

MARGINALIZED IN NIGERIA, MARGINALIZED IN IGBOLAND: AN APPRAISAL OF THE CRISES AND DYNAMICS OF SELF MARGINALIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY IGBOLAND

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Abstract

This study contends that while it is painful and probably normal to see and lament the alien status of the Igbo in the Nigerian project as evidenced in their verified marginalized condition, it is even more painful and lamentable that the Igbo are also alien and discriminated against in core Igbo heartland. It affirms that the popular refrain of Igbo marginalization in Nigeria is less painful when juxtaposed with the reality that greater number of the Igbo are even more marginalized in Igbo land. With sundry state policies targeted against indigenes of 'other' Igbo states in the labor market especially in the civil service and the retaliatory responses there from, including despicable social relations amongst the constituting peoples, government/culture-induced social stratification remain on the increase within the enclave. The superiority claims and assumptions of some sections of the Igbo fuse into attitudinal dispositions of government leading to certain marginalized Ndigbo alleging rights infringement that further buttress the crack on the unity-wall of the Igbo nation. The study argues that the central pursuit of sovereignty of the Igbo from Nigeria will be of no consequence if the cracked walls of unity that engender national consciousness and patriotism are not fortified to withstand the challenges of resistance to independence. It concludes by insisting that calls for a free Nigeria necessarily puts a duty on the Igbo to embrace a similar social condition because discriminatory disposition of Igbo state governments against Igbo non-indigenes as well as the assumption of cultural and material superiority of one Igbo group over the other signpost natural ingredient for rancor and disintegration that must be avoided by all means.

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Introduction

The popular parlance of 'dog eat dog' hilariously expressed in most communities in Igboland if not beyond is a killer of destiny. If dogs continuously eat other dogs, the mammalian extraction of dogs will in no time go into extinction. So, it is with the reprehensible saying that 'if a snake must remain long, it is incumbent on the said snake to eat (swallow) other snakes'. In both cases of the dog and snake, what seems most condemnable is the romance with self-annihilation because sooner than we imagine, the generational kingdom and lineage of dogs and snakes will be no more. In this study therefore, I place the Igbo ethnic nationality at par with the above narrative of self annihilation in the animal kingdom alluded to above. In line with the above, we advance three interrelated arguments. First, we argue that certain Igbo traditions, their mode of traditional governance including ways of life remain central and have indeed been the undoing of the Igbo in the face of contemporary realities in Nigeria. Two, we contend that discriminatory policies of one Igbo state against other Igbo states in south east Nigeria approximate not just to self-annihilation but self-marginalization especially within the context and understanding of the prevailing Igbo conditions in the wider Nigerian political turf. Such discriminatory policies by the minders of government in Igboland approximate to oppression and underdevelopment that manifest as consequential outcomes of marginalization. And three, I also contend that policies and actions of Igbo elites whether in or out of government that target Ndigbo in the five south east states represent self marginalization within the context of the quest for a united Igboland.

From these perspectives, we set out to affirm further that what is common place since the end of the Nigerian-Biafra civil war in 1970¹ have been the chilly cries and strident complaints by the Igbo of marginalization across the length and breadth of the country. This is evidenced from the institutionalized alienation² of the Igbo ethnic nationality to the ingenious policy craftsmanship meant to demobilize the "anquished" by the war victors. The Igbo have with unsure footedness glided from one institutional oppression to another; all with

¹Okaneme, G, 2014. Marginalization of Some Ethnic Nationalities in Nigeria: The Igbo Experience, *International Review of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 8 (1):43-47

²Ukaogo, V, 2013. Clapping with One Hand, Sleeping with One Eye: Repositioning the Igbo Agenda in a Competitive World, *IgboStudies Review*, Vol.1, No.1, 105-117.

