

Traditional Igbo Humane Character: Nature and Application

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Abstract

One of the identities of the Igbo is their humane character ably expressed in their kindness to their immediate and distant neighbours. This traditional Igbo culture spans across their social, political and economic lives. It is this singular sterling quality of the Igbo that informs the basis and reasons for Igbo adaptability and near ubiquity at virtually every corner of the globe, where they reside and freely interact with people of different nationalities, making their contributions to the socio-political and economic developments of whichever community they find themselves. This has been the trend over the centuries, from the pre-colonial period up to the present.

INTRODUCTION

The Igbo so far lack adequate scholarly attention and coverage. This is manifest in the dearth of knowledge and literature on Igbo history and culture. E.Obiechina threw more light on this subject matter during his Ahiajioku lecture outing where he opined that:

The most important single justification for devoting an entire issue of the conch to the Igbo life and culture is that... they have up till now been inadequately exposed: Very little precise knowledge about the Igbo exists and a good deal of this little is shrouded in the mist of half-truths, misrepresentations, myths and plain misinformation.¹

Thus, absence of enough and authentic information about the Igbo, naturally stimulated various reactions and shades of opinion about them from various peoples who have either lived among them or have had one interaction or the other with them even outside Igbo land. Some build up strong feelings, negative or positive about the Igbo. Sometimes the feelings were based on unsubstantiated facts; at times the feelings were mere reflections of a people's hatred for the Igbo enterprising habit. Yet, there were people that developed natural hatred for the Igbo simply because they were predominantly Christians; not because they lacked or they failed to display the all important character of hospitality necessary for peaceful co-existence in the society. In this easy efforts are made to discuss those basic qualities of traditional Igbo humane character which the people have displayed over the centuries.

A close perusal and consideration of aspects of the Igbo political, social and economic lives reveal a good deal of practical demonstration of the traditional Igbo character and identity of hospitality from the pre-colonial era up to the present. This essay will highlight this important aspect of Igbo life with an intent of correcting some mounting prejudices against the Igbo, based on hatched erroneous view about them, and in addition make an attempt to position the Igbo rightfully as people ever sensitive and responsive to the plight of fellow humans generally over the years, irrespective of differences in language, religion, colour and culture.

TRADITIONAL IGBO HOSPITALITY IN POLITICS

In politics generally, everybody in any given society is said to be a political animal². Ideally, political power belongs to the people. For the simple reason that all men within the society could not wield political power at the same time, the people feely vested their collective political power on certain individuals within the society who exercise it on behalf of other members of the society³. Thus, it becomes imperative that the political actor must cautiously apply the use of their power in accordance to the traditional laws and customs. Marsilio talked about two types of laws in a society namely, divine and human laws⁴

According to him human law is a command of the whole body of citizens, arising directly from the deliberation of those empowered to make law, about voluntary acts of human beings to be done or avoided in this world, for the sake of attaining the best and...⁵ On the other hand Marsilio see divine laws as,

A command of God directly, without human deliberation, about voluntary acts of human beings to be done or avoided in this world for the sake of attaining the best end.⁶

The two laws focus on people, but the differences are the reward and punishment each holds for them. In addition, whereas the human law deals with people living in the society, divine law stands for the great beyond⁷. Among the Igbo, the traditional political culture would appear to stand as an amalgam of human and divine laws. It exists as a traditional value system handed down from one generation to the other for the conduct

and guidance of the society, generation after generation.

Political leadership in Igbo land is structured and regimented into the following institutions namely the King (Eze), aristocracy or the legislature (Ndi-Nze na Ozo), and the village assembly (Amala or Oha-na Eze)⁸ Each of these institutions were guided by the norms and values of the society before the advent of colonialism. In the colonial and post colonial periods, the traditional values and norms were added some Parliamentary Acts and constitutional provisions binding on citizens of the country.

At any point in time, the traditional Igbo norms and value system stood as the basic oath of office, oath of allegiance, and indeed the taboos regulating the activities of the holders of any traditional office or title. Take for instance the kings (Eze) in the pre-colonial Igbo land were said to be priestly Kings and thus performed dual functions⁹. As priests they were intermediaries between the gods, ancestors and the people. They also operated as custodians of the cultural heritage of the people¹⁰.

The cultural heritage of the people had no place for social vices of all types including corruption, dishonesty of any sort, and blood shed, among others. Deviants or defaulters who ventured into evil practices were attacked and struck down by the gods and ancestors to whom the society belonged. Everybody within the society was subject to this extant law. Both the indigenes and stranger elements were protected by the law and anyone of them stood the risk of possible attack by the gods and ancestors in the event of any social misconduct.

