IMPLICATIONS OF IGWEBUIKE PHILOSOPHY IN PURSUIT FOR *SHALOM* IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL AND ETHNIC PARTICULARISMS IN AFRICAN

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Abstract

This Paper examines an African current reality, with emphasis on Nigeria, of the different tensions and conflicts which have become a leitmotif and serious concern for most nations in the continent. While not limiting itself to the rising nationalism in Nigeria and the factors that lead to this situation, the paper also looks at the ethnic particularism part of this situation. This work has an Igwebuike perspective to the situation in the sense that it uses its philosophy as model in an attempt to foster peace building and conflict transformation in the society. The Paper adopted phenomenological and socio-descriptive methods; and bibliographic tool was used in eliciting data for this study. The work reveals that there is untold and unnecessary hardship and pain that nationalism and ethnic particularism bring on the people of Nigeria, and therefore recommends that the African values enshrined in Igwebuike philosophy be adopted in fostering shalom in the face of rising national and ethnic particularisms in the face of conflict decimated Nigeria and the world at large.

Keywords: Igwebuike philosophy, nationalism, peace building, conflict, ethnic, particularism

Introduction

A cursory look at the world of today from Asia to Europe to America to the Caribbean, and to Africa, the smoke that emits from these places is the smoke of conflict and war, a smoke of tension and displacement. A huge percentage of the news that emanates from news rooms all over the world is that of displacement and insecurity, news of maiming and killings, news that is devoid of peace and peaceful coexistence. This sad reality is not strange or new to Africa and Nigeria in particular. This is especially obvious in the number of killings and other cognate realities that are recorded in the country on daily basis. Many causes have been identified for this ugly reality and the Igwebuike, as a transcendental

organisation or body, is invited to render her prophetic voice in dousing this trend.

The history of nationalism and ethnic tensions in Nigeria and most post-colonial African states has been more of negative reports and complaints about civil strife resulting from difficulties in inter-ethnic relations than of a growth of the spirit of unity which appeared to have characterised the Nigerian/African nationalist struggles.[61] This is not surprising as Duruji painfully avers that before the intrusion of the British into what is now known as Nigeria, that the various ethnic and cultural groups that make up the area called Nigeria today existed as autonomous political entities.[62] He posits that these entities had their own political systems, social and religious values distinct from one another. The aim of the colonialists in bringing these entities together was purely for exploitation of capital. To facilitate this, they employed divide and rule tactics so as to consolidate and preserve British foothold with little interest in the socioeconomic or political development of the country, or its people. Consequently, the British colonial policies, were not tailored to foster unity and peaceful coexistence among the disparate groups that constitute Nigeria, rather it was intended to exploit the varied differences, create distrusts, suspicions and cleavages among them. Ultimately, these unsavoury developments have degenerated to conflicts and unhealthy coexistence in most Nigerian communities, hence the rise in nationalism and ethnic particularism.

Some African ideologies, philosophies, worldviews and dispositions to life are pro life and peace in the society, and have been very helpful in coexisting peacefully, fostering a holistic development. A few examples of this are the Esan ideology, which has become a saying, of *akoamen,* meaning, may it be well or good with all of us. Another is the *ubuntu* philosophy of I am because you are. *Ubuntu* can be described as the capacity in an African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interests of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual caring. There is not much difference of this from the Esan *akoamen* philosophy. The last one and the one we will consider in this paper is the Igwebuike philosophy. Kanu is a

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[61] I. Odimegwu, "Nigerian Nationalism and the Crisis of Patriotism: A Conceptual Dialogics in Philosophy and Africa" in Ike Odimegwu, (ed) *UNESCO 2006 World Philosophy,* 2006, Vol. 1, 203

[62] M.M. Duruji, "Ethnic Militia and Sub-nationalism in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of MASSOP and OPC," Department of Political science and International Relations, Covenant University, 2010.

promoter of Igwebuike Philosophy, and has done considerable work on the ideology.[63]

Conceptual Clarifications
a. Igwebuike Philosophy

In understanding the concept and worldview of Igwebuike Philosophy, one does not have to travel far to get what this African philosophy is all about. Professor Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, a Professor of African Philosophy from the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Tansian University, Umunya, Anabra State, Nigeria has the following to say about the Igwebuike Philosophy:

> In more recent times, *Igwebuike* has been employed as a lens for the interpretation of reality. *Igwebuike* is an Igbo word that expresses the heart of African thought, logic and the modality of being in African philosophy[64]. Although it is a word, it is not just a word; it carries within it an entire structure: the structure of African philosophy, traditional religion and culture. It is taken from the Igbo language, and is a composite word made up of three words[65]. Therefore, it can be employed as a word or used as a sentence: as a word, it is written as *Igwebuike*, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwe bu ike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space[66]. The three words involved: *Igwe* is a noun which means number or population, usually a huge number or population. *Bu* is a verb, which means *is*. *Ike* is another verb, which means *strength* or *power*[67]. Thus, put together, it means 'number is strength' or 'number is power', that is, when human beings come together in

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[63] I. A. Kanu, "Igwebuike Philosophy and the Issue of National Development," A paper presented at the National Conference on Peace and National Development organized by the Centre for Peace Development, Veritas University, Abuja, 20-22 November, 2017, 3

[64] I. A. Kanu, *Igwebuike as an Expressive Modality of Being in African ontology. Journal of Environmental and Construction Management. 6. 3.* pp. 59-69.

