Integrity, Cultural Forces, and the Igbo Diaspora

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Abstract
The problem tackled in this paper is, how does a typical Igbo man in the Diaspora, who endeavors to be a man of integrity, *ekwueme*, attain a balance between two apparently countervailing principles of conduct learnt early in life, namely, *ebe onye bi k’ona awachi* (adventurous waywardness in extreme form), and *akulue uno amalu onye kpalu ya* (Provincialism when extreme). This is with a view to examining the claim of Chinua Achebe that a consensus among Nigerians is on their common resentment for the Igbo man. The paper found out that it is a desirable ideal for an Igbo man to contribute time, talent, and treasure, evenhandedly, to the development of his home town, hence *akulue uno*, and also to the development of wherever he lives outside home doing business or practicing his profession, thus, *ebe onye bi k’ona awachi*. Regrettably, this ideal of balance in commitment either way (egbe belu, ugo belu) is rarely achieved, thereby detracting from the integrity (robust social existence) of the hypothetical Igbo man either at home or abroad where he sojourns. In most cases what is obtainable is that the Igbo man is committed to his home town, and minimally attends to his host community, and vice versa, therefore admired on the one hand, and resented on the other hand. Consequently, Igbo resentment by Nigerians can be a veritable phenomenon either at home or abroad depending on how the Igbo man achieves or fails to achieve integrity in the midst of the two cultural forces. So resenting the Igbo man is not just by other Nigerians, an Igbo man who fails to show integrity in his autochthonous home can be vehemently resented by his own people. This paper deployed a formal conception of integrity by Lynne Mcfall, carried out conceptual clarifications of some Igbo cultural concepts and principles of conduct, used Aristotle’s theory of the mean to evaluate how the Igbo man in the diaspora can endeavor to straddle between two apparently countervailing principles of action, and relied on Philosophical argumentation to strengthen its points. Given that the Igbo man can be resented either at home or abroad, depending on how he tries to live a life integrity either way, the solution to the problem of resentment of the Igbo by other Nigerians or by the Igbo themselves, is for him to strive towards the mean in his actions towards realizing his aims and objectives, and also be less self-righteous, mild in manners, and adopt robust business ethics in whatever he does, either in his native community, or where he sojourns for acquiring integrity as a virtue is a work in progress.

Introduction
Chinua Achebe claims other “Nigerians will probably achieve consensus on no other matter than their common resentment of the Igbo.” (Achebe, 2012, p. 74) This is a weighty statement from one considered wise and knowledgeable amongst the Igbo as well

28
as globally. Discerning people may not brush it aside; hence a critical analysis of it is necessary. Thus, the statement in question is used here as a point of departure for critical analysis of the Igbo adventurous disposition resulting in their dispersal all over the world, plying trades and thriving in their various communities, hence the term Igbo Diaspora. Even if the claim is credible, an Igbo man living his entire life within his immediate community may not realize it, as he lacks the benefit of contrasting experience.

Interrogating this claim should be in contexts of the Diaspora communities of Igbo people all over the world, in order to provide the required community life for a proper rational and comparative evaluation of the Igbo life patterns at home or elsewhere. For as the Igbo themselves maintain, the person, who points to another of his neighbor with an accusing index finger, should realize that four of such fingers of his are pointing back at him. But the question is, what is that character other Nigerians see in the average Igbo man that make them resent him? Perhaps it is the Igbo man’s quest for integrity, given his cultural antecedents which are not properly understood by other people.

Answering this question requires a criterion for ascertaining the basis of other peoples’ friendship or otherwise for the Igbo man. For this purpose, the yard stick is integrity, an attribute most people desire to possess (Mcfall, 1998, pp. 11-18).

Consequently, in the first section of this paper, the integrity is conceptualized and clarified. In the second, my claim that the average Igbo man has a high achievement index psychology is appraised against a cultural background that imbued him with it (Orogun, 2014, pp. 25-36). The third section, traces his trajectory as he ventures out of his clime seeking greener pastures, in the face of lean opportunities contrived by nature or governmental policy, disempowering him within his community. Finally, formative cultural principles he affirms, and commitments to his host community, are evaluated using integrity test articulated earlier given the pulls of the centrifugal and centripetal forces of either autochthonous or incidental cultures, modifying his character in ways that attract evaluative consequences.

The Concept of Integrity

Lynne McFall has developed a formal account of integrity. The sketch is as follows: “personal integrity requires that an agent (1) subscribes to some consistent set of principles or commitments and (2) in the face of temptations or challenge (3) uphold these principles or commitments for (4) what he takes to be the right reasons This is a formal schema for integrity because it is a framework into which all persons, corporate bodies, and institutions can fit, as long as each, in its case, has or aspires to have integrity.

This formal framework is also a facility for contextual evaluation of integrity of persons or organizations. A person in the community whom the Igbo regard as ekwueme, for example, has integrity on the condition that as a person in the community, he/she is committed to (a) truth telling at all times (b) eschewing bribe-taking (c) fidelity to culturally prescribed marital and parental duties (d) not altering land boundaries secretly (e) eschewing gossip and back-biting (f) eschewing thieviness and encouraging others to do same, (g) knowing the good and doing the good, and so on. This integrity assessment can be
further contextualized by regarding *ekwueme* as a place-marker, such that if a person, say Ugwu n’Ngwu, is faithful to these commitments, then he is *ekwueme*.

