



Maintaining an Igbo Peaceful Culture in a Disruptive World

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Abstract

Ours today is a world of multi-cultural setting. As the cultures vary from place to place, so do the ideosyncracies of the individuals of the cultures vary. This difference in ideologies and understandings continue to cause conflicts and turbulence among the persons and regions of the world. Like Chinua Achebe would title his magnum opus, things have really fallen apart and the center cannot hold. For this reason, there arises the question about how a particular culture and people could maintain a peaceful existence amidst a disruptive world like the one we find ourselves in today. This work employs the hermeneutical method in its bid to explore the appreciation of nature by the ‘homoafrikanus’ (with particular emphasis on the Igbo man). The work establishes that Igbo man’s harmonious living in his environment, coupled with his care and respect for the human person enriches his life and gives peace to his existence in such a turbulent world as ours. It also proposes an effort to be made towards achieving harmony of the soul by the Igbo man which will inevitably enhance peace, unity and progress between persons and the society. 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: Igbo, Peace, cosmology, Disruptive world, culture

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the symbiotic unanimity between man and his moral responsibility towards his natural environment remains a major area of interest for exploration in this disruptive world. In recognizing and appreciating well known multidisciplinary approaches to these global concerns, this



research focuses on the *Maintaining an Igbo Peaceful Culture in a Disruptive World*. 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. 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.

Thus, in Igbo cosmology, the earth called *Ani*, is the handwork of God, the Creator and Maker of all things, as 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). 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 culture 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 or disruption. Therefore, this research explores the unalloyed sense of harmonious existence rooted in the Igbo peaceful culture in the modern world.

In this study of the Igbo cosmology with its constitutive elements like norms, customs and practices, the controversial arguments in favor for/against the growth of the Igbo culture are taken into consideration. Hence, Igbo spirituality is anchored on the human person and his environment. For the above reason, this paper explored how far the Igbos have also properly utilized the natural environment. 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. 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 paper intends to refute the claims that the historical black man is barbaric, crude and unread (Conrad, 1982). 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.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

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

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 way of life 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, 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. 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? This paper 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 society.

THESIS STATEMENT

The outstanding fact in this research is that to this day, Igbo culture 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 culture to wane, given to the fast and furious approach with which Africa embraced foreign values, practices and cultures. These surviving elements of Igbo culture 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 culture is a means or vital tool to addressing current environmental challenges that besiege the world. Consequently, Igbo culture treasures the human person and the environment in which he or she lives and operates. Thus it is peaceful despite the modern challenges.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs the methodological tools of exposition and analysis of the sources of the Igbo culture. 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. Igbo cosmology 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.

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 cosmology. 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 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 Igbo cosmology. One can also appreciate the exigency of this paper 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 indigenous setting and the world at large.



PEACE AND PERSONHOOD IN THE IGBO SOCIETY

THE IGBO: IDENTITY AND BELIEF PATTERN

The Igbo is an African ethnic group – alongside Hausa and Yoruba – of over 60 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. 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; “*Igbo enweghi Eze*” – the Igbo people have no king. An elders’ council decides the affairs of the village community (Achebe, 2008). 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). The Igbo of the ancestral cult also has special significance. Funeral ceremonies are held to pay homage to spirits and gods (Ogbaa, 1995).

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 or her 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). 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 or her integration and the wiser he or she becomes (Nnoruka, 2009). 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 or 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).”

This means that one does not lose his identity in the group but retains his or her 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 culture. 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). The passing of the individual does not mean he or she is no longer a part of the community for he or 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). 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). 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). With this in mind, an attempt to grasp the idea of how human person is perceived in Igbo society is needed.



THE HUMAN PERSON IN IGBO COSMOLOGY

The nature of the human person is that of one who engages in spiritual practice (Casmire et al, 2014). 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). 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). 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: 'mادuka' meaning that man is in charge of other created things (Nwala, 1985) 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 (Casmire et al, 2014). 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). 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). 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)." 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). 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). Consequently, the idea of 'mmuo' is heavily dependent to its context, as it includes the elements of spirit, emotion, and consciousness (Nwala, 1985). 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. For 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). 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). The saying "Onye na Chi ya," meaning, "Each with his own Chi," eminently highlights this belief. Without a guide the Igbo life is vulnerable and could be disruptive.