[65] I. A. Kanu, *Igwebuike as an Igbo-African wholistic response to the problem of evil and human suffering.* Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities. 3. 2. 2017, p.52

[66] I. A. Kanu, *Igwebuike as an Igbo-African ethic of reciprocity.* Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities. 3. 2. 2017, p.127

[67] I. A. Kanu, "Igwebuike as a Complementary Approach to the Issue of Girl-Child Education". Published in *Nightingale International Journal of Contemporary Education and Research*. Vol. 3. No. 6. 2017, pp. 11-17. Also see Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony, "Igwebuike as an Igbo-African Philosophy for the Protection of the Environment". Published in *Nightingale International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences.* Vol. 3. No. 4. 2017, pp. 28-38.

solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful and can constitute an insurmountable force[68]. Its English equivalents are solidarity and complementarity[69]. It is anchored on the African worldview, which is characterized by a common origin, common world-view, common language, shared culture, shared race, colour and habits, common historical experience and a common destiny[70]. Life is a life of *sharedness*[71].

From the submission of Kanu, it is clear that the crux of the message of Igwebuike is the message of unity, not division; a unity that is enshrined in solidarity and complementarity; a message that transcends any kind of barrier, be it race, colour, social, culture, economic; a message that engenders peace etc. I particularly submit that this worldview is what is needed in the world of today; a world full of all forms of divisions and strife.

b. Nationalism

The term nationalism is as controversial as its etymological and historical roots. According to Odimegwu, nationalism is a theory, an ideology, a movement, a consciousness and a creed; but it is also a disease, an expression of mania or desire. Its meaning in each of these categories is not less diverse nor is the categories explicitly defined.[72] Nationalism is seen as the sense of political togetherness that makes people feel patriotic about a country, connected to a 'we-group', and distinct from 'they-group.' As an Ideology, nationalism holds that the nation should be the primary political identity of individuals.

Eteete posits that nationalist ideology maintains that the paramount political loyalty of individuals should be patriotically extended to the nation-state, the political vehicle of the nation's self-governance. Most people have more than one political vehicle of the nation's self-governance, some have more than one political identity, and nationalism almost always is their primary political orientation. For example, I can say that, I am a Nigerian, an Esan man by tribe,

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[68] I. A. Kanu, "Igwebuike and the logic of African philosophy.*" Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities.* 3. 1. 2017, P.9

[69] I. A. Kanu, "Igwebuike and the question of superiority in the scientific community of knowledge.*" Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities.* 3. 1. 2017, p.78

[70] Iroegbu, P., *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy*. Owerri: International Universities Press. 1995, p. 24

[71] I. A. Kanu, "Igwebuike as the consummate foundation of African bioethical principles." *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities.* 2. 2. 2016, p.41.

[72] I. Odimegwu, 204

and a Democrat or Progressive - in that order. We emotionally rank our identities; while some of us put our country first, some see themselves first on a religious basis and so on. Thus, you probably see yourself first and foremost politically as a citizen of Nigeria or some other country. In this kind of identification, one might even be willing to fight and die for his country.[73]

However, nationalistic fanaticism leaves us with a perjured idea that leaves more to be desired in the era of organicism and homogenisation that drives the global politics. Nationalism in this form beclouds the moral sense and the rational judgment of the true nationalist. At its worst, it is a possession with the absolute worth of my nation and the absolute worthlessness of any other besides it. Proponents of this form of ideology pay less attention to cosmopolitanism, since it argues that it is possible to be a citizen of the world in general. This diseased version of reality finds expression in some of the innocuous distinction made popular from nation to nation. For instance, the Igbo describes the Hausa as 'not intelligent', or the Yoruba describes the Igbo as greedy or money-conscious; or the Hausa describes the Yoruba as cowardly and noisy, and other such ethnic categorization; these statements according to Negedu and Atabor, are mostly not mere objective description of facts, but prejudicial declaration of nationalistic positions and orientations.[74]