**The Igbo Umunna and its Values**

The Igbo society is founded on basic family units known as *ezi*, or *ezi n’ulo*, (Ufearoh, 2010)(family) comprising a man and his wife or wives, their children, relatives, and dependents under one roof. But no *ezi n’ulo* is absolute, or independent. Rather, every *ezi n’ulo* is a unit in a group of families, having an *okpara* or *opara* as the head. This group of families supposedly has a common progenitor, and thus called *Umunna*. A group of *Umunna*, say, a string of ten *Umunna*, bond together, to form *mba* or town, sometimes with a prefix – *umu*. Hence we have such town names as Umuahia, Umuleri, and Umu-odeju. Also there are towns or clans having a prefix as *mba*, like Mbaino and Mbaise, as well as, other towns without such prefixes, but yet may claim a common ancestor, such as Nnewi, Ogidi andNsukka. Certain ideals emanate from *Umunna* due to its nature and organization. By ideals are meant those principles, concepts, and ideas expressing the inalienable values of *Umunna*, in view of which achievable goals are set, including rules guiding fair competitions among persons, families, villages, and even towns. From what I gathered from practical experience, the following values, though not yet exhaustive, are important in Igbo society. (Uchendu, 2007)

(a) **Seniority**

Seniority stands for precedence of birth in a family, or order of descent from a common father or ancestor. For instance, allotment or shares of anything among children is according to seniority. However, as only boys inherit their fathers in Igbo-land, in a family of say, four boys, the first son, by virtue of that, automatically becomes the leader of the family, in the absence of their father. By inheritance, the father’s *obi* or *obu* (the father’s main dwelling, usually the most prominent abode in an Igbo compound) goes to him, and in the other allotment of the father’s estate he picks first before others in that order of seniority, thereby preventing potential conflicts among siblings where their father could not allot things himself before his demise. Seniority is a criterion for determining who is *okpara* or *opera Umunna*, his privileges, and determines who gets honorific appellation or greetings, and from whom!

(b) **Communality**

In an *Umunna*, some means of economic production like land and economic trees are held in trust by the *okpara* for the benefit of all its members. Meals are served commonly at the *obi* of the *okpara*, or one can walk into any kitchen of the wives in the family, and demand to be served food. From this practice an ethical principle derives to the effect that *one should not harm another with whom s/he had shared meals from the same plate*, hence the elevation of mutual trust and protection in the *umunna*. Assuming that a family member comes by some means, and wants to build a house, he should not just grab any piece of the family land. He approaches the *okpara Umunna* to allot
him a piece of land for that purpose. But on completion, some other members of the family lacking shelter would have some space in the new house.

Labor is also a common utility in the *Umunna*. Any senior member of the family is free to send any child of the family on errands. Young men in the family should not lie idle while the farmlands of wives in the family or of fathers for that matter lie fallow. In principle, therefore, any property, or wealth, or even proceed from career progression and advancement secured by any member of the family, becomes family possessions in the sense that all is expected to take pride in such achievements. It is from this sense of communality that the Igbo say, *aku lue uno amalu onye kpalu ya*, meaning, wealth is better appreciated when it reaches home.

### (c) Extended Family System

An Igbo person can trace the web of his filial relationships on both sides of his/her parents even up to the fifth generation. In many cases it is forgetfulness or the inconvenience of expected social responsibility, which forces termination to the lengthy trace through the labyrinth of one’s family relations. This tendency is the basis of the Igbo aphorisms maintaining that *mmadu k’ego* (kit and kin is worthier than money or wealth), or that *igwe mmadu bu ike* (there is power in number of one’s relatives). This maintenance of web of family relationships goes with the traditional ethics of care and responsibility towards all those encountered along the line of relationships on both sides of descent of one’s parents.

### Supportive Apprenticeship and Quest for Formal Education

The Igbo value *comfortable subsistence* – the ability of a man especially, to establish his own homestead when of age, with the economic ability to maintain it. Achieving this, requires every young adult male, having a worthy means for economic viability, to avoid *feeding from another person’s kitchen*, due to hunger, which is abhorred in this culture as a despicable existence.

Consequently, supportive apprenticeship for every child was and still is an unwritten rule, placing an apprentice under a master for service and training only, or by agreement that after a specified number of years, the master will in turn establish the apprentice in the trade he learnt. With the advent of formal education in schools, a similar attitude prevailed. Communities were not only taxing themselves to build schools, but were also establishing scholarship schemes for the secondary and tertiary education of their wards. Hence, many early Igbo University or Polytechnic schools graduates in the ‘50s and ‘60s were beneficiaries of town unions’ scholarship schemes. In the same vein, many early successful Igbo businessmen and traders also benefited from this kind of family supportive apprenticeship schemes. The Igbo man’s struggles in these two areas of youth training leads us to another *Umunna* value.