As noted above, the laws of the land were there for all (indigenes and strangers) to observe. All were protected by the same laws as long as one conducted his life within the ambit and confines of the laws of the land. Anti-social conducts such as shedding of blood for any reason whatsoever, yam stealing, fake claim of another person's land and incest among others, were abhorable practices that amounted to a serious breach of the taboos of the land. All such offenders, indigenes or stranger elements, run the risk of incurring the wrath of the gods.

Similarly, the king (Eze), Nze or Ozo title holder was expected to be truthful and honest while delivering judgment on cases brought before him or them¹¹. The culture made provision for cleansing rites for the King and indeed all those involved in any traditional official engagements. This cleansing rite was demonstrated in the breaking and sharing of kola nut ritual. Prior to this exercise everyone present was offered a bowl of water to wash his hands¹². The kola nuts to be shared were equally washed. This symbolic cleansing rite qualified and compelled one, a partaker to undertake and discharge his functions in a cleansed frame of mind¹³. Next, was the libation; the ancestors in the great beyond who were themselves holy members of the society were invoked to come and partake in the kola nut sharing among the cleansed living members of the society.

Having passed through the cleansing rites, the Eze and his aristocracy were deemed to be purged and purified of all dishonest spirit and ready for a sound judgment in a way to avoid the wrath of the gods¹⁴. Igbo traditional justice thus, has no special consideration for sex, status, place of origin or any other identity of the plaintiff or defendant. The title Obi of Onitsha is said to denote his position as a symbol of ancestral authority and benevolence, providing a court for settling disputes and administering justice. Thus, ill-used slaves, persecuted free-men, or fugitive offenders could take sanctuary with the King ...¹⁵

A further demonstration of the hospitality of the Obi was clearly expressed in the fact that he was identified with his people in more practical ways. Thus, absolutism or tyranny on his part was rendered impossible because it was abhorrent to the peoples philosophy of life¹⁶.

Aside political life, traditional Igbo hospitality was equally, demonstrated in their social life. The following passage will present a clear picture of this life pattern among the Igbo.

TRADITIONAL IGBO HOSPITALITY IN SOCIAL LIFE

Hospitality is not alien to Igbo culture. It has been a very important component of Igbo life over the centuries. It was not restricted to the citizens of any Igbo community; it was indeed a popular practice in the entire Igbo environment or society. It was a trait consciously and unconsciously demonstrated among the Igbo.

The Igbo social life had its anchor in the Igbo socio-religious concepts and belief in Ofo na Ogu. This simply translated to perfection. It was indeed the pivot upon which justice and fair-play rested in the Igbo traditional ethos¹⁷. The Igbo tradition laid great emphasis on justice to all and at the same time out-lawed injustice in any form. Commenting on the Igbo social life, I.M Onyeocha expressed the view that,

Everyone must know and keep his or her place as well as respect that of others. Furthermore, the weak, the widow the orphan, the stranger and the ignorant are fully protected and must never be oppressed or taken advantage of. The innocent must not be punished and the guilty must not be spared. The debtor must pay his or her debt and the trader must deal on genuine wares¹⁸.

The Igbo social system did not create room for discrimination among members of the society, except in the case of communities where traditional Osu caste institutions existed. The ancestors of every Osu caste group were dedicated to a deity which the group was bound to serve¹⁹. It is worthy of note that the discrimination against the Osu caste group was never meant to hurt them²⁰. Rather, it was meant to avoid them. This was

because any deliberate and even non-deliberate act against them attracted the wrath of the deity they served. So to play safe, people cautiously avoided all forms of socio-political and economic relations with members of the Osu caste system²¹.

Apart from Osu caste group, every free born from any part of Igbo land and beyond had the grace of being integrated into any Igbo community. The social networking system in Igbo land provided and guaranteed adequate machinery for this tradition. For instance, every Igbo society was made up of nuclear family that made up the village, the basic political unit in Igbo society²². Normally when a man moved into a community with an intent of residing permanently there, he first became a guest to a nuclear family he sojourned with for some years.

The host family and the stranger element were bound in a mutual relationship, owing some duties and responsibilities to each other. Most often, the motive behind the strangers migration and settlement into the area was economic. Migrant labourers, Smiths and farmers in search of fertile land to farm on were among such settlers outside their local environments²³. The host family and communities normally showed their hospitality to the people in questions particularly in the pre-colonial and colonial period. This they did by ensuring their security, providing them food, shelter and some measure of comfort within the limit of their resources.