It has also been seen as the movement to defend the identity and interests of a nation with the aim of primarily securing her political independence. According to Beswick, this may comprise the actions of members to secure or maintain the right to self-determination, as well as their desire to be perceived as a nation. The conceptual content of nationalism remains the attribute that members of a nation have when they care about their national identity and the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve or sustain some form of political sovereignty.[75]

Nationalism is the movement of people to exit their original State or nation to pursue independent statehood or regional autonomy within a multi-ethnic, multi-religious state. We also refer to sub-nationalism as a movement or revolt of peoples against the unitary nature of state, reinforced by indigenous rights and

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[73] A.M. Eteete, "Ethnic Nationalism, Statism, Citizenship and the Right to Non-discrimination under the Nigerian Constitution," Department of International Law and Diplomacy, Babcock University, Ilisan Remo, Nigeria, 5, 2013

[74] I. Negedu, and A. Atabor, "Nationalism in Nigeria: A Case for patriotic Citizenship" *American International Journal of Contemporary Research,* Vol. 5, No. 3, 2015, 75

[75] J. Beswick, *Regional nationalism in Spain,* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2008), 25

contention of power. It leans to mobilization and ethnocentrism for political and economic advantage of one ethnic group against another.

c. Ethnic Particularism

For a proper understanding of particularism of an ethnic group, it is important to have an understanding of what particularism is all about. The word has been used in different fields to express opinions. In the field of theology, particularism is understood to mean the principle that only certain people are chosen by God for salvation. This is an aspect of Calvin's theology of salvation, that certain people have already be set aside to be saved by God at the end. In the socio-political sphere, particularism is the principle that individual states, races, or groups of a federation may act independently of the central government or authority. It is the principle of leaving each state in an empire or federation or a nation free to govern itself and promote its own interests, without reference to those of the whole.

Ethnic particularism could therefore be seen as organised violence-oriented groups populated by diverse elements, cutting across different age strata, but drawing membership exclusively from an ethnic group and established to promote and protect the interests of an ethnic group.

Nigeria is a nation with not less than 250 ethnic groups and one can only but expect that there will be some form of ethnic struggle for relevance and claiming of right. This ethnic awareness, identity politics, particularism, and localism against the uniformity of abstract universalism are common features of the postmodern and post colonial milieus. These identities have given rise to groups agitating for their rights and seeking attention which have most times led to conflict and unwanted situations as can be seen and heard in every part of the world.

Understanding of Contemporary National and Ethnic Particularisms in the Nigerian Context

Africa, just like other continents of the world, and Nigeria, just like most other nations are bedevilled with twin enemies of nationalism and ethnic particularism. Anuforo succinctly quipped in his reference to Governor General of Nigeria, (1920 - 1931) on the vastness of Nigeria. The Governor described Nigeria as a collection of independent Native States, separated from one another by great distances, by differences of history and traditions and by ethnological,

racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers.[76] In the same line, Negedu and Atabo posit that this multiplicity of content, that is, the myriads of ethnic groups that make up Nigeria has perpetually posed a problem for the nation-state called Nigeria; they lamented that the infrastructure on which Nigeria stands cannot hold a superstructure because of its shaky nature. When a foundation is shaky; it will be absurd to put on its top an imposing superstructure. There is fundamental problem that must be tackled before Nigeria can stand on its feet.[77]

National and ethnic particularism did not start recently; it is rather a long time phenomenon. This challenge of nationalism ethnic particularity can be traced to the earlier days of Nigerian state when the leaders of Nigerian nationalist struggles graduated into the leaders of post independence Nigerian government, they seemed also to have transformed instantaneously from Nigerian nationalist freedom fighters to ethnic nationalist leaders. And so in the first Republic Nigerian political experience, the leaders of the three major ethnic groups – Nnamdi Azikiwe (Igbo), Ahmadu Bello (Hausa) and Obafemi Awolowo (Yoruba) showed themselves, in moment of personal crisis to be more of ethnic champions than nationalist leaders. While Awolowo and Bello were more open and direct, the vacillation of Azikiwe did not help the Nigerian people or the Igbo people. Many believe that this trend historically prepared the grounds for the agitations that we experience these days in the name of ethnic loyalties that abound in different forms.

To discuss how nationalism and ethnic particularism militate against peace building and conflict transformation, a working definition for ethnic militia will be appropriate. Ethnic militia is a tool or avenue for the disturbance of peace in any society. Duruji posits that ethnic militia is an extreme form of ethnic agitation for self-determination. This agitation usually manifest when an ethnic group assumes militant posture. They serve as a social pressure group designed to influence the structure of power to the advantage of an ethnic group, and call attention to the deteriorating material condition or political deprivation, and perceived marginalisation of their group or social environment.[78] From the

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[76] B. Anurofo, "The Breakup of Nigeria: Unthinkable, a remote possibility or the only solution?" 2013. www.openmindfoundation.com, accessed 17th May, 2019.

