THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND GOVERNANCE: AN EXPLORATION OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE *OHACRACY* INDIGENOUS MODEL OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE IN IGBOLAND OF SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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DECLARATION

This study was undertaken at the School of Religion Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg in South Africa.

I hereby declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated in the text, is my unaided work and has not been presented at any other institution of higher learning. It is hereby submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Pastoral theology), in the School of Religion Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, South Africa.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work, first, to my mother Mrs Alice Egwim-Anyanele of the blessed memory who was my first teacher of the Igbo *Ohacracy* foundation. Mama, may your passing to the ancestors continue to sprout new life and courage to renew our Igbo heritage and keeping to the true Igbo foundations. Thank you to my (catechetical) teachers through you I have learnt and lived in the Roman Catholic tradition. These two traditions have formed me and continue to inform me of who I become.

Second, I dedicate this work to my Umudurukwaku home community and the entire Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-Eastern Nigeria. By you and through you, I have become a true Igbo man.

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EDITOR OF THE THESIS

I hereby confirm that the above named PhD thesis has been read and edited by myself this day of 27th February 2019

It meets the requirements at this level and is ready for printing.

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ABSTRACT

More than half a century ago, the Vatican II ecumenical Council took place to redefine the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the modern world. Ecumenical as the Council is known; the Vatican II theology re-established the Church anew as to be relevant in the contemporary world, thereby opening doors for lay participation in the Catholic Church governance. Despite the Council and its leaning towards lay participation in the universal Catholic Church, the Catholic communities in the Igbo *Ohacracy* of the South-eastern Nigeria and the larger Nigerian communities continue to battle towards the determination and realization of the roles or duties of the laity. A Church identified to be communal, consultative; and collegial in its ecclesiological understanding applies the image of a Family of God's People envisions a participatory Church which the Vatican II had proposed. This is yet to be fully achieved especially among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people.

This study is located between two opposing ideologies of governance: It therefore investigates the centralized system of governance of the Roman Catholic Church and the decentralized Igbo *Ohacracy* order. The study also analyses the collective lay participation in the common governance of the Catholic Church as recommended by Vatican II council. It also examines authority, the laity, participation of women and inculturation to interrogate governance in both the Catholic Church and Igbo *Ohacracy* systems of governance. Indeed, this study reveals that in order for the Catholic Church tradition to continue to make sense and meaning, the values of dialogue, listening and consensus decision making should guide its style of governance in dealing with the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria. The Igbo *Ohacracy* form of indigenous governance is the inspiration behind the study.

The study focuses on the Roman Catholic Church among the Owerri-Okigwe Igbo of South-eastern Nigerian communities. As a theological project, this study is located within the field of ecclesiology under the discipline of Practical Theology. Church as home for millions of Roman Catholic adherents around the world can no longer remain isolated and less concerned in matters related to governance which the Church in general has inspired all around the world; not just among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria. Each day, human beings experience governance in various ways as it affects them; whether in the family, the community, place of work, in the Church or society at large.

This study has applied both "Large Ears" and "Inculturation" theoretical frameworks. The former refers to the 'Manja Metaphor' used in the Central African Republic. It signifies the eldest brother as the one who has developed the greatest capacity for 'listening' to the will of the ancestors and to the conversations going on in the family community Uzukwu (1996:143). As a major theory for this study, it represents dialogue, consensus and communal participation in the common ownership of community activities and decision making. The latter, inculturation remains a term used to signify the movement which takes local cultures and their values as basic instruments and powerful means for presenting, reformulating and living;

Christianity Waliggo, (1991:506). It describes the contextual or cultural application in understanding and practising the Christian values.

This study investigates how both the centralized model of the Roman Catholic Church governance and the decentralized Igbo *Ohacracy* indigenous orders affect the Igbo people who are caught up in between these two influential systems.

It is therefore meaningful to note that this study shows the Vatican II Council's recommendation and opens doors for lay participation in the governance of the Catholic Church. The Igbo Catholic communities are yet to realize this vision fully for its Catholic adherents. Surprisingly though, through the *Ohacracy* institutions as analysed, this study has demonstrated a high level of individual and group participation among the Igbo governance order. From all indications of the analysis of both the centralized Catholic Church and the decentralized Igbo *Ohacracy* orders, it reveals that though these two systems are directly opposed to each other, the receptive nature of the Igbo culture has rather encouraged co-existence of the two. Moreover, the aggressive, dynamic and vibrant developmental pursuit nature of the Catholic Church (for example, Western education and medicine) has also propelled the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities' receptivity of the ways and activities of the Roman Catholic Church among them.