### (d) Healthy But stiff competition

Education and provision of community utilities were and still are veritable turfs for competition between towns and communities in Igbo society. Healthy competition
commences right from the family among siblings of same parents, seeking to be recognized for good character or achievements especially in polygamous families. For whatever the father says to all his children in his obu, the real lessons about how to survive in the family’s affairs and succeed in the society, are learnt in one’s mother’s kitchen. Hence, the Igbo didactic expression: ‘izu ka mma na nne ji’. That is, bonding for counseling are desirable and most valued among children of the same mother! In other words the truth about life is found in one’s mother’s kitchen.

(e) **Complementarity of man and woman**

The existence of independent women organizations and guilds epitomize the Igbo ethic of the complementarity or synergy of man and woman, like two cotyledons of a seed, both in marriage and civil society. Feminists, should take time to understudy marriage among the Igbo. In it women are adored, cared for, and protected by their husbands and his family, especially a virtuous wife. There is an unwritten rule in Igbo culture that a man whose marriage fails, also loses respect among peers. So, the man does everything in his power to ensure that his wife and children do not lack the necessary provisions of life, to obviate vile talk–of- the- town about his family. From this perspective women in Igbo society have enviable latitude for freedom, relative independence, and economic self-expression.

For instance before Christianity, married women in many parts of Igbo-land retained their maiden surnames. If a woman answered Mgbankwo Odo before marriage, in it, she was addressed as **Mgbankwo Odo, the wife of Okoro.** She was not called Mgbankwo Okoro, or Mrs. Mgbankwo Okoro! The later version of addressing women was imported by the Christian missionaries, as they brought cultural patriarchy emphasizing the dominance of man in the family dating from Adam. Secondly, women in Igbo culture, then and now, engaged in vigorous economic activities in commerce and agriculture, such that they achieved and maintained economic and financial independence from their husbands. Hence, women could take high profile titles comparable to the ozo titles for men. For instance in Nsukka town, there is the Umuada Guild for titled women who take the equivalence of the men’s oha title, and are properly respected as such.

From the perspective of complementarity, wife and her husband took turns in feeding the family, in my own part of Igbo-land, in the days before monetary economy took over our lives. At harvest time, the man fed the family through the farm harvest season. So, it was within a woman’s right not to cook anything for a meal, should the man, whose duty it was to feed the family in the season fail to provide food stuff. On the other hand, when the man’s barn was empty and farming season had commenced, it became the turn of the woman to feed the family from her trade proceeds.

**The Igbo in the Diaspora**

The concept **diaspora** usually refers to the dispersal of Africans to the new World during the Trans-Atlantic, or trans-Saharan slave trade, or of the Jews around the world both in the ancient and modern times. In recent times, such dispersal of the Jews around the world was a consequence of the holocaust perpetrated by Adolf Hitler’s third Reich in Germany. Hence, the phrase, **the Jewish Diaspora,** and with time, other peoples started
using the word *Diaspora* positively to denote the willful emigration of certain races to live in other parts of the world, other than their ancestral homeland.

It is in this later sense that we talk of the *Igbo Diaspora*, or the *Igbo in the Diaspora*. There is a factual statement bandied around as a joke by other Nigerians about the Igbo, which is that “if one ventures to any clime in Nigeria, and one sees no Igbo man there, one should run for one’s dear life, for it means that the place is not habitable.” In other words, anywhere in Nigeria where there is a modicum of life, an Igbo man would be found living and plying his trade there. With the passage of time, Igbo people have taken pride in this joke, and have gone further to amplify it by claiming that the Igbo people live in every part of the world. Factually, there are hundreds of Igbo groups and organizations, ranging from village, town, and clan based assortment of groups, including now global ones such as Igbo World Assembly (IWA), and World Igbo Congress (WIC). These groups are found in the Americas and Caribbean, the whole of Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. So, there is a real sense in which we can talk of *Igbo Diaspora* apart from that of the slave trade era.

There are certain objective conditions in Igbo-land that encourage this willful dispersal of its people throughout the world. Some of these are high population pressure on a small strip of land, erosion menace creating Bad Lands out of the palm-size of land available, lack of economic investment by governments to absorb willing hands to work, and near absence of utilities to encourage the people apply themselves to work and creativity, and so on. But my focus is not on these objective conditions, but on principles for living taught early life through cultural rearing, the average Igbo man learns as he is growing up in the village, which ultimately shapes his psychology.

Hence, once he is of age, sometimes as young as fifteen years old, he declares his independence from his handlers, and considers himself capable of fending for himself. Realizing, however, that his immediate environment, is bereft of ample opportunities for his self-reliance ambition, he ventures out, believing that *onye ije ka onye isi awo akuko* – adventurer possesses a repertoire of stories more than am old man.

On arrival at his destination, he is guided by another aphorism learnt back home: “*O je mba enwe ilo*”, meaning that a traveler, or a sojourner, has or makes no enemies. Hence, he makes friends across the board, boys and girls, men and women, old and young, as he settles down to business. As fortunes come his way, he once more remembers what he was taught pertaining to the responsibility of a businessman to his local environment in the adage that says, “*Ebe onye bi k’ ona awachi*”, to wit, one defends and develops his abode. So, he begins to invest meaningfully in his place of business, developing the place, and employing the locals, as a teacher, he ploughs his heart and mind to teaching all and sundry like his own children not caring for his own convenience. Given this positive disposition to people around him, he wins their hearts and minds, and in the conviction that “*agbata obi onye bu nwanne ya*”- one’s neighbor is his/her relative-he perseveres in fostering the engendered good neighborliness.

