. Failure to meet these two primary criteria is the failure to be regarded as an ancestor; because such individuals cannot be welcomed in the land of the good spirits (Arinze, 2008, p. 35). The Igbo families are made up of both the living and the ancestors whose good spirits are believed to be present. The Igbo people believe that the spirits of their dead loved ones are always among them even though unseen, and still actively contribute to the betterment of the family. The ancestors’ involvement is felt in the strong belief in them held by those who are alive. They believe that their ancestors contribute in the protection of the living from any unseen dangers or evil that might befall their loved ones. It is noteworthy to mention the rites of *kola* breaking when the ancestors are being invoked to protect and guide the living, and to bring good fortunes to the community. Such traditional customs exemplify the importance of ancestors’ place in Igboland. As Smith observed, prayers are offered to God through the ancestors because the Igbo believe that good ancestors are easy point of contact to God for the betterment of the living (Smith 1950, p.10). The ancestors are better disposed and

equipped for the intercessory functions because they are in a state of bliss. A prayer to the ancestors by human folks is a prayer to God. The first male son of every Igbo family is known as 'Okpala', and he enjoys a special place in Igbo family because his position is regarded as closest to the ancestors. They are respected, and given divine status because they are believed to receive spiritual guidance from their ancestors. The instrumentality of the ancestral doctrine in Igbo spirituality derives from the spiritual guidance the Igbos enjoy from their ancestors.

4.2.2 SHRINES AS GUIDES

Shrines play significant function in matters of spiritual guide among the Igbos. A shrine is a sacred place of worship where sacrifices, oblation and libation are made and spiritual inspirations reached. Of great significance with the shrines is the fact that they serve as physical medium through which ancestors' minds are known. Shrines are direct points of contact where the spirits and gods are communed with. And so, the shrine is strictly built, managed and utilized by the chief priest. The latter also acts as a point of contact between the living and the dead. In most cases, the shrine serves as the chief priests' house. The chief priests are revered with utmost esteem because it is believed that only they can see the spirits and the gods. Their messages and warnings are binding and final. Disobedience to them is a direct disobedience to the gods and such behavior attracts dire consequences. Their duties include guiding the community to do right, performs rituals, appease the gods and act as a medium between the living and the dead. The chief priests' roles among the Igbo society are well recognized and exclusive. Unique to shrines are Altars which are usually erected for purpose of sacrifices. Sacrifices are made in form of prayers inside the shrine for peace and good life in Igbo communities.

In addition, Igbos come to the shrine to express their trust in God(s), the spirits, the divinities, the ancestors and other realities and to achieve strong spiritual aggrandizement. Shrine offers the individual a space to introspect his or her life experiences in order to achieve clarity and strength. For this reason, shrines serve as a basis for spiritual guidance to the Igbo people just as the temple serves as a place of guidance-seeking for the Buddhists or as the Sacrament for the Catholics. Okeke explains thus:

The intermediary roles of these messengers of God in Igbo religion can be equated with the roles played by Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary, Angels and prophets of Christianity. It appears therefore, that if a Christian can validly pray through the Angels, then the Igbo man can as well pray through say Amadioha or Nnemmiri (Okeke, 2005).

Both the Christians and the Igbos share a lot of similarities in terms of worship. The Christians go to Churches to pray and carry out different rituals, so do the Igbos go to the shrines to perform rituals, commune, invoke and to appease the gods. Therefore this form of ritual explains the function of spiritual discipline in Igbo spirituality.

4.3 SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE IN IGBO SOCIETY

Igbos strongly advocate for communal living experience. Community life is a direct function of Igbo sacred society where every individual is both unique and is an expression of the larger society. Everybody counts. Community success is a collective effort of individual success and contribution. Thus, the Igbos hold unto the proverb that a tree does not make a forest (otu osisi anaghi emebe ohia). The Society is the main framework of Igbo life. Family, which is the basic component of the society, holds a very significant value among the Igbos. There are notable characteristics shared among the Igbos with regards to ideal family. Basic among the characteristics are respect for ancestors, respect for the living and peaceful co-existence with others in the community. Usually, the father is the head of the home. He is looked up to for

guidance and for decisive decision-making. He is the chief model to his children. The mother's main function is to give birth to children, attend to domestic chores and make her husband happy. Children are the future custodians who will be laden with the responsibility to keep the family line alive by preserving past good values. Thus the basic unit of the society is the family, which extends to even the ancestors and the gods (Ohiochoya, 2008, p.1). Mothers who include wives have special role in the family as allowed by the customs of the land, and by the fathers or the husbands respectively. Their positions in the home is both venerated and primed in Igbo society. While wives are meant to be submissive, Elizabeth Isichei argued that it is a kind of village democracy where all are involved (Isichei, 1976, p.79).

In Igbo spiritual society, family structure is not limited to the father, mother and children alone. In reality, it integrates the larger society through a systematic and collective communal consciousness and activities. The interest of the community is the interest of the individual in Igboland and vice versa. It is an ideal society where experiences are shared, relived and learned. There is a strong sense of belongingness and love. The Igbos are overtly conscious of their communities. And they guide it conscientiously. In terms of their spiritual awareness, Igbos are overly protective of their own when it comes to letting strangers in into their own space or clan system. Strangers, however, are treated with utmost hospitality, but not as much as to involve them into their spiritual circle.

The basic emphasis is the underlying relationship between discipline and spiritual guide, and how they work together in Igbo spirituality. Survival comes with a lot responsibility and actions in Igbo spirituality. There is a daily constant hustle with natural and spiritual powers and managing and combating these forces is the key factor towards engaging in a meaningful living.

There is a deliberate engagement which requires doggedness and will-power on the side of the individual without which there would not be peaceful community. There is also total compliance and trust to the spiritual authorities which ensures a comprehensive harmony for the whole of the community in such a way that both the individual and the community are protected and preserved. Values are sacred. And they are necessary for communal development. Hence, as Mbiti summarised, “spiritual guides provides the tenets for societal advancements in all its ramifications” (Mbiti, 1991).

Igbos must take into consideration the changes in global trends, especially, as it concerns multi-cultural diversity and progress. People are unique and can be distinguished from others based on their spiritual awareness, and this awareness guides them through the matrix of life’s challenges and realities. To entrench morality and good behavior in the society, moral ethics must be provided through spiritual direction. Furthermore, through spiritual direction, wisdom is gained through experiences and indispensable actions that links the individual to his neighbors, and, then, to the gods (Onyeocha, 1997, pp. 139-143). Through these daily actions, the individual is further equipped to handle daily life’s issues as he or she advances towards self-actualization. A person is valued not only by what the person gives back to the community in form of economic gain or returns, rather, he or she symbolizes the essence of competence, excellence, growth and development of the community.

According to Metuh, religion is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems, and world views that relate humanity to the supernatural, and to spirituality. People tend to derive morality, ethics, religious laws or a preferred lifestyle through religion (Metuh, 1987). Hence, religious cultivation is vital for the growth and sustainability of community. And it is

fundamentally what the Igbo spirituality seeks to achieve - to make life better and well adjustable for everyone. The individual is expected to abide by the rules and observe the guiding norms to enhance a well-functioning and integrated society. To be self-actualized, every Igbo individual must abide by the set-down tenets and values laid down by the Igbo customs. The individual must look up to the values and the moral guides in relation to his or her neighbor for peaceful living and common good. These set down principles act as police to provide balance and to control behaviors. By so doing, growth and development are attainable both for the individual and for the society. Thus, to be responsible is to meaningfully contribute to the general growth and welfare of the community, and to achieve social harmony and peaceful coexistence (Nyasani, 1997, pp. 46-50).

Every society needs organization through structural political mechanisms. Politics is one of the basic mechanisms of government. And these structural mechanisms reflect the values shared by the individuals within the community. Ojakaminor wrote:

The human being -both as an individual and in human groups – is constantly aware that he cannot act alone to meet the exigencies of his nature. Deep within his being, he feels the need for a more ample community in which he adds his contribution to that of his fellowmen and so achieves the common good from which each member of the society benefits. It was this that gave rise to the political community (Ojakaminor, 1996, p. 92).

Active participation of every individual in political activities largely determines the progress of that society. This is because the individual is equipped with the fundamental freedom to pursue goodness and to determine his future through obedience to the moral codes of conduct and ethics guiding his or her community. Individuals are expected to carry out their different roles to achieve efficient political stability and advancement by integrating religion, culture, education, medicine, science, and technology for common good. The individual is expected to be open

towards the changing realities of the changing times in form of technological and scientific breakthroughs, without losing his or her unique Igbo identity. They are also expected to utilize their Igbo uniqueness towards the betterment of the larger society. The code of conduct governing the Igbo society is known as 'Omenala'. The latter simply refers to a conscious and unwritten code of conducts, practices and heritage in traditional Igbo society. Omenala is usually transferred through oral didactics, symbols and art, rituals and other customary events. It is the constitution of the Igbo society inculcated through different traditional channels to the children as heritage. The children will, in turn, pass this code of conducts on to their children and children's children - world without end.