damning consequences.³ While the outward sulking by the people is today considered 'normal' being a popular refrain in the real media, social media and sundry outlets, an abnormal or better still an unusual phenomena seem to characterize the social relations of the Igbo in the era of globalization. This is the painful dilemma and paradox of Igbo marginalization by Igbo against the Igbo in Igboland. Igbo self - marginalization is often denied but it is safe to affirm that it is real and remain central to the rocking disunity and underdevelopment evident in Igboland today. Largely conceived as impossible by outsiders, the reality is that it probably is more hurtful to the Igbo project than the externally generated dilemma of marginalization brought upon the Igbo from the center. Igbo self-marginalization is often denied even by the Igbo themselves but the truth is that even in self-denial, the malaise requires the attention of all stakeholders in the Igbo project for the right attitude and mentality to be restored. Some may have argued that the pervasive issue of Igbo against Igbo does not exist; but represent an exaggerated misunderstanding by individuals with other motives. Much as these denials remove nothing from the observed reality on ground, deeper truth exists when retaliatory state policies in the South east zone are explained to mean action and reaction by one state against the other.

Politics of Non-Indigene Categorization as Self-Marginalization

In 2011, Governor Theodore Orji of Abia State unceremoniously sacked non Abia state indigenes from the state public service.⁴ By this action which ensured the sacking and disengagement of 3,000 non-Abia state indigenes from the state's public service, the Governor unknowingly enraged many Nigerians especially Nigerians of the Igbo stock. Although this was not the first time this has occurred in a south eastern state, the accompanying acrimony demonstrates that the exercise was conducted in poor faith and has the potential to send out wrong if not hazardous signals that do not augur well for the country's unity. The sack which came via a directive with the heading 'Back loading on transfer of non-indigenes in Abia State public service to their states of origin', from the Head of Service said:

I write to convey the approval of the Government of Abia State that all non-indigenes working in the public service of Abia state [including local

³ Ukaogo, Victor, 2016., 'The Rise of Individualism and the Growing Irrelevance of the Igbo in the Nigerian Project', in Raphael Njoku and Chima Korie (eds), *The Igbo in the Age of Globalization*, New- Jersey: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing, December.

⁴ *The Sack of Non-Indigenes In Abia, 2011, The Editorial, PM News, November 31.*

governments] be transferred to their states of origin with effect from 1st October, 2011. This policy does not apply to tertiary institutions in Abia State.⁵

The state government, noted for double speaking promptly defended its action with a lame excuse that 'many Abia indigenes who were displaced from the North owing to the brutal Boko Haram attacks needed to be rehabilitated and given jobs'.⁶ The government further sold the dummy that 'the workforce had to be reduced to enable the government pay the new national minimum wage of N18, 000'. As this was not the first of its kind in Igboland, earlier dismissal of non-indigenes by Igbo states of the southeast advanced these same reasons of paucity of funds. For instance, the military governments of Enugu and Imo states in the 1990s massively retrenched non-natives to enable them 'sustain the workforce with its lean resources'. Even in 2004, the former governor of Imo State, Achike Udenwa, ingeniously laid off non-indigenes of the state in the public service, giving similar lame excuse. In a touchy editorial, a Nigerian tabloid in its editorial held that:

We believe that the retrenchment of non-indigenes from Abia public service will undermine the harmonious relationship that exists between Abia state and other Igbo-speaking states in the south east whose indigenes are mostly affected by the exercise which kicked off on 1 October this year. It becomes even more worrisome if other states across the country decide to retaliate by sending non-indigenes packing from their public service.⁷

While it is convenient to allege marginalization of the Igbo in other parts of the country, keen observers of Nigerian politics were aghast what name will be given to the retrenchment of the Igbo in Igboland especially when such a state count as an oil producing/rich state. Indeed: while Governor Theodore Orji is busy sacking non-indigenes, his counterpart in Imo State, Owelle Rochas Okorochoa, is employing non-indigenes into political positions. There is belief in many quarters that Abia, one of the oil producing states in the country, could conveniently pay the minimum wage without any recourse to retrenchment of non-indigenes.⁸

⁵Anayo Okoli, 2011. Abia, Imo in Verbal Warfare over Sack of Non-Indigenes, Lagos: Vanguard, October

⁶The Sack of Non-Indigenes In Abia, 2011, The Editorial, PM News, November 31.