The stranger on his own part ensured that he exhibited good conduct. He must refrain from any form of sexual misconduct, especially with female members of his host family. He should also avoid acts that could lead him to the heinous crime of murder or shedding human blood by whatever means and for whatever reasons. He should also avoid other anti-social activities such as stealing (especially yam stealing), which was a taboo among the Igbo. In addition, he should avoid fighting and traits of violence that could make him unpopular in the society. Once he avoided such obnoxious characters, remained duty conscious, honest and kind (which were the enviable qualities of popularity in the society) he would in reciprocity enjoy the glowing hospitality of his host family and village at large.

In addition to this, Igbo society had provisions for absorbing stranger elements into the society through the process of naturalization²⁴. This is a process of integrating a stranger into a family outfit so that he enjoyed all rights and privileges reserved for bonafide members of that family and village at large. By virtue of this development, the naturalized stranger had the right to acquire portions of the family land at the farmstead for his farming. He also had the right to build a house at the family land at the homestead just like any other bonafide member of the family.

Further still, he had the right to take chieftaincy titles, initiate as member of secret societies including village masquerades. It is worthy of note here that although the naturalized stranger could have his initiation and admission into strategic sectors of the society, he would not aspire to be king or paramount ruler of the village or village group. Any attempt to do this would bring him face to face with other candidates and contestants to the seat. The naturalized man could at this point in time be put into a state of confusion and distress if his opponent reminded him that he or his ancestors were naturalized strangers²⁵.

In addition, the naturalized man must avoid unnecessary clashes with people especially over land issue. Involvement in such a delicate issue could play him into the hands of some vociferous characters with unguided manner of speech who would not hesitate to take him down the memory lane of his life. Such people would not hesitate to remind him that he was not a fully-fledged member of the society. They could go further to remind him the need for him to visit his home for once (an indirect way of asking him to go back to his original home). Even though this might have some psychological trauma on the naturalized stranger in question, his rights and privileges acquired by virtue of his naturalization were fully protected, provided he was never involved in any abominable act in the society or his home of adoption. Whatever embarrassment he got in the course of pursuing his ambitions were mere trivialities which had no effect on the status of the naturalized stranger. Only despicable and deplorable acts capable of besmearing the naturalized stranger and indeed his kindred by adoption, with stigma of unpopularity and shame, had the force of eroding the value of the status of the naturalized man. Once there was glaring proof of the involvement of the naturalized stranger in such unpopular acts, he lost all rights and privileges he formerly enjoyed as bonafide citizen of the family and the society of his sojourn. He was usually ignominiously set packing. No one came to his rescue. He could trace his way back to his original home or migrate to another community that could adopt him.

It is pertinent to note that what happened to the stranger element could equally happen to a fully fledged citizen of the society who ran foul of the customs and traditions of the land. Igbo society had no place for anyone that committed abominable acts. Such offences like incest, adultery (especially with ones female relations including wives of close male relations), murder, stealing and killing of totemistic animals, among others, constitute abominable and despicable offences outlawed in the society. Those guilty of such offences automatically became excommunicated, banished and ostracized from the society as social out-casts and misfits that upset the norms and ethos of the land, creating confusion and crisis within the socio-cultural environment they lived²⁶.

However, it is germane to note that there existed differences in the weight of punishment meted to the

two groups of offenders-the bonafide citizens and naturalized citizens. While the naturalized citizen had no opportunity of coming back to the community, the bonafide citizen could after some seven years of exile in a foreign land come back home. In the case of bonafide citizen even before he was re-absorbed into the society had to undergo some cleansing and purificatory rites. In a case of murder, the person, most often, remained in exile for life²⁷. This was a traditional way of averting intra-village crisis arising from revenge. A respondent was of the opinion that the family members of the deceased victim would not relent or hesitate to avenge the death of their dead relation as long as they were in frequent contact with the murderer of their relation. This could lead to vicious circle of a murderer being killed by relations of his victim and vice-versa.²⁸

As noted above all acts of abomination demanded some propitiatory rites in order to restore the lost glory and personality of the offender as a fully fledged son of the soil. Some items were needed for this to make sacrifices to the deities and ancestors to whom the society belonged. These included goat (he-goat), sheep, fowl, white cloth, tortoise, cowrie, manilas, British coins, yam tubers, and coco-yams among others²⁹. These items were taken to the shrine of the village deity by the chief priest who made necessary sacrifices on behalf of the offender, a process that must be satisfied before his re-integration into the society. Failure to do this could incur the wrath of the gods which could be disastrous to the society.