Building on this goodwill over time, he enlarges his business, having subsidiaries, or as a civil servant or a teacher, he prospers in his career, and makes his mark fairly early in spite of the vicissitudes of life and working environment. From this vantage point, he
builds a house or two in his town of residence, and thus as a land-lord, he takes in tenants - his erstwhile status barely five years ago. Having now sunk tap root where he sojourns, he is struck by another didactic saying of his people cautioning him in these words: “Obialu be onye abiagbule ya, ma O n’ala nkpunkpu afula ya n’azu”, that is, a sojourner should not spoil his land of abode, so he can return home safely, and without deformities! In view of this, he does everything in his power to be part of his host community- attending village or town meetings, joining neighborhood vigilante groups, paying all kinds taxes as prescribed by local authorities, running errands for leaders of the town, and making handsome financial contributions towards realizing local projects or church programs. Sometimes, if he is lucky, a chieftaincy title of the town, like Majeobaje of Ile-Ife, is conferred on him. Thus he is now part and parcel of his host town; sought after always by the town’s leaders for his valuable contributions to the development of the town.

All these notwithstanding, in his quiet moment, a silent voice reminds him: “Obialu ije nwe ula”- a sojourner eventually goes home. As he contemplates this, another voice emphasizes the home truth saying that: “akulue uno amalu onye kpalu ya”- one’s wealth is recognized only when it reaches home. If at this stage, he has not done much in his town or village, like having a country home, helping his kit and kin, enrolling in his local age grade, or church at home, contributing towards community projects, he quickly bridges the gaps on all fronts. It is this homeward tendency in the Igbo that many Nigerians regard as clannish, forgetting that even the white man affirms that, “east or west home is the best”! Igbo people are also said to be clannish because wherever they live, they tend to create, or belong to one cultural association or the other. But it is not a question of clannishness, but living out a robust cultural ideal, for even the Bible admonishes us to teach a child the way it should live, that is the way of the Lord, and when he grows up he will not depart from it. The Igbo huddle together in distant lands, in order to create home away from home, encouraging mutual support for one another, for their culture stresses that “oko koo mmadu, O si nwanne ya koo ya, ma okowa anu ohia, O chie ahu ya na osisi”- when a person feel itches, s/he is relieved by his/her brother, but for an itching beast, it rubs it’s hide against a tree. Aristotle’s view is apposite here: man is essentially a social animal, and so when the Igbo huddle together in their cultural associations away from home, they are living out the essence of man, and thus does not tantamount to clannishness. This and other traits we see in all Igbo associations both in the national and global Diaspora.

Two Global Igbo Organizations and their Aims and Objectives

There are two Igbo paradigmatic organizations in the Diaspora which are, the Igbo World Assembly (IWA), and the World Igbo Congress (WIC). The former was inaugurated on 3rd May 2008 with the slogan: Njiko na Igba Izu - Synergy and Deliberation. Its mission is to give one voice to all the disparate Igbo groups and associations in the external diaspora. At inception, it outlawed periodic elections as its own way of challenging the stereotype that Igbo enwe eze- the Igbo have no king, implying that the Igbo is leaderless or acephalous, which it contradicts by affiliating with Ohaneze ndi Igbo - Ohaneze for short. Two streams in IWA are the Americas/Caribbean, and the Europe, Africa and Asia streams. In the place of elections, leadership of IWA rotates between these two streams. It rather
believes and advocates participatory and collaborative leadership. The passion of IWA is to create a platform in concert with the apex Igbo cultural organization, Ohaneze, for one voice of the Igbo in national discourse pertaining to all aspects of human development. IWA has a program for bringing the Igbo in diaspora back home to invest and develop the Igbo homeland. For this and other complementary purposes, it holds annual conventions on the 26th and 27th September every year anywhere in Igbo land chosen by Ohaneze ndi Igbo, followed by Igbo commemoration day on 29th September annually.

On the other hand, the World Igbo Congress is piqued that the Igbo people are largely blamed for the Nigerian civil war, and probably because of this there are just scanty Federal government investment in the South East, the Igbo Homeland. So, in service to Igbo people, WIC is poised to create the enabling environment for the legendary Igbo creativity, industry, and resilience to blossom. Hence the destination of the WIC is “the restoration of the Dignity of the Igbo”, which informs the following objectives of WIC:

- To promote, protect, and advance Igbo culture and civilization
- To promote progress and development of Igbo land
- To promote and cultivate political awareness and civic responsibility among Ndi-Igbo
- To promote the advancement and welfare of Ndi-Igbo
- To promote harmony and peaceful co-existence with other ethnic groups
- To receive, invest and disburse funds, and hold property for the purposes of the corporation (sic) aforesaid.
- To conduct other activities, not in contravention of the Texas Non-Profit Corporation or Article six of the Articles of incorporation, necessary to carry out the foregoing purposes (the preservation of habitation principle).