⁷The Sack of Non-Indigenes In Abia, 2011, The Editorial, PM News, November 31.

⁸The Sack of Non-Indigenes In Abia, 2011, The Editorial, PM News, November 31.

We therefore argue that such an action that is 'anachronistic, obsolete and reprehensible' and patently 'irrational' is a sure manifestation of self marginalization which is in tandem with our analogy of the snake and the dog. While it is within the rights of states whose citizens had been so badly treated to respond in any manner considered appropriate, including retaliation, careful and credible observers saw the action of the Abia governor as not just 'irrational' but spoke in the bitterest of ways about the unity of Ndigbo.⁹ The contemplation of the Imo State government to retaliate by sacking Abia indigenes in its employ was a clear signal of the erosion of brotherhood in Igboland when the opposite should actually be the case. With the above, how tenable would it be for the Igbo that cannot accommodate the Igbo in the smallest of ways to argue or complain of any measure of injustice in Nigeria? There is therefore the lack of moral force to argue for a full accommodation of Igbo interests when bitterness and acrimony dominates relations across the zone.

Are the Igbo Marginalized in Nigeria?

There is no unanimity of opinion by scholars, government official and sundry individuals including politicians that the Igbo are marginalized but indicators on ground firmly insist that indeed marginalization has been their bedmate especially since 1970 when in the euphoria of contrived peace, the then Nigerian head of state, General Yakubu Gowon volunteered that there was 'no victor no vanquished'¹⁰ in the just ended war. He thereafter introduced the three R's representing reconstruction, reintegration and rehabilitation¹¹ without results.¹² Efforts at genuine reconciliation died on arrival as questions on the sincerity of reconciliation created the atmosphere of doubt and suspicion. Federal

⁹ Anayo Okoli, 2011. Abia, Imo in Verbal Warfare over Sack of Non-Indigenes, Lagos: Vanguard, October. Also see Frank Eneawaji Ogwuononu, 2011, The Sacking Of Non Indigenes In Abia State Civil Service, A Threat To Federalism, BREAK NEWS, November 18th.

¹⁰ Itumo Anthony, Nwobashi Humphery and Offor Ogbonnaya, 2018., Marginalization of the Igbo People in the Nigerian State: Myth or Reality? Middle East Journal of Scientific Research 26 (4)395-409

¹¹ Ukaogo, V, 2020., 'Gowon's Three R's and Yar'Adua's General Amnesty: an Analysis of Policy Failures, Security Challenges and Consequences in the West African Atlantic Seaboard', *IKORO: Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Vol. 14, No. 1, 277-300.

¹² Ojo, E.O, 2009, Mechanism for National Integration in a Multi-ethnic Federal State: The Nigeria Experience, Ibadan: Archer Publishers Lts

government mechanism of integration such as National Youth Service Corps schools, federal character, national sport festival, catchment area merely worsened the problems and created more challenges against inclusiveness. The history of Igbo marginalization in Nigeria is long and worrisome but it's very difficult to clearly chronicle the form and manifestation of this dilemma.¹³ Its reality or otherwise could be gleaned from historical developments in the country since 1960. The Igbo have suffered series of reverses in the annals of Nigerian history that prompted the summary opinion of Okoye thus: They lost property worth hundreds of thousands and millions of lives in the 1966 pogrom and their subsequent bid for a separate and independent state (Biafra) that culminated in a civil war and the subsequent defeat. They have also been emasculated after the civil war and subsequently marginalized not only in the Nigerian political arena but also in the public services, the armed forces and police.¹⁴

From a number of curious schemes, the victorious federal government crafted methods of keeping the Igbo perpetually down the denied them the possibility of recovery. Diverse economic and political emasculation methods were ingeniously designed that consigned the Igbo to Irrelevance. These methods include but not limited to curious banking policies, politics of State creation, and discrimination in federal appointments, military neutralization as well as selective development and educational policies. This probably encouraged the assumption 'that the purpose of this strategy is simply to dispossess, pauperize and indeed marginalize the Igbo and reduce their relevance in Nigeria'.¹⁵