Adedeji described age grade as "a set of persons born within a given time and period" (Adedeji, 2012). Leaders are selected or elected from age grades. The elected leaders of different age grades must consult through act of loyalty to the elders of the clan for guidance and advice to carry out their different functions in the society. Another unique group in Igbo traditional society is known as 'Umu-ada'. Umu-ada is a collective name for all the women (especially the married) in the traditional Igbo society. The status of Umu-ada is judiciously recognized and respected in Igboland. They are especially known for inculcating discipline, standing out for the truth and demanding justice where necessary in the Igbo community. The unique attributes of Umu-ada has earned them the sacred status they enjoy in Igbo spirituality. All of these different functions in Igbo spirituality are incorporated into the sanctity of the Igbo cultural heritage. The core belief that all good things come from God encourages acts of piety in form of sacrifices to attract more blessings from God (Ugochukwu, 2006, pp.69-70).

However, Igbo scholars disagree over what are the most proper ways to offer sacrifices to God. While some argue that the gods cannot be appeased directly, but through the intermediaries or God's representatives, others believe that individuals can commune directly with gods or their ancestors through private altars erected for the same purpose. Those who share the latter mindset about worship in Igboland, especially as opined by Arinze, argued that the God(s) are holy and good and pure, and therefore should be approached directly because some spirit mediums are inherently evil or unholy, and therefore are not worthy to intercede for mankind (Arinze 2008, p. 93). He further highlighted four mainstays of sacrifices in Igboland which include reparation, deliverance and cleansing, supplication and sacrifice to ward off molestation from unknown evil spirits, petition, and praises (Arinze, 2008, p. 64). The most important reason for sacrifice in Igbo traditional context is appeasement. God(s) are believed to both benevolent and punitive. And any sacrifice is either to appease him or seek for favors. It is believed that every good thing comes from God(s): children, wealth, success, health, rich harvest, fertile land, peace, et cetera. On the other hand, wars, diseases, death, hunger, famine, and other factors are believed to be direct consequences of evil in the land that needs to be addressed. Sacrifices are then made to either appreciate the benevolence of the God(s), to avert omens or ill-lucks, or to plead for forgiveness.

Thus, one can deduce from the ongoing that the worship of ancestors and gods is a hallmark of Igbo religious discipline. Communication with those who are dead is hung on the belief that both the living and the dead share cordial ties through ritualistic expressions which is aimed at achieving peace and harmony among the living.

4.4 THE CONCEPT OF PEACE IN IGBO SOCIETY

Peace is a broad concept that incorporates conscious actions to prevail in any given society. Without peace and harmony, no society or organization can survive. Conflicts could lead to disharmony, and if issues of conflict and disharmony are not resolved, and peace sought among or between the conflicting parties, it could lead to chaos, even to the extreme point of extinction of that society or organization. Although it is very rare for disharmony and conflicts to lead to total human extinction, same can lead to fatal consequences that could go way down in history leaving indelible wounds at its trails.

One of the basic traits of the Igbo traditional identity is peaceful coexistence. Prior to colonial eras, Igbos had a well-established and institutionalized means of maintaining peace and order in their communities. Pursuit for peace and harmony is enshrined in the psychology of the Igbo people, and the philosophy that guides their daily endeavours. Indigenous Igbo society nourishes and cherishes unified and integrated communal living. The Igbo society is collectivist in nature. The Igbo maxim ‘onye aghana nwanne ya’ (no one should be left behind) captures the concept of peace in Igbo traditional society. This maxim is anchored on the assumption that equity and fairness are the bedrock for peace and progress. The collectivist nature of the Igbo traditional society is based on the theory that what is good for one is good for all and vice versa. An Igbo proverb, ‘otu aka ruta mmanu, ozuo oha onu’ (an oil-tainted finger contaminates all others) serves as caution to be mindful of one’s actions as what affects one affects one’s neighbors as well.

From childhood, Igbo people are infused with the mindset that life of peace and harmony is the greatest virtue to acquire by every Igbo person, irrespective of where one find one’s self.

Council of elders, age-grade, umu-ada, masquerade cults, kins and family - head mostly the father or *okpara* as the case may be - and other minor societies like hunters' association, et cetera are recognized institutions armed with conflict resolutions and peace restoration. In extreme cases of disharmony or conflicts between individuals or parities, the deities are usually consulted to intervene. The resort to deities usually happens when other options to amicably settle issues between conflicting parties have been exhausted. The deities are involved in this stage to stage ritual treaties and blood covenant. This is mainly to instill fear among the conflicting parties and to caution that violation of the treaties could be fatalistic. The purpose of peace-making is rarely to pronounce judgments or to apportion blame, but to resolve issues or reach a compromise. The most common issues of disharmony arise between husband and wife, land disputes, inter-tribal conflicts, taboos, and unsettled debts. Emphasis is laid more on how to live in peace with one another than on how to settle disputes. Social activity platforms commonly used to inculcate bonding and peaceful integration include masquerade festivals, wrestling activities, 'egwu onwa' (moonlight fun), among others. In his book, *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe described the importance of community bonding among the precolonial Igbos thus:

When we gather in the village moonlit ground, it is not because of the moon. Everyone can see the moon from his own compound. When a king invites the villagers for a feast, it is not because of the food. Everyone has food in their own homes (Achebe, 2008, p.112).

Thus, the spirit of social bonding among the Igbo traditional society is that of love, peace, harmony, integration, and unity.

The Igbos are known for their overt and zealous hospitality towards strangers. Peaceful coexistence in Igbo spirituality uniquely defines how they relate with strangers. The concept of peace in Igbo society is summed up in a popular Igbo proverb 'Egbe bere, ugo bere; nke si ibe ya

ebena, osisi obe na ya gbajie ka ofu ka o si ato - efebe ebeghi ebe' (The eagle and the kite can perch on the same tree. If any of the birds will not make a space for the other to perch, let the tree fall from the roots so that the hostile bird will know what it feels like to fly without perching). The concept of peace in Igbo traditional society is summed up in another proverb, 'Nwa mmuo emegbuna nwa mmadu, nwa mmadu emegbuna nwa mmuo'. A similar line in the Christian bible captures the above maxim succinctly: 'Give to God what is God's and to Ceaser what is Ceaser's. Another maxim in Igbo concept of peaceful coexistence says 'emee emegwalu anaghi ese okwu' - 'an eye for an eye' paradigm in the Christian bible. Igbos believe that this standard is a fair measure of checks and balances that sustain a peaceful coexistence and harmony among folks in Igbo traditional communities.

4.5 TRADITIONAL IGBO APPROACH TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Because people live in clusters and groups and because human wants are varied and insatiable, clashes of interests are bound to happen. Human interests can come in form of differences in perception, needs, desires, goals, opinions, et cetera. These factors can be identified as root causes of conflicts within the human societies. Among the Igbo traditional society, causes are usually land disputes, kingship disputes, family disputes, sex, wife-beating, gossips, taboos among others.

The Igbos are peace-loving people. This unique quality is probably what differentiates the Igbos from other tribes in Nigeria. The easy-going characteristics of the Igbos are exemplified in the rate in which they migrate. Unlike the nomads, the Igbos settle down quickly and easily; inculturate, marry and establish abroad. The Igbos are probably the most travelled in the world.

There's a speculation that the Igbos can be found in any part of the world, even the most hostile or unaccommodating.

As earlier said, the Igbos have traditionally established institutions labored with the responsibility to resolve conflicts and restore peace and harmony in their society. The council of chiefs or elders, the umu-nna, umu-ada, umu-okpu, otu-ogbo, chief-priests and masquerade cults are among the most important conflict resolution institutions in Igbo traditional religions. The purpose of conflict management and resolution in Igbo land is not necessarily to give judgments or punish the offenders, but to resolve issues amicably and to provide counter-conflict measures for peaceful community to prevail. This system of peace-making and conflict management stem from the traditional assumption that conflict prevention is less manageable than the process of conflict resolutions. 'Emee ngwa, emeghalu odachi' (a stitch in time saves nine). The system of conflict resolution in Igbo society is mostly informal and open. All agenda must be made open, and issues fully addressed. The reason for this is to provide guide for younger generations and to ensure fairness in form of fair-hearing and justice. Traditionally, the Igbo cultural heritage is not written. It is handed down through oral tradition and observation. Therefore everyone is invited to witness events of conflict resolutions. There are different measures that can be deployed in conflict management in the Igbo traditional society.

Social activities are basically the most fundamental aspect of conflict management in Igbo society because through social activities like wrestling and masquerade festivals, bonding and familiarity are inculcated among them. Through the act of getting together, ideas and opinions and interests are shared, understood, assimilated, tolerated and encouraged. The Igbos believe that they came from one grand source and therefore must live together as one indivisible

big and extended family. Social activities also provide platforms where values are inculcated and learned. Through stories and folklores, songs, tales in moonlit nights, proverbs and maxims, ideas are passed through to the younger generation which will serve as guide to influence or modify behaviors, and to encourage good morals.

Age grade in Igbo traditional society provide the function of policing and safety of individuals and properties. In extreme cases they are equipped to go to wars and to defend the integrity of their communities and villages. They carry out orders as directed by the council of elders or any other recognized conflict management institutions. This group also recommends sanctions. Conflicts are resolved through sanctions and punishments as the case may be. The punishments could come in form of banning individuals from partaking in various events within the community, or in extreme measures, banishment. Sanctions in conflict management in Igbo traditional society is basically for correctional purposes. The affected individual is expected to comply by the decisions of the conflict resolution body for his benefit, and the benefit of the entire community.