[77] Negedu and Atabo, 76

[78] M. M. Duruji, "Ethnic Militias and Sub-nationalism in Nigeria: A Comparative study of MASSOB and OPC," Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria, 14-15, 2010

above, it is safe to posit that the insurgence of nationalist tendencies which eventually culminates to ethnic militia is a flow-out of the tension that has always been between civic and ethnic nationalism. According to Odimegwu, these conflicts of ethnic and civic nationalisms in Nigeria constitute for the average Nigerian citizen, a conflict and dislocation of loyalties between the Nigerian state and the various ethnic nationalities in the state.[79]

Conflict brings about all manner of outcomes such as poverty, death, destruction, food shortage and disease, etc. The first major sign of conflict which brought tension among Nigerians came on the 15th January 1966. As a result of the coup, the Eastern Region made up of majority of Igbo people declared a republic known as Biafra. The rest of Nigerians led by Northern Nigeria declared war on the Igbo in July 1967. However, the war ended in January 1970. Since then, peace has eluded the regions. From 1999 till date, Nigeria has experienced critical events that undermined her co-existence. The crisis reached its peak according to Okwueze during the military regimes of under Babangida and Abacha as Nigeria was already facing serious economic and political problems.[80] The Nigerian crises in different shades are highlighted below.

Sharia Crisis: In November 1999, the introduction of Sharia Law (Islamic civil and criminal code) in the twelve Northern States of Nigeria met aggressive resistance that caused the religious crisis of February 2000. The implementation of Sharia Law, in the opinion of Harnischfeger, sparked national controversies since the days of its proposal in 1999 by Zamfara Governor, Sani Ahmad Yerima. The government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as "a State of Religion" and should also make her position known on Sharia law in the constitution.[81]

Niger Delta Crisis (Militancy): This is mainly carried out by the ethnic militia in the Nigerian Niger Delta. These groups include Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), and Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) are some of the major ones. Restiveness of the Niger Delta region where youths of the region unable to reconcile the wealth the region gives the nation with the extremely poor condition in which the region lives with has taken to actions which create

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[79] I. Odimegwu, 207

[80] M.I Okwueze, *Ethics, Religion and Society*. Nsukka, Nigeria, 2003, 99-117.

[81] J. Harinischfeger, *Democratization and Islamic Law: The Sharia conflict in Nigeria.* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2008), 35-56.

anxiety, tension and conflict. This has necessitated the formation of ethnic militia like the ones mentioned above whose goal appears to be to effect violent changes where peaceful changes are impossible. Since then, ethnic militants have taken over the Niger Delta region making it a peace less and unpeaceable environment.

Other Militant Groups: The Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) founded in 1999 by Ralph Uwazuruike, is an Igbo dominated ethnic movement. MASSOB agitates for a Republic of Biafra comprising the South-East and South-South regions of Nigeria. The Oodua People's Congress (OPC) founded by Dr. Fredrick Faseun, is predominant in the Yoruba area and predates the return to democracy in 1999, but became more visible thereafter in their quest for a repositioned Yoruba nation in the politics of Nigeria. In the North, the story remains the same, as various ethnic movements were established; among these organizations in the North are the Arewa People's Congress (APC) which emerged to counter the OPC; the *hambada* and *hisbah* to enforce sharia compliance in northern states. In recent years, there has been renewed rush to join in the race through the militant Islamic body (Boko Haram) that pervades the area and these developments stem from the perception of marginalisation and non-accommodation of pure Islamic principles/way of life by the Nigerian political system. The reason for these acts perpetrated by different sub-groups to gain recognition is essentially because Nigerian political workers/office holders have made little remarkable difference compared with the struggles, which our foremost nationalists undertook to make Nigeria a reality. This dialectical reversal paves way for people to vent anger on the government.

Kidnapping: The crisis in Nigeria has been variously reported by various scholars. Whitney Young lamented that armed youths occupied Shell oil company buildings in Lagos and held hostage 30 Nigerian employees and four guards of the Anglo-Dutch-owned Company. The Nigerian army overcame the group releasing 34 hostages.[82] Agbuegbu, reported how the Niger Delta armed militants kidnapped 22 Nigerian citizens and two unidentified foreign nationals working for Chevron, a U.S Oil Company.[83] The problem of ethnic militia and

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[82] Y. Whitney, "Patterns of Global Terrorism" *Public Affairs section of U.S. Consulate* The U.S. Department of State, 2001.

[83] T. Agbuegbu, "Crack down on Militias" *Newswatch* October 17th, 2005, 18.

their activities has brought numerous crises in Nigeria. In fact, story of kidnapping is daily on the news.