From marginalization to Self-marginalization: of the Greenleaf and the Ant

Marginalization is social exclusion, a situation of social disadvantage that involves the deliberate alienation of a minority group and ignoring such a group in the scheme of things. It essentially involves the exclusion of that group and relegating its needs and desires ostensibly on account of its irrelevance.¹⁶ It

¹³Itumo Anthony, Nwobashi Humphery and Offor Ogbonnaya, 2018., Marginalization of the Igbo People in the Nigerian State: Myth or Reality? Middle East Journal of Scientific Research 26 (4) 43-47. See also Uwalaka Jude, 2003(cited by Uduma, D.O), Marginalization Syndrome in Nigeria's Politics: The Case of Ndigbo, International Journal of Advanced Legal Studies and Governance, 91, 91, 2015).

¹⁴Okoye, S.E, 2017., Marginalization in Nigeria: The Way Out for Ndigbo, The Igbo Network language Language Centre, Igbo Events Calendar; Igbo Essay Series.

¹⁵Ojukwu, E.O, 2001., The Marginalization of Ndigbo, Vanguard Newspapers, January 10.

¹⁶<http://www.businessdirectory.com/definition/marginalization.html>

exists at various levels with diverse implications for social existence. From how we conceive marginalization, it is usually visited on a negligible or minority group with little or no capacity to resist it. For the Igbo, they are neither negligible, lack capacity nor a minority but they have suffered exclusion for several decades. It means that such social condition has not been properly studied to unearth the real explanation. Our intervention here is to necessarily interrogate internal dynamics underscoring Igbo marginalization, that explanation comes from, notably self.

As indicated and observed elsewhere, the Igbo condition of marginalization is well noted and understood even by non- Igbo people. What is probably not mentioned or discussed are the contributions of the Igbo to their often-repeated plight. This is what we refer to as self marginalization, representing self inflicted conditions necessitating the continued situation of marginalization. The metaphor of the green-leaf and the ant is quite apt as it captures the reality that the receding greenery of the leaf derives from the tiny ant that has made meal of the leaf, meaning that what is eating up the green-leaf is inside and domiciled in the green-leaf. Taken a shade further, that which incapacitates the Igbo comes from within and not without. It is therefore my contention that when the Igbo grow out of attitude of self annihilation, their precarious condition of self marginalization will become of no effect. Our intervention is clear and straight forward, Igbo self-marginalization explains in large dose their pitiable condition in today's Nigeria. For emphasis, we must say that It has become normal for the Igbo to attribute external factors to their predicament in the country. Majority would conveniently forget that internally generated contradictions also add up to the challenge. Consciously or unconsciously, they have aggravated the issues of perceived non-inclusion in national politics. This is the central thesis of my intervention here to the effect that we strongly believe that there is an urgent need for sober reflection which requires new thinking, creativity and fresh strategies. From all indications, the Igbo methods of self marketing needs reviewing, her values reprioritized, ambitions re-oriented, attitudes reshaped, psyche rehabilitated, character rebuilt and vision redirected.¹⁷ If the above makes any sense whatsoever, we will try to enumerate and explain where possible how the Igbo are responsible for their dilemma.

¹⁷Uwalaka Jude, 2003., *The Struggle for an Inclusive Nigeria: Igbos, to be or not to be – A Treatise on Igbo Igbo Political Personality in Nigeria*, SNAAP Press Ltd, 29.