Oath-taking is another means deployed in conflict resolution in Igbo traditional society. The reason for oat-taking is usually to defend oneself or someone's self-respect and dignity. The use of oath-taking in resolving issues in Igbo society is mainly to encourage honesty and truth, and to discourage dishonesty and lies. The conflicting parties are bound by the spoken words of the swearing and oath.

Marriage bonding is also a common practice among the Igbos to settle disputes, especially between a kindred and another through inter-marriage practices. In most cases, this practice serves as a cementing of larger bonding to ensure lasting relationships between the two kindred or villages.

Disputes settlement in Igbo society usually starts with pouring of libations to invoke the spirits of their ancestors and breaking of kola nuts. Kola nut in Igboland is a symbol of truth, life and unity. Therefore, it is necessary that this ritual is invoked in every gathering of importance in Igbo society. Partaking in breaking of kola nut is an assurance communal bonding much deeper than what is observed. It is an act of goodwill and blessing to both those who share in the simple ritual. The Igbos believe in the sacredness and sanctity of human life. This is significant to the Igbo culture and tradition, the latter which serve as bedrock for unity in Igbo society. The tradition and culture require that everyone must be treated with equal respect and dignity, and in return, obedience and conformity with cultural and traditional tenets and values serve as the basic criteria for status elevation in Igbo. The culture and tradition is supreme to the individual's feelings or wants. As Achebe advised, nobody who fights his chi or goes against the gods will remain unpunished in one way or another (Achebe, 2008, p.149).

4.6. IGBO CONFLICT RESOLUTION VIS-À-VIS THE UNITED NATIONS

“Ndigbo” (Igbo Nation) evokes a strong sense of unity among the Igbos in terms of religious, cultural, social and political realities. It is a sub-cultural mindset with distinct values that seeks to blend with the diverse global cultural macrocosm without losing the Igbo identity. The relationship that exists between the Igbo's peace worldview or conflict resolution, and the United Nations can be viewed from a popular Igbo mantra “Nku di na mba na eghere mba nri”. This mantra is deeper in meaning than the similar English version of the saying, ‘when in Rome, do like the Romans’. Subcultures have distinct values or shared interests that are not popular among the majority of the people in the larger culture, but do not contradict or violate what the majority culture share in value. “Nwanne di na mba” (there are brotherly friends in strange lands)

and “Onye aghana nwanne ya” (carry everyone along) are age old popular sayings among the Igbos that quickly suggest a strong traditional bonding in Igbo peace worldview, and subcultural relationship that exists between the Igbos and the rest of the world. Ndigbo can be viewed as a subculture within the framework of the United Nations. Some scholars had argued that subculture is a small segment of people that coexist within the framework of the dominant culture. Unlike counterculture which is a system where a group of people with shared values go against one or more significant values of the dominant culture, Ndigbo believe in peaceful coexistence - “Onye biri ibe ya biri” (live and let live).

The United Nations (UN) has too many objectives and one of the foremost is Peace-keeping and Conflict Resolution (UN, August, 1997, p. 11). The purpose of peace-keeping in the United Nations is to maintain International Peace and Security in the world. The United Nations adopt an eclectic approach in peace diplomacy efforts. Eclectic approach is about selecting the best alternatives in conflict resolution and crises management. The UN pursues peace through conflict prevention and mediation, peace-keeping missions, peace enforcement and peace-building. Conflict prevention involves a systematic effort in identifying sources or issues that could trigger conflicts, and through information gathering, early warning and careful analysis intervenes to prevent issues from escalating. The office of the Secretary General in the United Nations is mostly useful at this stage of conflict prevention (UN, 1971, pp. 40-46).

In Igbo traditional society, peace-making efforts is usually a collective prerogative as folks are being taught from childhood to live in harmony with one another. Ndigbo connotes oneness, unity and harmony. This mindset is captioned in the Igbo adage, ‘agu ada eri agu ibe ya’ (a lion does not feed on its kind). The individual is mostly responsible for his actions but he

is not exclusive in sharing the consequences of his actions. And as such, every Igbo person is expected to learn how to ‘live and let live,’ and how to let go and forgive “e lee, aghara”. Imbibing these values as core values is the most vital tool in conflict prevention among the Ndigbo. Furthermore, in the Igbo traditional setting, the oldest in the family, clan, village or town is expected to use his office of age and experience to prevent conflicts from escalating. This goes with the saying that ‘okenye anaghi ano n’ulo, ewu amuo n’ogbili – it is the duty of the elderly ones to direct properly.

Another major aspect of conflict resolution in the United Nations is their engagement in Peace-keeping. The purpose of peace-keeping is often to bring the conflicting groups to negotiate agreement. Peace-keeping mission can be facilitated especially by the intervention of the Secretary General, special envoy, groups, member presidents, military, regional bodies, voluntary groups, affiliates, et cetera. The nature of the conflict determines the best options to adopt by the United Nations in conflict resolution. This eclectic approach is similar in Igbo’s peace and conflict resolution worldview. Among those saddled with the responsibility to maintain peace and order in Igbo traditional society are the chiefs and the elders, the age-grades, Umuada, ndi iyom, hunters association, et cetera.

Conflict resolution can be achieved through Enforcements. The United Nations may deploy military troops to warring zones to quell, hold siege or give aid. The United Nations Security Council is primarily responsible for the authorization of military peace-keeping mission. In Igbo traditional peace-keeping worldview, all efforts are made to achieve reconciliation between hostile parties. Inter-tribal or local wars are usually initiated more on defensive than on offensive notes. The able-bodied men are expected to volunteer for war engagement. The council

of chiefs and elders, chief priest and warriors are usually the stake-holders in war decision-making in Igbo traditional society. Generally, the purpose of conflict resolution in local and global context is to achieve peace (UN, 1971, p. 45). However, there are inherent challenges.

4.7 CONFLICT RESOLUTION, ITS CHALLENGES IN IGBO LAND

In pre-colonial traditional Igbo society, land (ala) can be identified as the one of the major causes of conflicts. In contemporary Igbo society, religion and politics factor in the chart as one of the major causes of conflicts among or across the Igbo nation in relation to other tribes in Nigeria. To resolve conflicts in Igbo traditional society, one must be conversant of the nature of the conflict, the challenges, the approach to adopt, and the possible outcomes. The pre-colonial Igbo traditional society laid more emphasis on land because of the spiritual value they attached on land and land produce (especially yam). Ala, (the earth-goddess) was greatly revered as the source of life and livelihood. Sacrifices are made to the earth-goddess to protect her children (humans) from sickness and strange death, and to provide plentiful harvest of crops especially the yam. The New-yam festival is still one of the best legacies being cherished among the Igbos till date. As a result, any unresolved issues about land ownership or allocation are treated with utmost attention among the Igbos to avoid fatal consequences. However, this chapter intends to investigate the challenges of conflict resolution in Igbo society.

One of the major challenges facing the Igbo conflict resolution system is undue attachment to westernization. The pro-colonial Igbo society enjoyed more peace and harmony until the arrival of the white man. The advent of the white man in Igboland brought at its trail cultural superiority through the mechanism of assimilation and association. Enculturation resulted in diversity, which in turn resulted in loss of cultural heritages and legacies. In terms of

material culture, our mode of dressing for example was altered as western style of dressing was preferred over the Igbo style of dressing. The Igbo language is suffering a huge backward today as a result of the undue consideration of the white man's language over and against Igbo language. Where one can argue that early exposure to western education, ethnic and economic diversity encourages variety, and advance innovation and economic expansion, and prepares the young to face a multicultural world, one can equally agree that such blending ought not have taken precedence over and above the tested and trusted Igbo traditional core value systems especially as it relates to maintaining peace and order in the society. A good case in point is the Igbo system of policing as opposed to the western system of policing. The latter adopts the use of force and sanctions in carrying out its functions whereas, in the traditional pre-colonial Igbo society, enforcement of law and order was a conscious effort among every member of the community. Emphases were laid more on crime prevention through early moral inculcation and value-stemming than on policing, sanctions and punishment. Therefore, one can agree that the rift between global cultural diversity (westernization) and the Igbo traditional value system is a major challenge to conflict resolution in Igbo peace philosophy.

Another challenge to conflict resolution in Igbo traditional society is the measure of interest or favoritism. In Igbo traditional society, an elderly person, chiefs or the king could use his office status to give unfair judgments in favor of one party over another for selfish interests. Such interests could come in form of money, land, giving out of a daughter's hand in marriage, et cetera. Even though it was not a very common practice in Igbo traditional society, stories were told about such incidences and how the innocent were vindicated at last. Hence there is need to imbibe truth and honesty as core values in conflict resolution.

4.8 PEACE IS A VALUE OF RELIGIOUS CULTURE AND MORALITY

Peace is a constitutive element at the center of African religion and morality and results from the interplay between both. It is thus two-dimensional - characterized as both a Religious and a Moral Value in African traditional religion and society. This understanding is predicated on the fact that good human conduct requisite for maintaining order, harmony and equilibrium, is religiously motivated. Peace is informed and embedded in this religious worldview and requires human cooperation for its positive propagation and effective practice for the good of the community. Peace is the state of order, harmony and equilibrium. Peace is value-oriented. As a moral value, peace brings completion and Fullness to Life as the result of harmonious Living. Taylor argues that:

A man's well-being consists... in keeping in harmony with the cosmic totality. When things go well with him he knows he is at peace and of a piece with the scheme of things and there can be no greater good than that. If things go wrong then somewhere he has fallen out of step... The whole system of divination exists to help him discover the point at which the harmony has been broken and how it may be restored (Taylor, 1963, p.67).