Political Crisis: In Benue state, central Nigeria in 2001 experienced a military assault as affirmed by Terwase that a planned military operation was carried out in revenge for the killing of 19 soldiers, over 200 unarmed civilians were killed.[84] He lamented that the government failed to condemn any of the attacks. There had been continuous series of assassinations in Nigeria. On the 23rd of December 2001, according to Edemodu, the former Attorney-general of the federation Chief Bola Ige was assassinated in his residence.[85] The list is endless and beyond the scope of this presentation.

Religious Crisis: In November 2002, Nigeria witnessed a religious crisis motivated by Miss World Pageant. Because Nigeria won the 2001 Miss World contest by Agbani Darego, it was to host the 2002 Miss World in Nigeria but the timing coincided with the Muslim Ramadan Festival and it met stumbling block from the Islamic clerics. The massive public protest and riots that followed caused loss of lives, many injured and properties worth millions of naira damaged. There is also the problem of sectarian religious killings perpetuated by Boko Haram in many parts of the Northern Nigeria. According to Akah, Boko Haram was founded in Maiduguri, northern Nigeria in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf and has its political goal to create an Islamic state.[86] The organization sees Western style education as a sin. They have been on rampage since then and the nation seems not to have any meaningful solution to the menace. To this end, many countries of the world, Nigeria in particular have not known peace over the years. It is this reason that necessitated the formation of many international organizations and Igwebuike whose objectives were and are still the maintenance of world peace and security.

Land Disputes: There are also land disputes which have caused conflicts across the country. Examples are the communities of Aguleri and Umuleri in Anambra state, the Brass and Nembe communities of Bayelsa and Rivers states are typical examples of conflicts emanating from prolonged boundary disputes. Even the Bakassi Peninsula internal boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroun almost evolved into war when Cameroonian soldiers opened fire and killed

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[84] I.S. Terwase, "Religious Violence in Nigeria: Causal diagnoses and strategic recommendations to the state and religious communities", *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*. 2012, 107-112.

[85] A. Edemodu, "Year of Assassins and Political Violence. *The Guardian*, 29th December, 2002, 20.

[86] Josephine Ngozi Akah, "The Role of Christianity in Nigeria's Quest for Peaceful Coexistence" *Bassey Andah Journal,* Vol. 9, 2016, 178.

Nigerian soldiers patrolling the river Apka Yafi on 16h May 1981. Cameroun apologized and later won the dispute at the International court of Justice at Hague in 2001. Currently, Nigeria is facing ethnic diversity conflicts involving the farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Nasarawa, Benue, Abia, Enugu and other some States. The herdsmen attacked these States, killing hundreds of people and destroying properties worth millions of Naira.

Trade Disputes: Trade related disputes are other areas of conflict in Nigeria. A crisis in this area was the removal of fuel subsidy. Nigeria is a country where the majority of the population live below poverty level. Removal of subsidy on fuel will no doubt worsen an already existing difficult situation for the people. The government has failed to provide amenities for the people, education is not well funded, the roads are dilapidated, railways have packed up and healthcare deteriorated. There is the issue of tribalism as a crises situation in Nigeria whereby people favour their wards when it comes to appointments and contracts. Favouritism is the order of the day and the game of jungle justice exists. During the crises situation, lives were lost, properties worth millions of naira are destroyed, economic activities are grounded to a halt, some people even become refugees in their own land, foreign investors are afraid to come in, government attention will be diverted to providing security rather than focusing on sustainable development. All these do not ensure peaceful co-existence.

Some Causes of Conflict

Some causes of agitations and conflict have been identified in most of African nations, Nigeria inclusive. They are classified into three simple basic categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary causes. The primary or root causes are inequality, state collapse, economic decline, a bad history of resolving problems, and inequity in dispensing the national resource wealth. The secondary causes have to do with unemployment, lack of good and effective education, population pressure, abuse of ethnicity, and availability of arms. The tertiary causes are regional and interlocking conflicts, lack of guarantors, inadequate and inappropriate mediation, and misplaced humanitarian assistance.[87] The scope of this paper will not be able to cover the details of these causes as they happen in Nigeria and other nations of the world.

From the foregoing the ultimate victim is the Nigerian state, she suffers in virtually all perspectives; ranging from service she should render to her citizens,

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[87] Department for International Development, "The Causes of Conflict in Africa" 13-14, 2001.

she fails because she is incapacitated; from the perspective of the ethnic nationalist who benefits, his loyalty is to his ethnicity and not to the Nigerian state; from the perspective of the ethnic-nationalist who is not gaining immediately; there are two possible attitudes; to claim to be a Nigerian nationalist and accuse others of ethnicism; or to accuse Nigeria of being a failed state and to call for dissolution of the Nigerian state which is a hallmark of the nationalism and ethnic particularism being discussed here. All these point to how we have nurtured the seed of discord that was sown by the colonial masters to their own advantage. The question remains: how can the Igwebuike contribute her quota in stemming conflict and fostering peace building in a conflict decimated Nigeria?