Igbo Value and Belief System

One fundamental factor that has occasioned Igbo self marginalization is their value and belief system. A curious examination of pre-colonial Igbo world view, belief and value systems is fraught with worrisome observations. Elsewhere, a scholar have dealt with the Igbo world view and belief system couched in individualism¹⁸ but Ifeanyi Mmuoh captured this even in greater details when he volunteered that:

The general belief system in the Ibo(Igbo) nation then was that Igboamaeze. Every man was his own leader or leader of his own household. The value system on the other favored personal achievements, financial clout as well as persons well cultured in the inherent belief system. There was no generally accepted or impositions of religious beliefs like leadership every ibo(Igbo man was free to worship as many chi as he could. However, there was a wholesome belief in a greater god called Chukwu.¹⁹

Mmuoh further argues that on account of the inherited values system from the old era and adhered till date which favor and admire 'personal achievements', aggressive mentality was inadvertently created in the Igbo psyche that unwittingly 'found expression in hard work and diligence'. Accordingly:

Every Ibo (Igbo man needed to be prominent in that society because the alternative was something very unpleasant to contemplate. When a man was without any name, property or achievement attached to his personality, he was more or less a man without a voice among his peers. Moreover, polygamy was a strategy that worked hand in hand with hard work, as the industrious man had a lot of help in his wives and children and that translated to prosperity and financial clout. But in time however, these values system started to have a negative impact on the average ibo(Igbo).²⁰

The negative impact of the Igbo value and belief system is so pervasive that in error, sundry other nationalities insistently assume that the Igbo love for money remain the country's major dilemma. This assumption is generalist and silent on what other ethnic nationalities love the more other than money. What I

¹⁸ Ukaogo, Victor, 2016., 'The Rise of Individualism and the Growing Irrelevance of the Igbo in the Nigerian Project', in Raphael Njoku and Chima Korieh (eds), *The Igbo in the Age of Globalization*, New- Jersey:Goldline and Jacobs Publishing, December.

¹⁹ Ifeanyi Mmuoh, 2017., *The Origin of Igbo Marginalization in Nigeria*, NigeriaWorld, November, 14.

²⁰ Ifeanyi Mmuoh, 2017., *The Origin of Igbo Marginalization in Nigeria*, NigeriaWorld, November, 14.

see is that the glorification of personal achievement closely evaluated by individual's wealth was carried into the colonial and post colonial Igbo lifestyle without necessarily understanding the time and timing of such practice.

Igbo Resistance to Change and Discriminatory Class System

Linked to the above is another factor ostensibly related to Igbo natural reluctance and resistance to change? The Igbo society has a very way of frowning at and resisting anything that is not in tandem with the "usual or normal" procedure upon which a task is executed; irrespective of the merit or otherwise of the "new" procedure. The Igbo resistance to Christian missionaries' advancement into Igboland is a case in point. So also, were the British administrators' labors to introduce indirect rule in Igboland. It took them more time and labor to accomplish British intensions in the south east. The British encounter with the Igbo revealed a tribe that was not only unwilling but stubbornly opposed to the idea of adjusting to accommodate alien practices and whatever considered foreign to them. Class system and the crises associated with it count as a drawback for the Igbo. The class system that existed in the Igbo society-by virtue of being clearly delineated-somehow encouraged discrimination. For instance, the Osu system ostracized certain folks who were considered not normal citizens. Suffice it to say that even the burial rites of a privileged person back in the days had a high price tag.

Igbo and the Absence of Constituted Leadership²¹

From the foregoing discussion, we have tried to identify and explain those traits, attitude and actions that betray not only the realization of Igbo cause in the bigger Nigerian project but depict self marginalization in the polity. The much-admired Igbo solidarity died naturally after the end of the civil war in 1970 and in its stead rose the defensive and self-destructive age-old sermon of republicanism of the Igbo spirit. Igbo politicians belabor themselves to justify and rationalize their preference of self to all in their attitudes in the public arena. The republican spirit they interpret to mean everyone should pursue his own interest not the general interest. This dovetails to the notorious Nzeribe thesis of *Aga akpaya kpa or Makpaya akpa* (if we discuss it or if consulted) without

²¹This section is derived from my earlier intervention on Igbo Marginalization. See Ukaogo, V, 2013. Clapping with One Hand, Sleeping with One Eye: Repositioning the Igbo Agenda in a Competitive World, *IgboStudies Review*, Vol.1, No.1, 1-16.

which anyone who acts contrary and vexatious saying that Igbo enwe eze (no king in Igboland).²²