The Concerned Igbo Intellectuals in London is another group, writing papers interrogating salient issues militating against Igbo collective progress within the Nigerian political set up. In its view, the Nigerian civil war was a tragedy for the Igbo people, who in the aftermath lost not only positions in the nation, but also confidence in themselves. This situation has roots in recent Nigerian history. When other Nigerian leaders were pursuing their own peoples’ interests in the Nigeria political arena, their Igbo counterparts were for national interest and one Nigeria. Now having been strategically displaced after the civil war from the commanding heights of Nigerian economy and politics, they have almost nothing to fall back on but their creativity, resilience, and perseverance.

The matter now is not searching for a single Igbo leader, but to redefine the mainline interests of the Igbo within Nigeria. This mainline interest, if eventually articulated, will provide a rallying point for the Igbo people. An obstacle against this project is Igbo republicanism and individualism, though useful for self-expression, but quite dysfunctional in synthesizing a robust pan-Igbo position.

These organizations are thus of the view that while individual success of the Igbo is obvious, both at home and abroad, emancipation of the race is lacking as they work at cross purposes, putting the common interest of the people at stake.
The Igbo people in the diaspora, are consequently, bothered about the cacophony of Igbo voices both at home and abroad, on very important national issues. They have made important moves to synchronize these voices into one for the Igbo people under the leadership of Ohaneze Ndigbo, given that agboko mamiri onu, obeyo ufufu (effort to urinate on one spot yields foams and bubbles). In other words, when different views are synchronized, it becomes effective, by virtue of Njikoka—unity is supreme! So, the question of Igbo leadership as a vanguard for championing their interests nation-wide is still a potent one, placed on the front burner of Igbo economic and political stove. Furthermore, these groups are concerned about the decline of Igbo language in the age of globalization and are therefore seeking effective ways for stemming the downward slide of Igbo civilization and culture. Igbo people are urged to teach their children the Igbo language, by speaking it themselves at home, wherever they reside in the world. It is a shame for an Igbo parent to be discussing with his child in English in a public arena, showing that they cannot protect their confidences because of the failure of the parent to teach his child Igbo language! They should bear it in mind that "a dog that leaves its pack and hunts alone dies alone". There is always the need to watch one another’s back using language as a veritable tool.

The other main feature of Igbo in the diaspora is a conscious effort made by IWA and WIC, to repatriate wealth made outside, and human resources created in the modern advanced countries, back home in order to empower the Igbo people by training the youth to have visible and viable means of livelihood, and bringing in foreign direct, or even indigenous investments in Igbo-land, given the obvious dearth of governmental investments in the South East. This is done in compliance with the akulue uno dictum.

Finally, the Igbo in the diaspora make it a point of duty to ensure that members and affiliate bodies not only invest in the countries where they live, but also to comply with the laws of their host countries as a way of achieving harmonious relationships between host and sojourner.

As the Igbo Contact Forum (ICF) in Germany puts it that the “Igbo Contact Forum aspires for its members to live peacefully in their respective environs in Germany by being lawful with respect to the legal demands of Germany. The Forum works to unifying Nigerians and Igbos towards bettering the image of our country”.

So, it is not only that they obey the laws of their host country, but synergizes with other Nigerians in that country to conduct themselves decently, as a way of improving Nigerian’s image in Germany. The Igbo man is considered by his Nigerian cousins as audacious, ultra adaptable, creative, and ingenious, sometimes in devious ways, persevering and clannish, but usually with a high achievement index. In view of this characterization, these cousins of his have given a slanted interpretation to the word “Igbo” to imply ‘I go before others’. What I have done in this paper is not to controvert this characterization, but assume it credible, and then endeavor to explain it, in the hope that even if it is negative in some cases, there are always two sides to an issue, the idea of equipollence of arguments, pro and contra.

I have tried to show that the Igbo person, like any other person, is a product of his indigenous socialization. In his own case, the Igbo finds himself in a geographical location which is scarcely fertile in places, now denied access to the sea by the craft and device of
state creation, and lacking modern industrial investments and other means of economic production, but with high population density of up to 1000 persons per square kilometer in some places! I have tried to show that this natural condition has overtime produced a set of values, and didactic principles, which in turn, produced *stiff competitive high achievement index psychology* which invariably, every Igbo person unconsciously, if you like, shares and carries along with him like the tortoise’s shell.

Given that this psychology cannot be optimally actualized in the immediate environment with scarce resources, the Igbo man having developed across the generations, a survival trait of adventure, usually ventures out of his indigenous homeland in search of greener pastures, thereby creating national and global Igbo diaspora. Igbo people in these Diasporas, arising from ingrained cultural values and didactic principles, tend to behave alike, guided by such dicta as:

- Cooperate with ‘kit and kin’ for mutual assistance.
- Achieve success for survival and prosperity, failure is not an option.
- Domesticate prosperity in host community for acceptance.
- Transfer products of prosperity back home, sojourner ultimately returns home.