African traditional morality is primarily concerned with propagating Good life and general wellbeing. Life is centrally regarded as an intrinsic and fundamental value. To forcefully cause an end to someone's life is considered a breach of peace as well. Accordingly, Africans love and celebrate life a lot as a sign of spiritual and material blessings from God. To be at peace means to be satisfied with the basics of life. Rweyemamu defined peace as well lived relationship, health of the body and mind, ability to manage stress and conflicts, and being successful in one's endeavors (Rweyemamu, 1989, p.391). Also, Awolalu describes peace as when the totality of human desires is met and a state of contentment with whatever life offers (Awolalu, 1970, p. 21). According to African understanding, to have peace means to have all the basic human necessities needed to sustain life on one hand, and to be in good relationship with community members too.

The absence of these two realities means the absence of peace. Any attempt to truncate individual self-development and fundamental freedom is a threat to peaceful coexistence. In the same vein, injustice and other form of abhorrent behaviors targeted at an individual or a group is considered unhealthy for peace and harmony. Hospitality and protection of strangers is not only an Igbo practice, but a general African value-oriented custom. This practice is premised on the logic that all human share a common genesis from God.

Peace is also a religious value that brings harmony. According to Achebe, Igbos observe a week of peace as a cultural religious ceremony. Thus he submitted,

Our forefathers ordained that before we plant any crops in the earth, we should observe a week in which a man does not say a harsh word to his neighbor. We live in peace with our fellows to honour our great goddess of the earth without whose blessing our crops will not grow (Achebe, 2008, p. 221).

Achebe further notes that:

There are specific periods of the year in many African societies marked out for the promotion of peace. During this period, which may last for a week or a month, litigations are suspended while quarrels and all forms of violent and unjust acts are avoided for fear of incurring the wrath of God, the deities and the ancestors (Achebe, 1994, pp. 29-32).

Thus harmony - Order and equilibrium - which is achieved in the community of persons as a pre-existent metaphysical reality is what constitutes peace. The essence of morality is keeping together the harmonious communication and co-existence of members of the human community with the community of spirits. Harmony and peace are not mutually exclusive terms when the Igbos talk of the relationships and interactions that exist among the traditional community of persons (Ikenga-Metuh, 1987, p.78). The traditional religious view of life always make disputes, conflicts or war morally unacceptable because they collapse social and cosmic order and harmony. Given the fact that there are different mindsets and differences of opinions, disputes do

arise, but harmony is achieved through consensus which is the nature of settling conflicts in most traditional communities. In cases where disputes arise between neighboring villages or towns, the first step to address it is to come together to discuss the issue and to reach compromise (Achebe, 1994, pp. 9-12).

4.8.1 PEACE AND JUSTICE IN IGBO COMMUNITY

Peace is closely related to justice. Africans resolve their differences through a community based system of justice. The Igbos have a representative form of community justice system whereby all parties or factions involved in a dispute are summoned to the community council of elders and traditional ruler. The justice principles based on the Omenala are consulted and the decisions have a binding force. Violating Omenala incurs sanctions which are enforced so that the harmony in the community is not destroyed. Peace is thus the outcome of such harmony. The binding force of the Omenala justice system is what ensures peace and harmony. Omenala intrinsically motivates and conforms members to discharge their duties and obligations without force. Violating Omenala - that is the norms, customs and traditions of the Igbo people - is tantamount to a vertical and horizontal breach of peace, that is, destroying the alignment that exist between the supernatural and the natural. Violating peace agreements result to discord and disharmony and threatens the peace and security of individuals and the community. Rituals and sacrifices are usually carried out by religious priests or functionaries on behalf of defaulters for the appeasement of the forces that are beyond human control. Here, the case of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* comes to mind (Achebe, 2008, p.221). Harmony, which results from the interplay between peace and embedded justice, is thus categorically an important Igbo worldview. Peter Sarpong emphasized the commensal nature of peace and justice among the

Ashanti people who view peace as a product of justice. They believe that everyone must be treated fairly and equally for peace to exist (Sarpong, 1989, pp. 353-355).

Theophilus Okere supports that:

Peace is not something that happen but rather a situation that arises when justice happens. It is a happy state of things that happens when the state of things is just... the result of order and right alignment... It is not only that peace is based on justice, rather, peace is justice and justice is peace (Okere, 1998, pp. 9-10).

Africans' unwritten moral code contains taboos which are forbidden actions and things. It equally contains what guidelines on how to compensate or make reparations for wrong actions and injustices meted out individuals or groups in Igbo society. Lessons from the past usually dictate such compensations and reparations.

Achebe informs that the community of persons is usually confused on how to handle sacrileges especially ones that are new and strange in the community (Achebe, 1994, pp.157-158). To bring about unity, harmony and balance in the community, Sarpong advised that disputing parties must agree to unravel the genesis of the issue through sincere recourse to the sacred (Sarpong, 1989, p.360). The romance and synergy between peace and justice ensures progress in the community and society. Igbos strongly believe that progress is a result of divine favor and sanction. This is why every discussion on progress bothers on peace especially the attempt to be at peace with both the spiritual and human realms because true progress cannot be achieved in the absence of the divinely established harmony and order. So peace is central to both justice and progress and makes them practical realities. A Yoruba song expresses the vitality of peace by claiming that home and children are products of peaceful coexistence (Awolalu, 1970, p. 21). In most African societies, peace is a gift from the God not from human.

4.8.2 PEACE AS A GIFT FROM GOD IN IGBO COMMUNITY

In African cosmology, peace is believed to be God-given. Hence, Igbos make daily supplication to the gods to give peace to the community and to the individual. The Igbo proverb “Egbe bere Ugo bere; nke si ibe ya ebela, nku kwaa ya” is a summary of peaceful co-existence in Igbo society which simply calls for all to live and let live. This prayer is especially made by the elders when offering oblations especially in the early hours of the day (Arinze, 1970, pp, 25-104). Sacrifices and offerings are expiatory, meant to remove abominations committed in human history and experience and appease the justified anger or wrath of God, or divinities, or ancestors; in order to achieve peace and harmony on the imbalance created by such defiant acts in the first place (Arinze, 1970, pp. 34-37).

The main purpose of offering expiatory sacrifices is to ask the rulers and controllers of the spiritual dominion to mediate and aid return the peace that has been desecrated. Laurenti Magesa writes that:

The fundamental meaning of sacrifices and offerings lies in their efficacy to restore wholeness. If wrong-doing causes a dangerous separation of the various elements of the universe, sacrifices and offerings aim to reestablish unity and restore balance (Magesa, 1997, p. 203).

Sacrifices and offerings also take place at different periods of the day, made to request for peace even with no breach of peace, violation or transgression of religious moral norms. Such requests prevent the evil spirits who seek to disturb the peace of the individual. Peace is a top and constant item considered in the scale of preferences of an Africans’ list of petitions (Shorter, 1987, pp.122-123). The morning prayer of an Igbo family offers a practical aspect of the aforementioned principle especially in the offering and breaking of kola nut: “Chukwu onye n’ahu n’ihe na ahu n’nzuzo, nye anyi ogologo ndu na ahu isi ike, nye anyi ihe anyi g’eri na nke

anyi ga añu. Gozie umu anyi, mee ka anyi na ndi agbata obi anyi noro n'udo” - God who sees all things, bless us with the good life, health, children and all that we need for sustenance. Grant us peace with our fellow human beings (Obiagwu, 1983, pp.34-40).

Sarpong supports that prayer offering to God, the divinities and the ancestors is an absolute requirement and necessity because it ensures peace as they are done with sincerity of purpose, right mindfulness and moral check (Sarpong, 1989, p.359). This function is the intrinsic and fundamental part of most religious functions. They are geared towards peace-making in line with the intentions of the cosmic order. Religious functions embrace the aspects of peace-making which is the settling of disputes, entreating peace through offering sacrifices and prayers for peace. Robert sees a peace-maker as God's instrument. The peace-maker is responsible for the social order and as such, possesses a God-given potential to mitigate and to entrench peace in the community (Robert, p.376).