The republican tradition is not synonymous with extreme individualism and trumpeters of this tradition that use same to rationalize failure to generate collective political agenda for a common good do so out of ignorance and little knowledge. With its roots in Periclean Athens and pre-imperialist Rome, Aristotle robustly wrote about it and it flourished through the Machiavellian and Guicciandeni era. It played great role in revolutionary Europe, especially England and her American colonies. Republicanism engenders a society that protects the individual rights and properties and gives the individual a say in governance but classical republicanism is preoccupied with civic or public virtue that promotes public good.²³ What good do we now have? In the esteemed view of Tony Momoh, self-republicanism has its fortune, but where individualism subjects everything else to personal interest, then the consequences of failure should be borne without pointing to directions outside their home base.²⁴

Igbo, Greed, Mercenary Commercialism and Opportunism

Another fundamental drawback fueling self-marginalization is the negative entrepreneurial spirit that is today legendary and proverbial in Igboland. Commerce is good for it has done the Igbo a lot of good. They have provided everything for themselves even when other rely on government for everything and it has also empowered them against all odds and expectations. Good as it would appear, enormous challenges become most manifest especially in the area of commoditizing everything around them and the commercialization of life if possible. The penchant attitude for the pursuit of money and the opportunism associated with it remain most disgusting. Every little opportunity must be converted to profit making thus the rise of mercenary instinct in a good number of the people. Quest for money becomes serious business as everything is reduced to money, a situation that attracts aspersion and caricature on the people. This attitude reduces the Igbo in the public domain with insulting jokes and jabs thrown without pity on all. Imagine the recorded insult of a female minister under Obasanjo's first term regime who mocked the Igbo to

²²Meek, C.K, 1973., *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe*, Oxford University Press, 237

²³Mooney, C.F, 1970., *Public Virtue, Law and the Social Character of Religion*, Notra Dame Press, No. 7-8. Also sww Arinze, F, 1970., *Sacrifice in Igbo Religion*, 5

²⁴Tony Momoh, 2003., 'Threat to Igbo Solidarity', Lagos: Vanguard, February 19.

concentrate on trading and leave politics and presidency to other Nigerians.²⁵ Perhaps on account of such insults and similar ones, Sarah Jubrilu lamented the undue mercantilist attitude of Igbos and advised as follows:

Politically, I find it painful that a lot of Igbo leaders have become vote contractors; they collect money and sell their votes. So when they voted get into power, they feel they owe them nothing. Many Igbo leaders connive with those who want to marginalize them to vote against their interest. They seem to have no resilience or sustaining principle, people do not respect you, so they do not take you seriously in the scheme of things. Igbo leaders should stop using their people to bargain for their personal needs. There is a lot of sell out, a lot of selfish politicking...Now their boys don't go to school, they are only after money.²⁶

The Igbo may have strong acquisitive spirit but same with other people. They may have been misconstrued by others. But it also shows the wrong reading of the attitudes of the Igbo by outsiders. Truth be told however, if the Igbo love money, the way and manner they do it pricks the mind as they "condescend, or demean and destroy themselves or compromise their rights, betray their principles for financial interest (that) bring them disdain and scorn in the eyes of other Nigerians".²⁷ There is no doubt that the Igbos have suffered immense injustice from the larger Nigerian state. Chris Alli lamented this in the context of the Igbo dilemma:

Unfortunately for the Igbos, the Yoruba and the Hausa/Fulani contrived at the end of the war to cosign them Igbo to neglect. It was a terrible political act that laid the foundation for the Igbo irredentism. The nation indeed, has been dishonest to judgments on the cause of the reconciliation tenets of the post war philosophy. Thirty years after, they have ensured the weakening of the Igbo voice.²⁸

Within the explanatory framework of enemy within, a scholar opined that the Igbo themselves are a burden and challenge to themselves. Still on disunity and the Igbo, this self-inflicted pain has caused the inability to collectively pursue set objectives.²⁹ And as Reuben Abati observed:

²⁵Uwalaka Jude, 2003., *The Struggle for an Inclusive Nigeria: Igbos, to be or not to be – A Treatise on Igbo Igbo Political Personality in Nigeria*, SNAAP Press Ltd, 36.