Even in the modern times, traditional method of cleansing rites still obtained. Even Christians who committed abominable acts were made to go through the traditionally laid down procedure of first going on exile and later undergoing cleansing rites. Probably, the stigma attached to the act made him bow unarguably to the traditional rather than Christian method of cleansing. Besides, the traditionalists made use of youth association, age-grade societies, ekpo, Okonko, and oboni secret societies to enforce compliance on the part of the offenders, to the tenet of the deities and traditional ethos of the society³⁰.

For the second group-naturalized citizens, they had no need for cleansing rites. Once there was an evidence of involvement in abominable act, the person was stripped and divested of all rights and privilege he formerly enjoyed as a naturalized citizen of the area. Thus he was instantly sent on exile to his home or any other community of his choice. He was never to retrace his steps back to the community for any reason whatsoever. So, in Igbo social life, the hospitality one received from people around him was directly tagged to the hospitality he showed to others.

HOSPITALITY IN IGBO ECONOMIC LIFE

Traditional Igbo Hospitality had also been practically demonstrated in virtually every aspect of the Igbo economic life right from the pre-colonial period up to the present. The traditional economy of the Igbo can be perceived and discussed under the following sub-headings namely, agriculture, non-agricultural production and trade. Among all these sectors, agriculture was and still is the mainstay of the Igbo economy.³¹ Efforts will be made here to highlight the extent the Igbo demonstrated their traditional hospitality within the above economic sectors over time.

AGRICULTURE

Igbo agriculture rested on three major fulcrums namely, the land tenure system, source of labour and types of crops cultivated. In each of these, traditional Igbo hospitality was practically demonstrated. Igbo land tenure system, for instance revealed a well packaged arrangements that guaranteed every farmer in any given Igbo society the right to procure land for his farming³².

In the first instance, land was communally owned among the Igbo. So, it was the practice among the people that in every farming season, members of a kindred decided on the portion of land to farm on. The people practised rotational bush-fallow system, whereby a piece of land was farmed in a particular year, left for seven years to revert to a bush, while other areas were farmed in turn³³. Land in a particular area was shared to every male member of the kindred who was of adult age. Widows of deceased male members of the kindred also had their fair shares. So, no one had any cause to grumble on account of neglect over land distribution³⁴.

The same land tenure system made provision for large scale farmers who after collecting their due share of the kindred land still had need for more portions of land. This was because, there were indigent men and even widows who would not have enough yams to plant on their own share of the land. Here, mutual assistance and hospitality ensued. The large scale farmer would be prepared to offer some ropes or stacks of yam tubers to such men or women in exchange for portions of their land³⁵. At times, the poor farmer would just lease his land free to the wealthy former without demanding anything in exchange. This arrangement took care of indigenes and non-indigenes in the land. By these internal arrangements, everyone within the society had land to farm on. Only very lazy person could claim that he had no land to farm on.

Sale of land was not in practice in Igbo land in the pre-colonial period. It was in the colonial and post-colonial periods that land was sold. This was of course part of the capitalist culture that came with colonialism.

LABOUR

Labour is indeed indispensable for the prosecution of any agricultural task. Development of agriculture was one of the events that led to the evolution of human society³⁶. Invention of iron technology was said to have aided the development of agriculture, bringing to an end the shifting cultivation of the early man wanderer, thus laying foundation for sedentary agricultural practice and eventual development of human society³⁷.

There were various sources of labour in the Igbo society and each of them to a large extent demonstrated a good spirit of traditional hospitality among the Igbo. The commonest source of labour here was the family³⁸. A family in Igbo land comprised members of the nuclear family, dependent relations and slaves of the family. Each of the members of a family played one complementary role or the other for the up-keep of the family. Virtually every family member had a contribution to make in the family agricultural and other economic projects. The importance of family as a veritable source of labour was responsible for many men taking to polygamy in order to have enough children for agricultural labour³⁹. Son-in-law also constituted another source of labour for his father-in-law. Culture demanded that a son-in-law should constitute a team of able bodied young men to work for the father-in-law. This was to demonstrate to his father-in-law his ability to take care of his wife when she was released to him by his father in-law⁴⁰. Apart from satisfying the cultural requirement of the people, it was a clear cut case of hospitality shown to the father in-law by his son in-law.