4.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4

Peace is a divine attribute and gift, and ensures the preservation of the human and natural environments, and the true progress of both. This chapter puts forward Omenala as the ultimate guide and regulator of the traditional moral life of Igbo communities. Omenala guarantees Life as a great value and abhors and disapproves the taking of innocent life and people. Ilogu states that “the key point to be noted is the existence of a moral code built up from the injunctions of the earth goddess (Ala) through the ancestors (Ndi ichie). These injunctions made up of approved observances and prohibitions constitute what the Igbo call Omenala. Those prohibitions are also referred to as Nso Ala - Taboos (actions) that are abominable to Ala.” Offences, which could be legal, religious and moral, are considered breaches of peace meant to

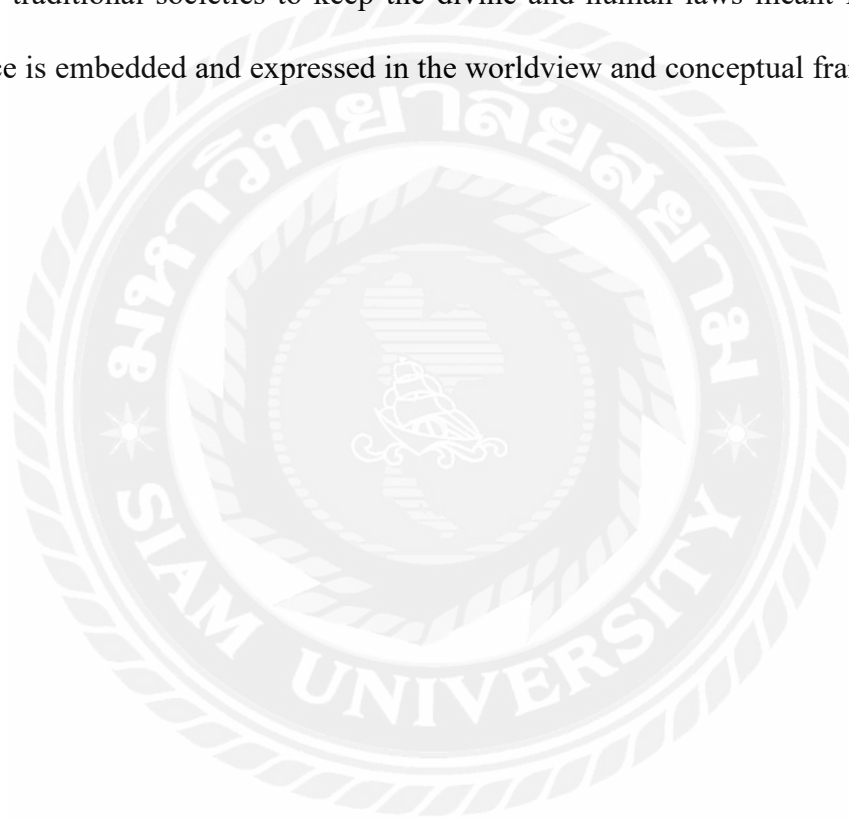
sustain harmony and order in the land. The sanctity of human life is respected and everybody aims to be in good moral standing so that they can live in peace and have a good life. Moral uprightness hinge on good character spelt out through norms and codes.

Igbos are naturally friendly and openly very accommodative because friendship and cooperation are naturally parts of the quest of human nature - the desire to reach out to others and maintain harmony and well-being. In cases of disputes or conflicts which mostly arise in human interactions, the umunna council system diplomatically promotes dialogue, mediation, negotiations and reconciliations. Settling disputes by making and offering peace naturally comes as part of the function the umuna elders, family heads and religious functionaries like Eze mmuo (the Chief Priest that officiates at traditional shrines of the gods by making peace offerings and sacrifices that are ritually cleansing). These dialogues usually take place in the town halls or market squares.

Consensus agreements usually come through long protracted discussions through which peace accords are reached. The discussions are protracted because every last skeptic must be won. What applies to individuals or group of persons in the Igbo setting can also apply to the community of human kind because human nature applies to all human persons. Thus, in cases of war between communities, peace is arrived at through deliberations involving the council of community elders where leadership power is vested and who are bound to honesty and justice in settling disputes. Maintaining the tenets of the moral order is important so that all can live in peace. The importance of morality was to keep the harmony and wellbeing of the community made up of the living and the living-dead. Cherished moral values make them to live in peace and harmony with their fellow men. The goal to keep their covenantal bonds with the spiritual

forces of their world makes them to be at peace and totally religious in their social dealings and relationship with their neighbors and with other fellow human beings.

This belief of the Igbo (i.e. being inseparably attached to their God or gods) becomes another guiding principle for peace in their social relationship with their fellow men. The fear of severing their relationship with the Supreme Being and divinities that sustain creation and human existence, help traditional societies to keep the divine and human laws meant for peaceful co-existence. Peace is embedded and expressed in the worldview and conceptual framework of Igbo spirituality.



CHAPTER 5

CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN AFRICA

5.1 INTROCUCTION

Persisting conflicts in the African continent have drawn great attention, concern and questions. An equally important consideration closely knit to this question is why mechanisms like the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPMR) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) have failed to find lasting solutions to these conflicts. From these groups, the Peacekeeping Operation (PKO) stands out considering their interventions in various complex armed conflicts that often metamorphosed into active war zones: United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL); United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM); United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNMIR); et cetera (Woodhouse et al, p.11). Africa's never-ending conflicts impact negatively on humans and on the environment and constitute the biggest hindrance to peace and security on the continent. OAU's general secretary between 1989–2001, as Salim Ahmed Salim properly phrases it thus:

Conflicts have cast a dark shadow over the prospects for a united, secure and prosperous Africa which we seek to create... Conflicts have caused immense suffering to our people and, in the worst case, death. Men, women and children have been uprooted, dispossessed, deprived of their means of livelihood and thrown into exile as refugees as a result of conflicts. Conflicts have engendered hate and division among our people and undermined the prospects of the long term stability and unity of our countries and Africa as a whole. Since much energy, time and resources have been devoted to meeting the exigencies of conflict, our countries have been unable to harness the energies of our people and target them to development (OAU, 1992, p.3).

The emphasis is that insecurity and instability will continue if conflicts persist. Even though there are efforts geared to achieve peace through countless initiatives, interventions, and commitments by the UN, African governments and local groups and parties, conflicts can still be found in many parts of Africa and are far from being completely eradicated. This work argues that hoped-for-results are not forthcoming because the sources of these conflicts have not been adequately attended to. It is on this basis that we postulate that peacekeeping operations alone, as the single most used tool in dispute and crisis situations, is not sufficient. The remedy lies elsewhere. This work takes a closer look at some of these conflicts, the measures taken to end them as well as the effects of peace support operations in those situations. The goal is to develop recommendations on an informed and credible basis which will be instrumental in developing and transforming Africa.

5.2 THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT

Conflict arises when human interests and ulterior motives clash. According to Ira William Zartman, a USA conflict researcher:

conflict stems from the basic fact of human interdependence. Seeing to satisfy their needs, wants and desires, people make demands upon themselves, upon the physical environment, upon other people and upon whatever organization and institution that appear to be in a position to help them (Stedman, 1996, p.370).

Stanger, on his part, states that conflict is:

a situation in which two or more human beings desire goods which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other, but not both... each party is mobilizing energy to obtain a goal, a desired object or situation and each party perceives the other as a barrier to that goal (Stanger, 1967, p.16).

The British Defense Doctrine, 1996, defines conflict as a misunderstanding between leaders, or between groups or between individuals. It is basically a human problem. For Deng, Kimaru and Zartman, conflict is superfluous in the sense that the points of disagreements are not well defined by both opposing factions, hence the perceived tensions (Kimaru, et al, 1996, p.XX). For Coser, conflict is bound to arise in every human group due to the divergent interests and opinions in leadership style, expectations, resource control and choice of leaders, etc (Rose, 1995, p.119).

While it is true that every conflict has reasons and motives that trigger it, African conflicts are best described by Stedman. He argued that what brings about conflicts in Africa is basically tied to the collectivist culture widely practiced in Africa. Collectivist culture bothers on the individual versus the community. The individual is not just the product of the community but at large, he or she is bound to the privileges and sanctions of the community as against personal desires or choice. Stedman also identified divergent ethnicities and distribution of common wealth and power as possible trigger of conflict in African setting. In determining equity, balance and fairness, tensions are generated that are capable of escalating (Stedman, 1996). This definition best describes the accepted concept by most scholars. His idea explains that the motives behind all those conflicts can be summarized with the following: control issues and concentration of political power, fights over resource control as well as its distribution, corruption and the greed over government funds, long lasting economic enslavement, destitution and theft, ethnic dominion, and poverty. He goes on to state that “Armed conflict is described as war” (Stedman, 1996). While, several different forms of conflict can be found, this study is concerned with the armed and thus violent conflicts, which often turned into war - mostly between governments and numerous disagreeing groups and factions. Those armed conflicts can

be seen as war, and therefore the same form of legality can be applied to those situations. Peacekeeping describes the legal condition used to secure peace and will be reviewed next.

Brown points out five main conglomerated factors identified as social, economic, political, structural and cultural factors. Political factor entails weak state structures that lead to the social exclusion of parts of the population by lack of political structures and legitimacy, ineffective and discriminatory governing policies and economic systems, poverty, development problems, weak economic diversification, cultural and religious discrimination (Brown, 1996, p.13). Conflicts between states mainly have their roots in disagreements over border control. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), founded in 1963, spent their first two decades creating boundaries of freedom for Africa and later changed their focus goals, in the 80s and 90s, to fight against the injustices in Africa's international economic system.

Corruption of powerful individuals, as well as, poverty and human right abuses, lead to underdevelopment in the economic and political spheres, and, inevitably, armed conflicts between and within the member states. All these made OAU's ambitions of peace, security and stability in post-colonial Africa rather challenging. Inadequate improvements in the economic and political environment forced African elites internally as well as externally to be more liable for their actions in the economic and political field. A major turning point in this development marks the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, when the Cold War ended. With the East and West ceasing their decades-long conflict, it also had a major impact on the political world in Africa.