**Integrity Assessment of the Igbo man and his Organization**
The above summarizes the possible state of mind of an average Igbo person living outside his homeland. But it is important to further show his other commitments or avowals as arising from his indigenous socialization discussed heretofore. From it we can confidently say that the Igbo man in the diaspora is, invariably, committed to these principles:

1. The *nwanne/nwanna* principle – Family hood, community, and communality.
2. The *igwe bu ike* principle – there is strength in number: 3rd law of dialectics.
3. The *izu ka mma na nne ji* principle – mutual trust and counsel between siblings of same mother.
4. The *njikoka* principle – unity is supreme.
5. The *nwanyi b’ulo* principle – woman is home anchorage: complementarity of man and woman in the home and society.
6. The *onye ije ka onye isi awo akuko* principle – pedagogy and wisdom from adventure instead of age.
7. The *oje mba enwe ilo principle* – adventurer or traveler or sojourner has and makes no enemy.
8. The *ebe onye bi k’ona awachi* principle – commitment to the development of one’s place of residence.
9. The *agbata obi onye bu nwa nne ya* principle – one’s neighbor is his sibling: good neighborliness.
10. The *obialu be onye abiaghule ya... principle* – non-destruction of one’s place of residence.
11. The *oko koo mmadu...principle* – scratch my back and I scratch yours; mutual dependability.
Integrity, Cultural forces and the Igbo Diaspora

(12) The *aka nri kwo aka ekpe, aka ekpe akwo aka nri* principle – mutuality.
(13) The *akulue uno* principle – repatriating wealth and property home.
(14) The *obialu ije nwe ula* principle – eventual return home of a sojourner, wayfarer, adventurer.
(15) The *nkem ka nke anyi* principle – exaltation and supremacy of personal property.

These principles, to which Igbo persons, possibly and unconsciously, subscribe in the diaspora, need to be harmonized further for consistency and proper analysis. In this regard, four sets of principles can be generated from this list:

Much as there is no wholesome consistency among the principles, there is, however, segmental consistency among some of them, as seen below:

(a) 1-4 are principles of family-hood and unity.
(b) 5 is the principle of exaltation of wifehood or womanhood/motherhood – a trans-territorial principle.
(c) 6 -12 are the principles of good neighborliness of host and sojourner, or even anywhere.
(d) 13 -15 are principles of home-ward-ness or homeward integration by wealth and property exaltation and repatriation - the idea that east or west home is the best.

With these principles, the integrity of the Igbo man and his organizations outside the Igbo homeland can be reasonably assessed. It needs to be stressed that (a) and (b) are compatible, for there is no essential Igbo family without a wife or mother, and the manner in which a man holds and treats his wife or mother enhances or detracts from his integrity, and is an index of his/her humanity and civility.

First of all, the ability to marry a woman, raise a family, and maintain the family confers cultural manhood on an Igbo male, and abiding respectability to the woman in it, a kind of dignified manhood not accorded to loafers and incorrigible never-do-wells in Igbo society. In an Igbo family, the woman or wife or mother is the epicenter of life, the fulcrum around which the life of all members of the family, including that of the man, articulates. It is this sense of the exaltation of wifehood, womanhood, or motherhood that the Igbo express in their aphorism – *nwanyi bu ulo*: woman is the foundation of the home, which as a metaphor makes the point that the woman *is* the home.

Hence, her position in the family is beyond that of a complement, she is the *foundation*, and without her there is no family and no home. So if you want to know the kind of person an Igbo man is, look at how he treats his wife, or his mother, or a woman, all his credibility and integrity depends, literally, on it. That the Igbo marriage *endures* is a fact accepted by all Nigerians, and it is the cynosure of all eyes, with many a woman wishing to be an Igbo wife! It is a principle the Igbo man upholds no matter where he lives in the world, that is what it means to say that it is a *trans-territorial principle*, hence it is in a set all by itself among the above principles.

Now, if these are the principles for assessing the integrity of the Igbo man or any of his organizations, can he entertain them all at once without inconsistency or outright
contradiction? I believe that the principles are in sets, and as such, a particular set defines the context of avowal and operation, although, the principles may also be mutually reinforcing in spite of contexts. For instance, set (a) can reinforce and strengthen any of the other sets, for whether we talk of success in business, or harmonious coexistence with neighbors, having a stable, love oriented family is a sure footing for the man in all the other aspects of his life.

Nevertheless, there appears to be an obvious existential tension between sets (c) and (d), for strict fidelity to (c) undermines (d), and vice versa. But if we live in Heraclitean or a dialectical world, the tension could be adjudged a force for progress and qualitative advancement. So, it now appears that the integrity of the average Igbo man in the diaspora, whether he is in business, in the Arts, or in the professions hinges on how he straddles between sets (c) and (d).

An Igbo sojourner who is exceedingly successful and commits himself to the principles of good neighborliness in set (c), and becomes a community’s man in his place of abode, to the extent that he is given a chieftaincy title in recognition of his contributions, material and otherwise, to the development of his host community, could pass as a man of integrity in his place of residence, but may be regarded as a worthless person in his home-autochthonous community, had he affronted set (d) principles essentially all this time.

On the other hand, if this same sojourner is so homeward minded, such that he scantily cares about the development of his host community, and does just the minimum in this regard, but consciously repatriates almost all the proceeds of his successful enterprise back to his autochthonous home, is likely to be regarded as a persona non grata in his host community, but a worthy son-of-the-soil in his home town, with a high grade of integrity. He could also be given a chieftaincy title in his town, and streets and some other remarkable structures in the town named after him in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the development of his home town. This time, he is faithful to set (d) principles, but cares less about set (c). So, this hypothetical Igbo man is both a man of integrity, and a worthless person, an object of respect and scorn in the same life time. This creates tension, what do we call this tension, and how do we resolve the tension?