People of the same age bracket could also form a co-operative to work in turns in their fathers' or mothers' farms. Girls and boys were free to form their respective group for the same purpose⁴¹. This co-operative labour force was made up of people from the society irrespective of place of origin. The only qualification was one's ability to cope with the strength of other co-operative members. This was because work at the farm site was shared equitably among members and each person was expected to finish up his own task at the same time with others. Members, of a co-operative group could decide to work for the aged and poor members of the society without asking for any reward. This humanitarian services demonstrated the traditional Igbo spirit of hospitality clearly expressed in the Igbo slogan "Onye aghala nwanne ya" (literally meaning, "Be your brothers keeper).

Migrant labour force also existed in Igbo land. People from parts of Igbo land such as Abakalik, Izii, Okposi, Oshiri, Edda, and Nsukka areas migrated to other parts of Igbo land where they hired out their labour to those who needed them for such tasks like bush-clearing and mound-making⁴². This however took place in the colonial and post-colonial period, when slave trade had been abolished and security of movements guaranteed. By the same period, capitalist spirit had been entrenched in the economic system of Igbo land and Nigeria at large. The hospitality demonstrated by this group was reflected in their charges per a particular size or nature of task. For very poor members of the society, cost of labour was drastically reduced to enable such people to cope with payment. There were instances some members of migrant labourers rendered free services to very indigent men and women such as the sick and childless.

CROPS FOR FARMING.

Agricultural crops were indispensable in any farming project. There were tuber, seed and stem crops. Tuber crops included yam, coco-yam, tri-foliolate yam and bulbils. Seed crops included garden egg, pepper and melon, among others. Stem crops included cassava and sugar-cane. Here we are concerned with how the farmer procured the above crops he or she needed for planting.

A number of opportunities were open to the farmer or a prospective farmer to obtain these crops. One was from the open market; another was by borrowing from neighbours. The third opportunity was that provided by the traditional Igbo culture to serve the interest of newly wedded couples about to engage in farming occupation. Usually the newly wedded bride, in the company of some maidens visited every family within her maximal lineage to collect yam tubers and seedling, as well as other crops for farming. Actually, it did not take the tone of begging for the items. Rather, it was more of a reminder to every man and woman about the obligation they owed the newly wedded couple. Once the lady came to a family, the man and woman of the family in question appreciated her; the man moved straight to his yam barn and came out with a number of yam tubers which he freely handed to their august visitor. His wife on the other hand went inside her house and brought out a number of coco-yam tubers, maize, pepper, and melon among others, which she equally handed onto their visitor. There was no specified quantity of crops for this hospitality. The august visitor thanked and appreciated her host family⁴³. The maidens that accompanied her aided her in carrying the offered gift items to their depot. It could take her weeks and months to visit all the families she needed to collect gifts from.

This culture which began in the pre-colonial period continued up to the post-colonial era. It was a sure means of equipping newly married couples for the task of farming. In the recent time, the practice was phasing out owing largely to shift of interest from farming to trading and public service. But for those who still retained interest in farming, the practice still remained open. For those who saw the practice was out-dated and of-course had other means of coping, the exercise was un-called for. But for those who had no other option or source of survival, the practice remained a good starting point and platform for sound take-of in marital life.⁴⁴

NON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The Igbo engaged in non-agricultural productions such as smithery, wine-tapping, mat-making, sculpture, basket-making and pottery, among others. Most of these occupations were undertaken on part-time basis while they still devoted much of their times to farming, the mainstay of the people's economy. These professionals manifested to a large extent in the spirit of hospitality characteristic of the Igbo. The Igbo have in their common slogans expressions portraying their trait of hospitality. One of these slogans says, Onuru Ube nwanne agbala oso. (literally meaning, one should run to the rescue of his brother in need and not abandon him). It was this spirit that compelled people to rush to the scene of a wine-taper who had the misfortune of falling down from a palm tree. It was the same consciousness that made people rush to the scene of a smith's hut caught up in an inferno.

On their own part the artisans-wine-tapper, smith, potter and sculptor, manifested their spirit of hospitality in their places of work and to those around them. These they did through good apprenticeship programmes for those in need of the aid and by offering considerate prices for the products. By so doing they made eloquent contributions to the well-being of the society at large. Generally speaking, the Igbo have concepts, slogans and ideologies that clearly depict and portray their spirit of hospitality. These include "Onye aghala nwanne ya (literally meaning, one should not abandon his brother in any circumstance).⁴⁵ Ife Kwuru, Ife akwudebe ya (literally meaning once one person stands he should cause another person or persons to stand by him or around him),⁴⁶ "Onye nwelu ya nyetu nwanne ya", (literally meaning that whoever has, should share with his brothers)⁴⁷.