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). The societies constitute spiritual guides since they deter the community members from committing crimes against the land (Casmire et al, 2014). 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 (Ackermann, 2012). This prevents the disintegration of the community hence the existence of peace. This paper attempts to justify why this peaceful Igbo culture should be maintained in this modern world punctuated with various atrocities. Thus, if the elements of Igbo cultural values are adopted, the world will be less disruptive.

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).”

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 (Ackermann, 2012). As Rolston stated, man is in the center 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).

It is the duty of an individual to abide diligently 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). 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. 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). 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. The reason is to checkmate any form of disruption. Peace is very important for the Igbos. Hence they struggle hard to maintain a peaceful environment.

THE CONCEPT OF PEACE IN IGBO SOCIETY

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 (Ackermann, 2012). 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 for 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).” 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 culture uniquely defines how they relate with strangers.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

This research makes suggestions to conserve the environmental resources and encourage the environmental ethics embedded in the Igbo culture. 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. This applies to the concerns of the environmentalist who tried to differentiate the impacts as: "means-based", which is based on the farmer's production methods, and "effect-based", which is the impact that farming methods have on the farming system or on emissions to the environment.” (Van der Warf et al, 2002). The *Oromo Forest Ethics* of Ethiopia can be taken as a good paradigm (Kelbessa, 2015). The ethics are the key-factor to cohabit mankind with the society. Therefore, the Igbo culture and tradition which improve these trends need to be protected. Ever before the coming of the colonial masters in Igbo land, Igbos have a sound traditional means of keeping their environment clean, because to disrupt nature is to disrupt God as well as humans. As the world is becoming more disruptive, attention should be given to sound indigenous cultural values like the Igbo culture.

A change can only be reached when the people work together. This also applies to the UN peacekeeping mission in Africa. The need to understand indigenous cultural values will help reduce problems and failures inherent in the UN efforts to bring peace in some part of the world. Thus,



Mona stated that “despite the failures, the Council now expects U.N. forces to conduct strategic and ever more aggressive operations to help stabilize increasingly hostile environments and to neutralize insurgents” (Mona, 2018). This is why the traditional African communities need to be responsible for their actions and collaborate in decision making which can only be achieved when the Africans have 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. This in turn will supplement the efforts of the UN, “As the mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) shows, some may start with a peace process, but then end up with a protection mandate. It may thus be a mistake to make a principled decision that peacekeeping missions should, or should not, do peace-building tasks.” (Cedric, 2018). So many issues troubling many African nations are tribal in nature. Thus, the attention of the UN and its peacekeeping missions must be redirected to the cultural issues and differences which caused the problems or wars. Thus, “The peacebuilding dimension of peacekeeping not only depends on the context and mandate, but also on the evolving nature of the context and the need for peacekeeping missions to be able to continuously adapt. “ (Cedric, 2018).

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. 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. The nature of the Igbo cultural tenets and values could be linked to the position of Mousseau who sees the “economic conditions with institutions of governance and conflict, distinguishing personal clientelist economies from impersonal market-oriented ones, identifying the latter with permanent peace within and between nations.” (Mousseau, 2009).

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. Thus peaceful environment and absence of war is clearly inherent in Igbo worldview. Thus, it is stated that “peacebuilding operations in these and other settings have confronted many barriers and have



achieved varying degrees of success. Yet the very attempt on the part of outsiders to undertake such measures reflects an acknowledgment of international humanitarian and human rights law and a significant shift in international attitudes and practices towards civil conflicts.” (Tom & Andy, 2004). Thus, 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. Peace is a divine attribute and gift, and ensures the preservation of the human and natural environments, and the true progress of both. This paper 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. The peaceful Igbo culture which this paper 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 paper 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.

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