A scientific term called osmosis can be used to elucidate what is happening to the consciousness of this hypothetical Igbo man. Osmosis is the process by which a liquid of stronger concentration draws to itself another liquid with weaker concentration. Now, the principles in sets (c) and (d) appear as the cultural liquids of different concentrations, depending on the disposition of a person to either set. If this person’s mind, arising from socialization, is irresolutely committed to either set of principles, his consciousness becomes tautly poised about it, almost unbendable, and this taut disposition can be reinforced by practical experience in either case. Thus, if his mind is taut about set (d), he measures most important things from the purview of home-ward-ness: how his people regard him, how they involve him always in projects at home, and even practical visits people from home make to ascertain his state of well-being. Similarly, if he is irresolutely committed to set (c), the way of life of his host community in terms of social welfare programs that encourage inclusive growth of all segments of the local population, may appear to him to be better than what he is used to at home, and in turn then makes him feel
quite at home, away from home. Hence with time the stronger cultural consciousness will tend to dominate and suppress the order. In which case, he gains integrity from the dominant consciousness, and opprobrium from the suppressed weaker type. Many an Igbo man had this set (c) type of consciousness especially before the Nigerian civil war, and had started developing it again recently, if not for the Boko Haram insurgency, Niger Delta militancy, and other communal crises in other parts of the country.

The Igbo Internalized Didactic Principles and Human Nature

It would then appear as if humans have pulls towards or away from home, hence the saying, ‘east or west, home is the best.’ If this is so, then the human mind, over time, developed domestic instinct more like a dog that runs back to its master’s home each time it is startled, much as it can wander away for climes un-end, but all the while mentally marking ‘milestones’ which could help it retrace its steps back home. Some say that male dogs urinate at intervals as it wanders away from home, for it to be guided back by the smell of its own urine.

Assuming the propriety of this analogy, it can then be surmised that humans have the natural predilection to develop either set (c) or (d) type of taut consciousness such that it no longer matters whether one is Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Efik, Ijaw, Hindu, Malayan, Briton or American, in which case the cultural osmotic pressure exists for any human mind, and depending on which side of the pressure one falls, one acquires either integrity or opprobrium in relevant particular contexts. For instance, for any x, if x is a sojourner who lives his life in his host community, oblivious of its welfare, but x given any opportunity would send back home all he had made from his hosts, x will pass as a worthless person among his hosts, while regarded as a man of integrity in his aboriginal home, and vice versa. In the latter case, he could pass as a despicable person who remembers no heritage, neither mother nor father, nor kit and kin, having stumbled on a peaceful host community, which it would soon forget and abandon, just as he did in the case of his aboriginal home. No one who outlives his welcome in any place has integrity.

The Quest for Balance

It is obvious that commitment to sets (c) and (d) types of principles creates tension in the human mind, and further creates problems of integrity for one so committed. Following Aristotle’s doctrine of the mean, let’s call very strong commitment to set (c) type of principles wayward adventurism, and similar commitment to set (d) type of principles provincialism. Neither of these is a virtue, which, if it exists, is a mean between these two extremes.(Aristotle, 2002). Ever before Aristotle articulated his strive for the mean principle, Anaximander of Miletus had described the position of the earth in the universe as that of maintaining equidistance from all points of the compass (Raven, 1957, p. 128), hence its stability and integrity. Even though it cannot be maintained that every Igbo man-sojourner maintains this poise of Anaximanderian earth, where ever he lives, from his upbringing it is a treasured value for the Igbo person, which may not be always achieved and maintained, for as Aristotle says the mean differs for persons in their specific contexts. Even in each specific context and uniqueness of persons, virtue, integrity, philanthropy, or
communal commitment, or any other virtue that ignite endearment of one in others, is not a state but activity, or work in progress. In this regard, Aristotle maintains that “Virtue, as a good state, achieves the meson relative to us in feelings and actions and hence a mesotes” (Brown, 2014). The meson relative to us, is what is neither excessive nor deficient, but in-between, that is, just right for the specific situation.” A virtue is a mesotes relative to us precisely because it attains a meson relative to us, in just the same way the trainer and other experts such as craftsmen do.” (Brown, 2014)

Thus given a typical Igbo man-sojourner elsewhere in the world, who is an expert in whatever he plies, he has to determine, in the uniqueness of his situation, significant things considered, how to achieve a meson of any of the social goods desired in his location, given the pulls of socio-cultural forces. Assuming that communal commitment is a desired social good, how does an expert Igbo business man –sojourner achieves it where he resides without losing integrity due to socio-cultural forces? Determining how he would do this should not be in a vacuum. There ought to be some guide as to how this could be done given that such an expert professional or business man is also a rational, autonomous, and free economic man.