With many African states losing their old Eastern European Socialist State allies, strong political tension arose, since numerous contradicting political movements were established. The result was the reviving of old internal and external disputes of different ethnic, cultural and

religious groups which often resulted in conflict within states as well as between states. This sudden development resulted in the 1990s OAU declaration by the Assembly of States and Government to work towards peace through rapid resolutions to get those new conflicts under control. The idea was the recognition and a more dynamic approach to the new nature of the conflicts from inter-state to intra-state and can be seen as a turning point for the OAU.

While, there were numerous efforts of governments and the OAU itself to achieve peace on the continent, intra-state conflicts, especially, grew to a point where they were considered an international affair. Worldwide media coverage of the various war zones, coupled with widespread poverty along with starvation, resulted in a global outcry with the African elites and the populace realizing how the continent destroyed itself from within and that more actions were needed to end this miserable situation. African leaders began to share the recognition and major realization that economic growth and prosperity can only be achieved after resolving current and potential conflicts between the member states of the AU (or formally OAU). This led to the political elite committing themselves to a path of democratization on the basis of the principle of non-interference with concepts of sovereignty. This major breakthrough for the AU member states can be seen as a turning point and a new level for conflict resolution.

This breakthrough declaration puts Africa as the main force to solve their problems. It stood in contrast to previous times where international non-African support was expected. With that, the focus shifted to the AU as the main force to undertake conflict/crisis management, prevention and resolution. While the involvements of the member states themselves vastly differed, the AU in general took the huge step in facilitating and providing support on a financial, consultative and institutional basis for the conflict zones.

Following the 29th Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government (Ordinary Session), the declaration containing the proposed prevention, management and resolution mechanism was implemented. In detail, the mechanism featured three levels of authority: the Ambassadorial level, the Ministerial level, and the level of Heads of State and Government, and was supervised by the Bureau of the Assembly of OAU Heads and States and Government. The General Secretariat and the Office of the Secretary General and Conflict Management Center is the operational unit responsible at the lower scale. In addition to that, the OAU Peace Fund was established to collect donations and contributions to the cause from Africa and the rest of the world. The fall of the Soviet Union, which led to many African States losing their allies, has been mentioned. Along with that, the states also lost their external intervention powers to end conflicts, as noted in the example of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

From one day to the other, Africa continually lost its geopolitical importance, which led to the unwillingness of foreign superpowers to directly get involved with inner-African conflicts to secure peace, stability and security. This triggered new ways of thinking for African leaders in initiating and imposing preventative, especially non-military, actions for said conflicts in contrast to using armed force. In detail, those newly implemented measures featured four major aspects: confidence building measures, trust creation on the basis of cooperation (for shared development problems), the identification of mechanisms to sustain peace, and the reinforcement of bonds for peace, democracy and development. Next to those major four methods, there are several others defined in the Framework of the Mandate for Preventive Diplomacy. In summation, they may be described as preventive actions on an international, national, and regional level which established supportive structures with institutional capacity and a network for cooperation for organizations.

Another important mention has to be the 1996 OAU convention which brought together elites like intellectuals and key decision makers for the purpose of finding and sharing ideas regarding the management of future or potential conflicts. The overall goal was the creation of a reliable network of forces that had the ability to collect detailed and up-to-date information of said potential conflicts. Next to the collection of the information was its analyzing, to be used as the basis for early political action through the Secretary General and the Central Organ which were the recipients of the results. Challenging was the problem of the accuracy and quality of the information and the resulting decisions, since the OAU member states partially had serious economic problems. But disregarding that, one can note positively that the member states recognized their important role within the organization, on the basis of the established framework for the conflict mechanism. Silver lining to this was the qualitative growth of the organization since its improved and more active ways of working showed that the possibility for constructive cooperation was present and the organization really helped to improve relations and resolve conflicts that positively correlated with the sovereignty and non-interference of the member states. Having discussed AU's role in the conflicts of Africa, the next step is to have a closer look at the organizational structure itself.

5.3 THE CONCEPT OF PEACEKEEPING

The basic principle of the United Nations Peacekeeping is to maintain, and to restore global peace where it is lacking, and to intervene in conflicting zones. This is enforced via three lenses which include consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except when necessary and with the approval of the United Nations' Security Council (UN, August 1997, p.11). This abstract concept, in other words, describes the idea of a combat-ready action force,

which has the ability to internationally intervene and enforce ceasefire in regions with armed conflicts. Lawrence Onoja, a former Nigerian general and politician described UN peacekeeping operations as “essentially a practical mechanism developed by the UN in order to contain and control armed conflicts and to facilitate their resolution by peaceful means” (Onoja, 1996, p.2).

The Egyptian diplomat and politician, Boutros Ghali, defined it as “the deployment of an UN presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all parties concerned, normally involving military or police personnel and frequently civilians as well” (Boutros, UNDP, p.11). The UN encyclopedia on the other hand, defines the concept of peacekeeping in classical terms - based on the criticalness of the situation:

In cases where the dispute is still relatively under control, the UN may undertake observer operations involving the stationing of UN personnel in the area on a quasi-permanent basis to supervise cease-fire and truce lines and conduct immediately investigations of any complaints of violations. If full scale hostilities have broken out, military operations may be necessary to bring the fighting to a halt and to maintain the peace until final settlement has been reached (UN, 1971, p.46).

Peacekeeping has the possibility to enforce a situation for peacemaking and conflict resolution through suppression of the [armed] crisis on the basis of military intervention. This suppression opens up the possibility for mediation, negotiations, and reconciliation which are the hallmarks and groundwork for genuine ceasefire and ultimately, the end of conflict. It is in this light that Celestine Oyom Basse, a Nigerian Professor, stated that “in conflict management, peacekeeping is the third most important methods to be deployed in the novel techniques of conflict diplomacy” (Basse, 1993, p, 23).

From the above premise, peacekeeping may be seen as a democratic tool, essential to the resolution or at least control of conflicts. The possibilities of the operations cover the full

bandwidth, reaching from diplomacy to intervention, all on the basis of the principles and conditions defined by the UN organs: the Security Council and the General Assembly. In the meantime the United Nations peacekeeping encourage regional or local peacekeeping methods as long as they do not contravene the United Nations Charter, article 52 to be precise (UN Charter, Article 52).

5.4 THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict resolution can be coordinated in three steps: the analyzing, reviewing and resolving of the disparity between the parties involved. Ndiomu says it is to

...diffuse the negative emotional energy involved; enable the conflicting parties to understand and resolve their difference; resolve the differences so as to achieve solutions that are not imposed, which have been agreed by all the key parties, and which address the root cause of the conflict (Ndiomu, 1999, p.15).

The ultimate goal is an acceptable agreement which addresses the reasons for the said conflict and should lead to a change of behaviors, attitudes and structures which had before been violent, hostile and exploitative. In contrast to violent interactions, the applied principles as identified by some scholars are negotiation, mediation and reconciliation. The provisions found in chapter 7 and 8 of the UN charter had been adapted to the much needed worldwide peace and security. Chapter 7, article 42 features the concept of peacekeeping, while it was only the provision for peace enforcement before the adaptation. The groundwork for any peacekeeping operation now has the following terms and conditions: Consent of all parties involved prior to invitation; Stationing of international military force from mission states which are commanded by the international body and responsible for the mission; Intervention mission should already signal a ceasefire agreement; Impartiality is mandatory; Prohibition of force, except in self-defense; Full financial, personnel and logistical support by the participating countries established prior to the

mission. All those aspirations are under the light of promoting peace and conflict resolutions measures through consent-encouraging techniques.

The AU secretary general reiterated that conflict is still at large in Africa despite the huge effort made by the stakeholders of the organisation (Gbov, 2004, p, 112). Main reasons were the numerous limitations the two mechanisms were faced with. One could even make the case that the UN and not the AU was responsible for most conflict resolutions in Africa. This shows itself in the widespread belief of the insignificance of AU's presence in the said conflicts. However, a cursory look at AU's involvements in several conflicts in some African nations is important. Even when it was in a passive role, it helped solve the conflicts with measures like information and consultation and more importantly it pressured the international community to get involved with the conflict. Thus, AU acted in the resolution of conflicts in Burundi, Sudan, Angola, The Comoros, The Central African Republic, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Western Sahara. This suggests the need for peacekeeping and conflict resolution in African within the context of African worldview so that the efforts of both the UN and AU will be more effective.

5.5. PEACE KEEPING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICA

Narrowing it down to this work at hand and in consideration to the UN methods of peace keeping and conflict resolutions, the processes involved in the peaceful settlement of disputes - negotiation, mediation, et cetera - in the history and life of Igbos, shows that peacekeeping itself predates the UN system. The good thing is that it entails achieving a peaceful solution. This is why "the new UN concept of peacekeeping and its effectiveness brings it into the realm of conflict resolution." In other words, conflict resolution tallies with the peace-keeping functions

in conflict management. Looking at the Liberian and Rwandan crises in light of peacekeeping goals of intervention, prevention and post settlement peace building, issues still linger on. This is not to say that peacekeeping itself failed as a vital tool and relevant mechanism, but it means that more questions must be asked; like why did it fail in these particular situations.