Implications for Igwebuike Philosophy in fostering Peace in the face of rising National and Ethnic Particularisms in Nigeria
There are myriads of ways the Igwebuike can step up in the campaign for peace building and conflict transformation in Nigeria.

Campaign for Peace: Peace, according to the dictionary, is the absence of war or other hostilities or freedom from quarrels and disagreements. It also speaks of harmonious relation; public security and order; inner contentment; serenity.[88]
From a biblical perspective, the normal definition of peace would be absence of civil disturbance or hostilities, or freedom from internal and external strife. However the biblical concept of peace is wider than that, and rests heavily on the Hebrew root *slm*, (*shalom*) which means "to be complete" or "to be sound." The verb conveys both a dynamic and a static meaning: "to be complete or whole" or "to live well."[89] The noun has many nuances, but they can be grouped into four categories:

(1) *shalom* as wholeness of life or body (i.e., health);
(2) *shalom* as right relationship or harmony between two parties or people, often established by a covenant and, when related to God (whom they referred to as Yahweh), the covenant was renewed or maintained with a "peace offering";
(3) *shalom* as prosperity, success, or fulfilment (Lev 26:3-9); and
(4) *shalom* as victory over one's enemies or absence of war. *Shalom* was used in both greetings and farewells.

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[88] Peace, http://www.thefreedictionary.com/peace, accessed 23rd May, 2019

[89] Dictionaries - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology – Peace, http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/peace, accessed 23rd May, 2019

All religions have the concept of peace and prayers for peace in their scriptures; they preach peace, focusing on the goodness in society. Therefore they ought to involve themselves in peace building process and develop structures to protect it. Religion, thus, tries to give hopes of maintaining peace. Hence, the adoption of Igwebuike Philosophy will be a potent tool for initiating and maintaining peace in a society and engendering conflict transformation.

Reconciliation and justice are models of peace building. This is important as absence of them will never allow peace building to succeed. Biblical peace, as I have just stated, is a holistic peace and is not merely absence of strife. Holistic peace is possible when there is respect for human life and dignity, upholding of human and fundamental rights of all sorts with socio-economic and political justice through reconciliation as means to achieve the goal, namely peace. It is imperative that stakeholders of the various communities fall back on these core aspects of Igwebuike's philosophy and apply them for *shalom* that has become so elusive in recent times.

Before peace can be said to exist anywhere, the citizens must be free from all forms of violence, be it political, economic, social, or religious. Gaiya is of the opinion that religion infuses every aspect of Nigerian life, from fundamental greetings to name of businesses.[90] Engaging this in conflict settings can provide unique opportunities to intervene in ongoing conflicts or to reduce the risk that violence will erupt. Igwebuike teachings can provide values, norms, and motivations that support non-violent approaches to raising and confronting differences among people and communities. It can also provide empathy and compassion that can sustain reconciliation and problem solving across divisions. One of the ways Christianity has helped in securing peace in Nigeria is by appealing to the conscience of the people through ethical teachings. Conscience is a judge or guide. According to Abogunrin, it is seen as "the science of moral conduct.[91] This can also be pursued with more vigour by conscientising the minds and worldviews of the people on the Igwebuike ideology for a peaceful community.

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[90] M.A.B. Gaiya, Religion after 9/11: Implications for the study of religion in Nigerian Universities. University of Jos. Inaugural lecture series (No. 50). Jos, Nigeria, 2011,

[91] S.O. Abogunrin, (Ed.) *Religion and Ethics in Nigeria.* (Ibadan. Daystar Press, 1986), 2

In the light of the above, what perspectives should people take in adopting the Igwebuike philosophy in tackling national and ethnic particularisms in order for peace to reign? What are the expectations of God, the world, the people of Nigeria to bring about peace? I will highlight a few approaches as suggested by Cunningham on how peace can be enjoyed in a community, in which Igwebuike philosophy can be adopted.

1. Spiritual Approach: Nigeria needs mercy from God. I strongly believe that a resort to the religious aspect of Igwebuike philosophy of religion will go a long way in fostering peace in Nigeria and other nations. The Bible says "if my people that are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways... God says he will turn to them and heal them and their land." The healing of Nigeria must start with a cry for God's mercy which this work believes can better be handled only by looking at Igwebuike philosophy of religion and culture. Part of spiritual contribution is prayer. We are to pray for the peace of our Jerusalem. The first thing God did was to speak his word to the chaotic situation. Religious adherents should use every opportunity to introduce God's word to the situation of Nigeria, and for other African nations like South Sudan to emulate. The word of God which talks about peace and unity, which is a core aspect of Igwebuike' philosophy must be entrenched and applied into personal, family and communal living.