For this purpose it is necessary to bring up the Socratic view that virtue is knowledge, by which he meant that for anyone to claim excellence in any career or profession he should know the overall purpose of it. According to Orugun et al, the Igbo business man ventures into business, and not to say professional accomplishment, for the following purposes: profit, social approval, service to the community, personal satisfaction, livelihood, power, independence, family, job, and retirement comfort. In order to achieve these and more, he tasks himself and others for creativity, critical thinking, self-denial and taking extreme risks in the garb of the proverbial Igbo man seen even in hell plying his trade. (Orogun J. J., 2014)

Hence resolving the socio-cultural pressure in order for him to achieve the Aristotelian mean, he has to be considered as a rational economic-man who prudently seeks commensurate return on investment human, emotional, financial, and psycho-physical, who has to balance requirements among his purposes of venturing out in the first place. He has to balance personal satisfaction, profit, independence, family job, retirement comfort over community development both in his autochthonous home and place of residence, such that none of these purposes would be jeopardized.

Determining the mean among these competing purposes can be very tasking, and not many a man has the requisite skills for doing so. It is quite possible he errs on one side of the socio-cultural pressure pull thereby failing to achieve the mean. Such a person struggles between the demands of two extreme dicta from his social upbringing: ebe onye bi k’onawachi (one is required to develop his habitation) and aku lue uno amalu onye nwe ya (home ward repatriation of wealth thence announces its owner). But integrity in his scenario, depending on his financial power, requires that he attains egbe belu ugo belu (mutually assured survival, MAS) which should be the Aristotelian mean from the Igbo cultural perspective: his dedication to his habitation and contributions to its development should not compromise his responsibility back home and its overall development. Life then appears to be like a mathematical calculation, and not many are endowed with skills for
striking requisite balance in the contexts of competing and tautly strung alternatives. Hence if he preoccupies himself with homeward repartition of his wealth, he attracts envy and opprobrium where he lives, hence the Achebe claim. On the other hand if he so develops his habitation to the neglect of his autochthonous home he is dubbed efulefu – empty shell, wayward fool, which manifests as hate, even by his own people who are also Nigerians. The sumnum bonum is to become egbe belu ugo belu, rarely attained but is always work in progress.

Conclusion

A combination of natural environmental conditions, socialization, and governmental policies over the years shaped the personality of the typical Igbo man discussed in this paper. The Igbo homeland, compared with other geopolitical zones in the country, such as the South-West, or the North-West, is a relatively small parcel of land having population pressure of up to a thousand persons per square kilometer. At this same time, a significant part of this small strip of land is divested by gully erosion that had over the years, developed badlands of the Southern Dakota type. All these put even subsistent agriculture in great jeopardy which had created intensive sedentary agriculture practiced in many parts of this Igbo-land resulting, eons ago, in diminishing returns in that very fundamental of all economic endeavors of man. Obviously as the Igbo young person attains the age of reason and consciousness, the prominence of lack in the environment cannot be neglected nor wished away as it is an existential phenomenon.

However, in order that survival and community life is ensured, evolution of robust family and societal values like seniority, communality, ethics of the extended family system, have developed over time to mediate and form the psyche conscious of certain didactic principles extolling independence, freedom and responsibility, achievement by personal endeavor, good neighborliness, philanthropy, and most importantly the centrality of the wife and mother in the family. These principles and more that eventually condition both internalized and practical morality are passed from one generation to another through proverbs and aphorisms which are picked up, understood, retained and sustained in the mind of an average Igbo man, just as it happens in other human cultures.

One prominent way of meeting the insufficiency of daily provisions necessary for life, obvious in the Igbo man’s homeland, is for the youth to exercise its freedom and independence by venturing out of his natural environment to fend for himself and his relatives through the grind of personal economic endeavors in far flung places, which he does so successfully and beautifully to the chagrin of many a man. However, given the age long wisdom of Proverbs 22:6- “train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it”- this typical Igbo man carries his cultural psyche along with him just as a tortoise carries its shell wherever it goes.

The principles he learnt through his cultural socialization eventually create in him two opposing cultural forces arising from two basic principles of akulue uno amalu onye kpalu ya-home-ward-ness, and ebe onye bi k’ona awachi-a kind of sojourner philanthropy in host community. He has to straddle carefully between these two compelling but contradictory cultural forces in order to attain and maintain integrity. Relying on Aristotle’s
doctrine of the mean, it was contended here that pursuing any virtue is not just realized by attaining and maintaining a middle ground between two extremes, but acting, or behaving in accordance with the relevant virtue, in a living and contextual situation in such a way that the person attains a middle ground with respect to a particular virtue at that point in time.

This requires both material means, sagacity, and evenhandedness, in attaining a middle ground between say, home-ward-ness and sojourner philanthropy in order to become a man of integrity either way. Failure to deftly straddle between these two forces is the reason this typical Igbo can be reviled at home by his own people should he fail to show a robust home-ward-ness, or reviled in his host community where he plies his business, should he fail to be counted as a worthy philanthropist therein. So, the reviling of the Igbo man by Nigerians can be a veritable phenomenon both at home and abroad depending on how he achieves or fails to achieve integrity in the midst of the two cultural forces. The summum bonum, however, is egbe belu, ugo belu, nke si ibe ya ebena, nku kwa ya – mutuality and justice, and if necessary, equity. Attainment of this by a person or any human system is, if we believe Aristotle, work in progress.

References

43