In both Rwanda and Liberia there were possible aggressions on a historical and ethnic basis. To a point, argued by Adisa, the Rwandan crisis was kept alive because of the nature of their historical and social relations manipulated through systematic oppression of the two ethnic wings. (Adisa, 1996, p.13) Fights for power based on ethnic identity can be seen as the most important issue of political separation which inevitably led to ethnic cleansing in form of the genocide. While there are many complex matters that led to the conflict in the first place, lies, mistrust and aggressions between and even within the involved parties, inevitably, destroyed the peace process. Along with that, crooked communication between the different commands in the several territories led to low security and the horrible humanitarian crisis (The Blue Helmets, 387,389). It was this particular situation which destroyed all works of the UN and ECOWAS for a peaceful resolution.

From the above it may be deduced that the peacekeeping operation did not manage to properly react to the situation and therefore failed to fix the conflicts. The failing of those missions understandably led to discussions on the African continent regarding its relevance. This depicts that peacekeeping, though necessary, cannot be seen as an exclusive tool for conflict resolution in Africa. Furthermore, the UN and regional organizations must find sustainable solutions to conquer the problems and validate their peacekeeping intentions.

5.6 PEACE IN AFRICA AND ITS CHALLENGES

Following the decolonization of Africa, the majority of countries are having one-party systems or even military governments without any room for true democracy or democratic institutions. Administration was reserved for the elites which established and participated in corruption and favoritism. All those unfavorable developments led to Africa's political world being under the building pressure, mounted by numerous rival parties involved. While there are several reasons for this development, one of the major ones was the prominent role that colonial institutions still play in Africa's political realizations. The colonialists established structures that endorsed ethnic hegemonies more than national preeminence. Along with that, the omnipresent economic struggles of the African continent aggravated the situation, which hindered nation building and development.

The decline of the demand for African primary products on the international market exacerbated this problem immensely. This led to African factories being forced to operate on the lower end of capacity utilization. To make matters worse, agricultural productivity declined due to neglect of the sector and the making of wrong decisions. The final issue that overshadows the others is the exorbitant external debts of many African nations which led to spending cuts, especially in the public sector. All these problems combined, clearly had their consequences such as dissatisfaction, poverty, and starvation. These last three factors again had their effect on Africa's population and resulted in the phenomenon like child soldiers or trafficking and inevitably armed conflicts and violent coups.

While the majority of African States have struggled with these problems in the past, one can see how things are now beginning to change due to the strong-willed and continuing

cooperation of the OAU member states. Recognizing the hard efforts and their positive results may be one thing, but now it is indispensable to support and further encourage the states. The OAU now has come to a point where its focus is allowed to shift. It can now concentrate on sustaining the newly won harmony, preventing potential conflicts, and hopefully, reaching the desperately needed African brotherhood and solidarity.

To further enforce the democratization of the continent, it is of the highest importance to encourage the states that have already taken this path in order to lead Africa to peace, stability and economic development. While one can still see problems in this development, especially with the concept of sovereignty, the continent as a whole appears to be moving towards the right direction. A look at the 1990 Declaration, the 1993 Declaration for the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, as well as, the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community gives a clear picture of African leaders having the willingness to change and work together to achieve the integration of their economies. In addition to that, there is a growing number of OAU member states actively seeking for help from the organization to either prevent, manage or resolve internal conflicts. If one looks at these developments as a whole, it can be seen how the economic integration and democratization is getting more and more participants among the African nations. The next logical step is to strengthen those countries in their democratic development, and, in the end, find ways of working together in order to establish a prosperous and united Africa.

Besides that, there is the challenge of securing consent which is indispensable to impartiality and to building of trust and confidence. Along with that, there is the need for trustworthy public information in order to fight propaganda or any form of wrong public

information which are a burden on any peace process. Another challenge and problem are the weak and poorly trained forces used in those peacekeeping missions. Especially from the involved African countries, one can see how desperately an efficient and standby force with adequate equipment is needed. While African countries do not have a problem with the manpower of their forces, it already starts with the lack of the basic professional training.

Often there are criticisms on the legal status of peacekeeping missions, but one has to make it clear that the UN operational rules are clear within its legal framework which can be found in the articles of the charter. Since armed conflict is considered war, the legality that applies to war scenarios is also applicable to armed conflict. This provides peacekeeping as a legal condition to enforce peace through an action which is meant to promptly resolve an unfavorable situation with parties reluctant to any interference. In other words, this suggests that if the parties refuse to cooperate with the Security Council or disobey the decisions and agreements, it can legally impose punitive measures or sanctions in order to enforce peace, and to force the involved parties to negotiations. The stability of peace is mostly threatened by unsettled root causes like poverty, religious and ethnic tensions - including resource disputes. To truly achieve lasting peace, those root causes must be addressed through commitment, involvement and management. This is why the director general of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Mrs. Joy Ogwu, promotes synergies amongst African nations, and regional and international institutions in order to create a machinery that fights those root causes. This thesis suggests that, if the international community succeeds in conquering the two basic problems of underfunding and the fight against said root causes, there will be a strong basis to achieve peace and security.

5.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 5

This chapter took a cursory look at the concept of peace building in order to prove that, while it might still be a necessary tool for conflict resolution, it is not sufficient to ensure lasting peace. Numerous times, it did not succeed as an international mechanism of the UN to resolve conflicts, and can, therefore, be labeled as inadequate and as not the final frontier for success. One can find several reasons for this development. Most operations were insufficiently funded as well as not equipped with trained professionals and personnel in general - leading to hindrances in its success. Again, there is often no clear and adequate UN mandate which leads to constraint in missions that had problems to quickly react to new developments and adequately respond to them. Along with that, there is also a rather nonchalant stance from the West towards Africa's conflicts, which led to a lack of international attention and with that inadequate reactions and responses to resolve those conflicts. This often led to missing the point, where an intervention could have quickly brought the situation under control. This deployment delay even complicated most of the conflicts and crises. If one looks at Rwanda in October 1990, one can see that it took the OAU one year and the UN three years to get involved and intervene in the conflict. The logical conclusion here is that the time period it takes from the incident happening till a peacekeeping operation is put together is just too long. Those delays in the decision making, result in the growth of violent conflicts and, inevitably, result in the humanitarian crises which often resulted to human casualties and refugee crises. Next to the slow decision making, is the huge issue of funding. One can also see that challenges confronting peacekeeping add to the failure of the missions. The first challenge being a better defined peace accord that will establish political settlement.

In line with above-said, this chapter suggests that it is essential for African states and regions to take the leading role and, therefore, the responsibility to stabilize the continent. The UN, as a supernational organization, would have to take a step back from intervening themselves and will have to find a new role as a support force for regional organizations like the AU, ECOWAS or the South African Development Commission (ASDC). This would open up new possibilities for them to solve conflicts in their own territories, without the burden of the UN framework, which has proven to be languid to properly address issues on the continent.

However, it cannot instantly give all the responsibility to the regional organizations. This explains why there is a need for the UN to review and renew its rapid deployment and intervention tools in order to make them useful to the African reality of quickly emerging conflicts. This would also include a new practice regarding the respect towards people's culture and traditional practices, since they are a key issue to successful conflict management and resolution. Not only quick intervention, consensus agreements are a major factor as well. So in order to be truly successful, UN should be more understanding to the sensitivity of the involved parties. The worldview of the parties should also be on the table of discussion.

CHAPTER 6

APPRAISAL, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

6.1 APPRAISAL

This thesis has focused on peaceful environment in Igbo spirituality. The emphasis was on how nature is factored on harmonious peaceful environment. In other words, life is better and well appreciated when humans and nature fall in love with each other. Peaceful environment is a universal variable because it is dependent on human actions and reactions to natural environment. Hence the focus on how the Igbo nation understands peace vis-à-vis the natural world they live in. This study addressed two hypotheses in qualitative formulae and style that narrowed African worldview on peace to the Igbo worldview on same; for the single purpose of highlighting the relevance and the importance of Igbo spirituality in relation to peaceful coexistence. This research has argued exponentially that peaceful environment is possible in Igbo spirituality. In other words, our world would be a better place if the Igbo understanding of nature is explored, harnessed and adopted. A comparison was made between the United Nations Peacekeeping mission and peace concept in Igbo spirituality. This thesis is a call to explore, rediscover and maximize the potentials inherent in Igbo spirituality which bothers on nature and its preservation.

Due to the increasing insecurities, the survival of humanity is strictly dependant on healthy practices that bother on nature preservation and conservation of the green environment. Human attitudes towards the natural environment must always be appraised for a sustainable organic evolution. It is believed, as suggested by this thesis, that nature can both be tamed and harnessed to satisfy human needs of which peaceful coexistence and harmonious living are

expected positive outcomes. The mentioned activities have a direct or indirect influence on the Igbo spirituality, because by these one realizes Igbos' interactions with nature and environment. On the other hand, there are destructive activities to the environment which have a negative effect on the Igbo spirituality, such as indiscriminate grazing, fishing in forbidden waters or fetching firewood in sacred forests. By contrast, humans are dependent on shelter, food and herbal medicinal; so, in that respect, the sacred places which are important for the religious functions were desecrated to have sufficient space.

The influence of Christianity and Islam in Africa affects and interferes with the spiritual thinking of the Igbo on their cultural activity. Also, it additionally decreased the adoring of the environment by preaching against the worshipping and adoring of trees, animals and other creatures. Due to the influence of the world religions, a part of the Igbo accepted the new faith, which resulted in a higher degradation of the environment. This is caused to the fact that sacred places/objects were converted into something else. This fact was clearly highlighted in Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*.