TRADE AND COMMERCE

Trade was and still is another important occupation among the Igbo⁴⁸ It is next in importance to agriculture. There were two types of trade in Igbo land namely, local and long distance trading⁴⁹. In these types of trading Igbo demonstrated a high sense of hospitality in their prosecutions.

At the level of the local market, both the sellers and buyers came from the same locality, and they virtually knew each other. A buyer of one item could at the same time be a seller of another item needed by his or her former customer. There was a high level of mutual inter-dependence and complementarity among the traders. This relationship to a large extent translated to spirit of hospitality. This made provision for credit facility without any collateral or accrued interest. In addition, a seller of a particular item at the end of bargaining process could dash more "mmezi" of the product to the buyer as sign of good will and hospitality. This was called "Mmezi", (literally meaning more grace). It is indeed customary in Igbo land for any buyer to demand for "mmezi" additional quantity of item bought and the seller hardly failed to oblige. Because most of the items sold were locally produced, it was rare for the seller to count or assess the losses as a result of this compelled custom. But in the recent times when traders traveled out to buy from distant towns, incurring huge expenses, the degree of the dispensation of this "mmezi" though not phased out, is minimize to avoid losses.

In the case of long distance trade, all that have been said above about credit facilities and, increasing quantity of goods bought "mmezi", equally obtained especially where good items were involved. In addition to these hospitality to fellow traders were ever demonstrated. For instance a trader that lost his capital to robbers or to fire disaster received assistance from close relations, fellow traders, age grade associations and some social clubs the victim belonged to. Money realized from these groups would enable him to rebuild his capital base and resume his business.

But to qualify for and attract the said favour from fellows traders, individuals, and groups, the trader victim must be one adjudged to be nice, honest and hospitable. A contrary character would certainly disqualify him. A man identified as being non-chalant to the plight of unfortunate victims would hardly attract the sympathy and hospitality of others at his own times of need.

CONCLUSION

Hospitality is an outstanding character among the Igbo. In their individual homes, work places, at ceremonies, collective attitudes and cultural exhibitions, they consciously and unconsciously manifested spirit of hospitality. This characteristic spirit among the Igbo has been well rooted in the people's culture since the pre-colonial period. The culture, too, provided all the mechanisms that sustained and protected this sterling human virtue.

Thus, it is a fact to note that the traditional Igbo society had and still has no room for abominable acts. Any such act attracted the wrath of the gods. On the other hand, the only factors that guaranteed and sustained blessing, peace, wealth and good fortunes in the society were love, charity, hard-work and hospitality. Among these virtues, hospitality stood as the fulcrum upon which other virtues rested.

For the fact that the Igbo always had ways of helping out those in need, to a large extent contributed to the Igbo success in various fields of human endeavour. Non-Igbo stranger elements in Igbo communities enjoyed

Igbo hospitality to the extent that they would prefer to naturalize rather than ever dream of going back to their original homes. It is possible there were some bad eggs among the Igbo; they certainly were in the minority and were subsumed in the positive majority. The odd minority were subject to the law and culture of the people and were dealt with whenever and wherever they were noticed.

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3. *Ibid*
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9. *Ibid*, pp.44-46
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19. Chima Ude a retired trader, aged 87 years, a native of Ngodo Isouchi, interviewed on 5 April, 2014 at Ngodo village.
20. *Ibid*
21. V.E Dike, *The Osu caste System in Igbo Land*, United States: Morris Pub. Co., 2005, pp12-52
22. C. Ifemesia, pp. 66-76
23. L.T Chubb, *Igbo Land Tenure*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1961, p.43.
24. This has been an age long tradition in Igbo land. The Origin of this practice is yet uncertain. It is possible, this tradition had been in existence since the pre-colonial period.
25. It was never a taboo for a naturalized citizen to aspire to the rank of a paramount ruler in any Igbo Society. But he should be prepared to face whatever challenges that came out of it. His opponents could embarrass him with tales about his origin.
26. Apart from murder, stealing and incest, other abominable acts attracted various weights of punishments among different Igbo communities, depending on the gravity of the offence.
27. The life exile sentence did not apply in every Igbo community. In some communities the offender was welcomed back into the society after a period of seven years in exile. But in other communities, for Security reasons, life exile was the only option for offenders.
28. Ifekwe O. Onuoha, a farmer aged 75 years, native of Okue Ishiagu, interviewed on 6 April 2014 at Okue Village.
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