2. Academic Approach: The Igwebuike philosophy, apart from having cultural nuances, it is also an academic ideology. There are considerable numbers of Nigerians that are Igwebuike adherents that see Igwebuike from an academic perspective. If half of these are properly educated on the methods and ways to achieve peace in Nigeria the situation will definitely change for good. With such opportunity and access to such vast minds, Igwebuike's tenets should be promoted in seminars, lectures, and further research to proffer solutions to these ugly realities. Awareness must be created, the media should be used to promote peace, print of flyers to educate believers on their roles in peace making in Nigeria. Igwebuike ideology should be encouraged and used in various platforms to preach peace.

3. Moral Approach: As an ideology that has beliefs of peace, unity and strength enshrined in it, Igwebuike philosophy must be dispensed to the citizens of the nation for a revolutionary stand for peace and passed on same to incoming generations. Igwebuike must be continued by being taught to Nigerians to live a

life of honesty, integrity, purity, and peaceful coexistence which foster peace building. Intrapersonal, interpersonal, intra-group or inter-group conflict is caused by sin. The morality of peace and unity, which is the fulcrum of Igwebuike ideology, must be part of the lives of all African people.

Some Methods to be adopted in Effectuating Igwebuike philosophy for Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in Nigeria

The methods of performing peace building and conflict resolution in most African societies are many. Ajayi and Buhari suggest the following: mediation, adjudication, reconciliation, arbitration and negotiation.[92] It also includes employing extra-judicial devices and usage of legal maxims to persuade or convince the disputants about the implication or otherwise of their behaviour. These methods, which are akin to the Igwebuike philosophy, have been effective in traditional African Society and are still relevant in contemporary times.

Mediation

This is an old method of conflict management. It involves non-coercive intervention of the mediators, called third party either to reduce or go beyond or bring conflict to peaceful settlement. It is described as a method of conflict resolution that had been so critical to traditional society. The mediators usually endeavoured that peace and harmony reigned supreme in the society at whatever level of mediation. This is also usually couched with the dictum of no victor no vanquished as buttressed by the maxim. Adopting Igwebuike's ideology of peace and unity can act as mediation in conflicting situations. This mediation can be between the government and citizens in a non-violent manner.

Adjudication

In traditional African society, adjudication involves bringing all disputants in the conflict to a meeting usually in the chambers or compounds of family heads, quarter heads and palace court as the case maybe. Dialogue was linked with the adjudicatory processes in traditional way of solving conflicts. Nigeria's traditional, political and sociocultural structure should provide an easy platform for adopting the Igwebuike philosophy in such settling of disputes.

Negotiation

In traditional Igbo and other ethnic societies of Nigeria, peace is negotiated in times of conflict. Apology for wrongs done to individuals and the entire

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[92] Adeyinka Theresa Ajayi and Lateef Oluwafemi Buhari, "Methods of Conflict Resolution in Traditional African Society" An International *Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia Vol. 8 (2), Serial No. 33,* April, 2014, 149-151

community was a feature of negotiation. Such apology was channelled through the elders, compound heads and chiefs of high calibre in the society. The Igwebuike philosophy of peace and unity can be achieved through negotiation in most cases. So, the adoption of this philosophy can foster peace building too and thus, enshrine conflict transformation in her context.

Reconciliation
The Igwebuike philosophy can also be adopted as a reconciliatory method of fostering peace and quelling conflicts. This is one of the most significant aspects of conflict resolution and transformation. It is the end product of adjudication. After the disputants had been persuaded to end the dispute, peace was usually restored. This restoration of peace and harmony was always anchored on the principle of give a little and get a little. This approach buttresses the idea of the disputing parties to give concessions. A feast was usually organized to confirm the readiness of the conflicting parties towards reaching points of compromise. At least, as characteristic of African traditional society, conflict resolution method is the use of arbitration. The reconciliation function is practiced by an authority figure that mediates between conflicting parties but is empowered to make binding judgments. The purpose is not to render a judgment in law but to reconcile the conflicting parties and its norms. The relationship between the authority and the community is cushioned by community representatives who advise authority.[93]

Characteristics that are expected of Igwebuike philosophers in propagating their ideals for National and Ethnic Particularisms
The Igwebuike followers that can be efficient stakeholders in the stemming of national and ethnic particularisms by adopting Miroslav Volf's template for ensuring peace in a society: humility, hospitality, courage, imagination, and comfort with complexity.[94] These attitudes are some of the characteristics that all proponents of Igwebuike philosophy should be looking at to grow in as they seek an end to national and ethnic particularisms in the Nigerian context, and Wright posits that all other people should possess these characteristics too.[95]

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[93] Z. I. Williams, (ed.) "Traditional Cures for Modern Conflict," *African Conflict Medicine 2000*, Lynne Reiner Publisher Inc, 2000, 22-23

[94] M. Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace*. (Oxford: Abingdon Press, 2010), 157-165

[95] N. T. Wright, *After You Believe* (Harper Collins, 2010).