²⁶TELL Magazine, January 15th, 2000

²⁷Uwalaka Jude, 2003., *The Struggle for an Inclusive Nigeria: Igbos, to be or not to be – A Treatise on Igbo Igbo Political Personality in Nigeria*, SNAAP Press Ltd, 36.

²⁸ Chris Alli, 2001., *The Federal Republic of Nigeria Army: The Siege of a Nation* (Lagoa:Malthouse Press)

²⁹ Victor Ukaogo, *Post Conflict Igbo Challenges and the New Nigeria State*, in Chima Korieh (ed),

Despite their single mindedness, Igbos are easily the most disorganized group in this country, Igbo political leadership is diffuse, self contradictory and usually of little effect. What is broadly referred as the Igbo agenda suffers from a crisis of interpretation...And my point is simply that the moment the Igbo politics is freed from the shackles of expediency and opportunism, Nigerian politics as played in southern Nigeria would become more effective as a broad platform for the resolution of the Nigerian dilemma.³⁰

Still on the attitudes of the Igbo and the migratory tendencies of the people, good as it would seem, has done much harm in eroding the little confidence their hosts have in them. Economic migration per se is not the issue nor is it bad; but the attitudinal bravado that accompanies it as evidenced in Igbo desperation to buy up the whole of Lagos Kano, Abuja and Kaduna in the most audacious manner. This was the point the ACF made before the Oputa panel to the effect that "they (Igbos) are unduly aggressive, and ethnocentric...they are perceived as ruthless and intensely inward-looking, living everywhere without making adjustments to any local conditions".²⁵ This may explain curious legislative enactments to curtail Igbo entrepreneurship in non- Igbo areas of Nigeria. All of these began with the Igbo themselves.

Igbo: What can be Done?

As indicated elsewhere in this essay, the Igbo must be bold to review the factors that encourage marginalization and self marginalization that have influenced them for a longtime. All these have constituted pillars of self destruction. The issue of leadership is key and require urgent review especially for the Igbo since the Igbo have the cruel tendency to destroy individuals with leadership qualities. Conversely, the Hausa/Fulani with the Yoruba protect, guide and guard their own. In a social formation with competition as its watchword, leadership cannot be overemphasized.

Unfortunately, the Igbo's adaptation to contemporary reality looks to be difficult. This helps to explain why there is still such a strong desire and seeming desperation to represent whenever a leadership opportunity arises. During the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo, the Igbo had at least four senators in eight years occupying the position of senate president!! This is a self-evident

Ghosts of Biafra: War, Genocide, and Memory of the Nigeria-Biafra War, New-York: Cambria Press, 303-312.

³⁰Reuben Abati, Lagos: The Guardian, April 16th 2000. Also see Ojewale, 'War of Words', Lagos: Newswatch, August 20, 2000, 14

oddity because everyone believed he was his own leader, no one believes the other could do a greater job representing if allowed.

Conclusion

The study undertook an appraisal and review of the Igbo attitudinal disposition that glorifies republicanism and individualism. The truth is that there is the feeling that the Igbo in today's Nigeria, on account of ego do not understand where individualism should stop and where collectivism must begin. Rather than correct self marginalization, the Igbo continue to complain about outside forces militating against them without realizing that it was their failure to put their houses in order that exposed them to public ridicule in the first instance. The agitations of IPOB is said to be linked to the marginalization status of the Igbo but no one is willing to discuss the issues raised in this study. The Igbo renaissance so desperately needed is in the hands of the Igbo themselves. Once they put their acts together, the rest is just easy. This is why in the opinion of a scholar 'putting the house in order was as necessary for Ndigbo as making the case for a restructured Nigerian federation was for every Nigerian; for when we pluck the log from our eyes, we would be able to see well enough to deal with the speck in our neighbor's eyes.'