Urbanization is another important topic that is considered in the practice of the Igbo spirituality. Due to this background, people from the rural areas abandon their indigenous homes hoping for a better employment opportunity and efficient pastures in urban areas. This development is rampant in Africa. Furthermore, this geographical change affects the lifestyle greatly and reduces the spiritual values and beliefs which Africans attach to the natural objects.

An important reason why some Igbos are incredulous nowadays is due to scientific discoveries/modern education. A decisive reason for this change is the opinion that the Igbo religion is brutal, outdated and animistic, and is seen as ancestral worship. The traditional Igbo

lifestyle is, in their understanding, an old-fashioned belief in spirits. In this context, the Igbo beliefs were enormously influenced by this worldview. The question that begs for an answer is whether or not this redirection is still a part of the modernization. The worldview nowadays reckons that the Igbo spirituality is out of date. With the rising modernization, some Igbos try to adapt by following the new trend. The influence of the western practices on the Igbo spiritualities has provoked identity crisis and conflict of values. This affected the Igbo spirituality and practices in a negative way.

Lopsided formal education is another important point, because it leads to adversely affect the traditional Igbo in spiritual and in the personal values. Through the influence of the western culture, the Igbo spirit got replaced and, in this correlation, destroyed. Due to colonization, Africans were coerced to accept the education system of their colonial masters such as languages, practices and formal education. As a result, the Igbo needed to abandon their spirituality. By assuming the western culture in the education system, the Igbo spirituality beliefs decreased and beliefs in totems, taboos and sacred sites subsided.

This thesis underlines also the Igbo spiritual concern on the environment. For the Igbo, spiritual practices are of heavenly and earthly bodies of paramount importance, but many regulations and rules of their use do not exist anymore. To face the needs of the Igbo, they pacify some of them. In the Igbo belief system the environment is the heart of the spirits, descendants and the deceased. Also, the Igbo manage the use of their lands through the belief in taboos, totems and sacred objects. It was showed that the environment is vitally important for mankind and need to be treated with greatest care. The research resulted in the challenges that the Igbo spirituality needs to confront. Such challenges include the relegation of African traditional belief

system to the background by the emergence of foreign religions (mainly Christianity and Islam), negative influence of urbanization and its consequent problems such as deforestation, pollution, population explosion, incompatible education systems, et cetera. It needs to be espoused that the Igbos can develop their practices sustainably. This will have a good influence on the environment and future generations, and will work only when, and if, these noble abilities are not further threatened to annihilation.

To show how the Igbo spirituality can be integrated into the modern environmental ethics and to improve the understanding of it, this research has made a detailed analysis of various approaches. This thesis will let people of all generations be aware of how necessary it is for modern times to integrate or blend indigenous knowledge and practices into the overwhelming westernization that is swallowing the African continent. This thesis shows also that the friendliness to the environment and respect to the human and nonhuman elements of the indigenous environmental ethics, guaranteed peace in any given environment.

6.2 RECOMMENDATION

6.2.1 The influence of humans and the environmental degradation of flora, fauna and other environmental hazards that the action of humans originates are the critical points stated in the world stage and in several academic works. Therefore, this research makes suggestions to conserve the environmental resources and encourage the environmental ethics embedded in the Igbo spirituality.

6.2.2 One can rely on indigenous knowledge for more efficient and all-embracing development. The past showed already that laws with ingredients of African traditional belief

system have positive effects and such, can guarantee the protection of our bio-diversified existence. The Oromo Forest Ethics of Ethiopia can be taken as a good paradigm. The ethics are the key-factor to cohabit mankind with the society. Therefore, the African culture and tradition which improve these trends need to be protected.

6.2.3 The needs of the Igbo environment are incompatible with the western world ideas to control the environmental hazards and harnessing of resources. Therefore, the western methods should not replace completely the existing values and ethics of the traditional Igbos, especially those concerning the environment. According to this thesis, the knowledge of the Igbo and the western methods should be conflated, but Igbo leaders should remain at the forefront of the Igbo environment development. It is necessary that the leaders put effort in discovering the ideas and knowledge of the traditional Igbos to make progress in the development.

6.2.4 For the development of the environmental ethics, it is essential to guide ethical dialogues. This will remind the government and the local people of their common goal of being responsible for the environment. The central significance is the input of both sides to build a sound environmental principle. The thesis underlines also the relevance of documentation and constructive criticism of the environmental spirituality. The documentation is vital for the recording of the existing knowledge of the Igbo and to achieve a consecutive improvement of them. Furthermore, the constructive criticism would encourage the increase and development of Igbo knowledge.

6.2.5 Materialists and utilitarian ideologists are wrong in their thinking which states that the value of the earth and humans are resources. Any environmental ethics that has nothing to do with theism is not supportive enough for mankind with ecological ethics that will approach the

momentary issues concerning the environmental justice and ecological challenges, which follows from the association with imperialism and globalization. Negative environmental practices that affect the earth environment, which is the heritage of the communities, and threatens the biosphere and human life, should be prevented with morality. Furthermore, it is important that the Igbos get familiarized with the environmental situation. This can be achieved by community awareness programs and educational consciousness. These two mentioned ways need to contain the danger of deforestation, bush burning, illegal mining, and pollution of any kind. The sustainability of the forest needs to be enforced in the Igbo land. Moreover, the government needs to fund this education from its base. This will reduce the further expenses of the government in healthcare, agriculture and other sectors of the economy.

6.2.6 A change can only be reached when the people work together. This is why the traditional Igbo need to be responsible for their actions and collaborate in decision making which can only be achieved when the Igbo have a good leadership. Thus, community heads, opinion leaders, the state institutions, civil society groups and the NGOs need to enter the foreground. The responsibility for the sustainability, management and protection of the environment should be decentralized, so that the government is not the only one responsible. It is important that the people are more self-responsible in preserving and managing their environment. However, the government needs to support this change by providing logistics and funding the people.

6.2.7 Related to the waste problem, it is important to support the private and public companies as well as the non-profit organizations so that they can adapt the regional manufacturing of products and show the costumers how to dispose waste. Therefore, they must adapt the “Polluter Pay Principle (PPP)”. This principle contains the payment of the customer for the products and

their management. Additionally, the organizations and companies should give an incentive to motivate the people to return co-products. This initiative will promote the Igbo population to manage the waste. Furthermore, recycling plants could transfer the waste into new useable products, the plastic waste into usable plastic and biological waste into bio-energy or as compost that boost agricultural yields.

6.2.8 Forests are often endangered because trees are important for the Igbos in generating energy for cooking and other household activities. This has a huge negative impact on the land, sacred places and sources of Igbo spirituality. The remains of the Igbo belief system reveal that the environment is for God and therefore it needs the highest protection against any harm. Those who neglect it will be incurring the wrath of nature.

6.2.9 The main focus of this recommendation is on the sacredness of nature and on the demand of nature's conservation. A significant statement is the guiding and respect to everything that exists on this earth. The Igbo see and esteem the environment as their other self. Moreover, Igbo people consider that the environmental friendliness is important and needs the highest regard. This knowledge is passed orally while environmental ethics are different in every single culture group. This work encourages mankind to live in a respectful way and in good relationship with the environment and all its members. It gives credence to why it is said that no man is an island.

6.2.10 It is possible to unite the indigenous environmental ethics with the modern environmental ethics. The most important aspect is that the modern environmental ethics needs a deeper understanding of the indigenous environmental ethics. This will help to prevent ignorance and open the opportunity to accept the good and genuine aspects and to integrate them into the modern research. This unification of views between both sides can be beneficial, since both parts

can learn from each other, increase their knowledge and learn to accept each other's concepts, as well as for establishing a higher awareness for the betterment of the world.

6.3 CONCLUSION

The evaluation of the peaceful environmental ethics in Igbo spirituality which this thesis has focused on depends on the indigenous and traditional thought and life patterns. The emphasis lays on the development of the ecological principles related to the Igbo spirituality, which includes the ontological status of humans, the natural world and duties to it. This thesis attempts to comprehend the ecological thought of the Igbo, and in addition to show the significance of the humans in protecting and preserving other participants in their environment. It has turned out that nature and natural world are highly appreciated and through humans well taken care of and respected. The degradation of the environment is in this context prevented by the Igbo spirituality. The earth is endangered through human's exploitation and destruction and the environment is a part of it. Therefore, the resources should be used with care for the benefit of mankind as well as for the future of the environment. The consequences of the environmental destruction are ecocide, soil erosion, deforestation, desertification, poverty, biodiversity's destruction, war and conflicts over earth's resources, water and air pollution.

This study has revealed that the Igbo have a sound and well-grounded ethics and values in Igbo spirituality that are capable of sustaining life in all its form within and outside the African continent and ensuring environmental peaceful coexistence. The ethics and morals inherent in African spirituality is a historical heritage that is open to reform and dynamism. These ethics and values are passed down from one generation to another through oral communication, socialization, education, traditional religions, customs, and sages. The Igbo have

the opinion that the earth has an intrinsic value and this mirrored in their land preservation and conservation, which is their cultural heritage. Igbo's belief considers the degrading of nature as a great offence and needs to be avoided as much as possible. Consequently, the Igbo spirituality guards the nature and life. It promotes peace. It encourages enabling environment for peaceful living.



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