Humility: The clearest statement of humility as a part of peace building is in Paul's description of Christ's laying aside of his own power in order to make peace between humanity and God possible (Phil. 2:5-8). It acknowledges that *I* am not more important than *you* or *us*. However, humility is not about self-abasement, but to choose to put aside the pride and power that jeopardise unity, a unity that Igwebuike stands for. So, that aspect of humility in the Igwebuike ideology, that makes people put aside pride and power for the sake of *shalom* of the brethren, should be exploited as an important tool in addressing the chaos that has become our modern day reality.

Hospitality: This is an attitude as much as an act, an approach to the world and to other people. It welcomes, listens, and responds. The concept of hospitality is biblical. Hospitality was an ethic and law of Israel (Ex. 22:21). It is important that the Igwebuike ideology is spread far and wide as generosity to one another in the form of hospitality is a sure way of achieving *shalom* in today's world. The immigration situation in the world today is partly as a result of people forgetting the general teaching on hospitality, a value for which Africans were known for.

Courage: Often humility and hospitality involve the willingness to take a risk, especially in conflict situations. This risk-taking is not stupidity, rather, it is courage in the face of uncertain situations or to stand with people or speak out on particular situations in pursuit of peace. This was normal for the earliest Christians and even Africans. The Igwebuike philosophy must be used today as a cue from our ancestors who used it to garner the courage to achieve *shalom* in Nigeria and in other parts of Africa.

Courage is important because peace builders operate within great complexity, where no one is wholly innocent of being part of conflict. The Igwebuike needs to be able to move forward in a situation knowing that no one step will solve everything and that no one rule, beyond love, should be applied unilaterally. In reading the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), Volf points out that the father breaks the normal rules in order to restore his relationship with his Son because of his love for his Son.

Imagination: Finally, in ensuring the Igwebuike philosophy simmers down to the very ends of the society, there is needs to be optimistic and hopeful, and this can be achieved by the power of imagination, the ability to imagine a different future than currently seems possible, and to imagine ways of getting there. This is an imagination driven by the hope, vision and promise of a different future, a future of shalom. This is optimism in the face of daunting and seemingly

hopeless situation. It is the imagination of Moses, rooted in the vision given to him by God, to see Israel freed from slavery. This imagination is part of what Igwebuike philosophy stands for

Conclusion/Recommendations

As we have seen, national and ethnic particularisms are rife in Nigeria. Their history, causes and reality in the troubled nation were identified. However, the process of handling them and peace building is complex and interconnected. The generality of Africans and Nigerians in general, and the Igbo in particular are called upon to reengineer and republish the Igwebuike philosophy until it becomes part of the life and culture of the modern world. They must take up this responsibility as part of their holistic mandate and duty to the society. A few recommendations for ensuring of Igwebuike philosophy will suffice here:

a. The proponents of Igwebuike philosophy should together schools and encourage students to engage in meaningful activities such as dramatization, miming, poetry, singing, projects. The more children are exposed to reading materials that promote images of other people's culture, religion, uniqueness, social identity, among others, the less likely they are to find faults with one another and the more they are able to live among and work together for the benefit of mankind and for the good of the society. Leaders should re-orientate members of the society towards peace and tolerance with Igwebuike philosophy rather than incite them for violence. They should liaise with curriculum planners, to ensure that the tenets of promoting peaceful co-existence such as kindness, loyalty, honesty, love, optimism, compassion, etc. are included in reading comprehension passages of the English language curriculum.

b. The Igwebuike ideology of good governance must be the hallmark of political leaders. These leaders must be encouraged to avoid discrimination and marginalization of the people when dealing with developmental projects and religious matters in the country.

c. The Igwebuike mantra of tolerance, as a matter of fact, must be preached and promoted. Ethno-religious tolerance and accommodation of opposing views as part of deepening peace building and harmony in the country should be instilled in the hearts of people. In Nigeria, intolerance of opposing views by adherents of the major religions has heated the polity and caused tension. Political leaders should embrace Igwebuike philosophy in promoting conflict management and peaceful coexistence.

d. The protection of freedom of the citizens as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution is sacrosanct. This is necessary as one observes that the constitutional provisions for freedom of worship, religious expression and obligation as entrenched in section 38 (1) and (2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are weak. Most of the tensions and conflicts between different religious adherents in Nigeria are because of the flagrant abuse of the fundamental individual and group rights in the country. The adoption of Igwebuike philosophy of unity and strength will be a round peg in a round hole in ensuring protection for the citizens of any nation that embraces this ideology.

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