Finally, the study concludes that true and meaningful co-existence is highly probable between two traditions. With the aid and application of listening, dialogue and consensus in decision making ("Large Ear Theory") between these two systems, peaceful co-existence and progress/development will continue to be achieved. The respect of both traditions among the Igbo communities through the utilization of the values of inculturation in the Catholic Church as fully described in this study will go further to propagate the realization of value and cultural insights that have emerged in this study.

A NOTE ON KEY TERMS AND IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

Key terms: *Ohacracy order, Centralized governance, Decentralized governance, Participatory governance, Women, Vatican II Council, Laity, Authority, Contextual Theology, Feminism, gender, Clergy/Priest, Male leadership, Perceptions, Patriarchy, Listening, Palaver, Catholicism, Indigenous Values, Modernity, Pope, Governance, Common Good, Consensus, Large Ear, Inculturation, Canon Law, Colonialism, Slavery, Multi-Culture, Mono-Culture, Education, Medical Care, Church, Christianity, Africa, Igbo Ohacracy, Umuada, Umunna, Communalism, Masquerade, Igba-ndu, Fraternity, Development Union, Religion, History, Origin, Institution, Oji-Kola Nut, Ofo, King, Chiefs, Theology, Ecclesiology, Episcopate, Contemporary and Yam.*

DEFINITIONS

Africa: The word 'Africa' and everything related to it in this study, refers to the sub-Saharan African continent and its people. Although some researchers have maintained that one cannot discourse of sub-Saharan African Christian community in the singular form because of the variety found in its peoples, it has also been perceived that despite this diversity, there are more connections that have continued from pre-colonial times such as those of culture and religion (Mbiti 1975). This study will demonstrate and illustrate this further.

The Vatican II Council: This is an ecumenical or unifying 21st century council held in the Vatican City, Rome. As Cadorette (2009:126) noted the Second Vatican Council succeeded on scores, producing a systematic explanation of the Catholic theology as well as reinvigorating the battered structures of the institutional church. For this study, this council represented a period when the Roman Catholic Church governance structures were widened to all who are called by the name "Catholic". Based on the 'modern' world understanding and practise, the Catholic Church became open to other ideas and religions that contributed in contemporary life of social order.

As noted by The Pastoral Conference of the Sotho Region within the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (2006:125), the Vatican II Council was the 21th Ecumenical Council of the Church which was convoked by John XXIII in November 1962 and concluded by Paul VI in December 1965. The Vat II document will serve as the basic and fundamental text for this study.

The "Large Ears" Theory: This refers to the 'Manja Metaphor' used in the Central African Republic. It signifies the eldest brother as the one who has developed the greatest capacity for 'listening' to the will of the ancestors and to the conversations going on in the family community. As a major theory for this study, it represents dialogue, consensus and communal participation in the common ownership of community activities. As Uzukwu alludes to this theory, when the Church of Rome (eldest brother) is renewed with this African family social organizational model, it would have then achieved the task of the "Mother-Centre" (1996:143). This centre having the strength to unify, she now stands for all who belong to her and participate with equal chances.

The Small Christian Communities (SCC): The SCCs also referred to as Basic Christian Communities (BCC) has its origin and inspiration from liberation theology in the Latin American Church in the early 1970s. This study, demonstrates how this practice has come to express a new way of being "Church", in which families identify with each other in a closer and related way.

Decentralized Governance: In this form of governance, it is understood that there is no centralization or concentration of power or authority in the hands of one individual. Rather, governance is organized in such a way that it encourages everyone to to participate in governing activities within the community. The Igbo *Ohacracy* order falls under this description (Muo and Oghojafor 2012:160) and shall be dnstrated as such.

Centralized Governance: As opposed to the decentralized form of governance, this concentrates power and authority in the hands of an individual or a group over the majority of the masses. Most chiefdoms and kingdoms are defined in this manner including the Roman Catholic Church governing practises (Cadorette 2009:182).

Clericalism: This refers to the Roman Catholic Church where by power, authority and decision making are centred on the priest or clergy. By so doing the laity is side lined and thereby participate less in matters of governance. This study concurs with Uzukwu who notes that for the church in Africa to chart a new course for a relational leadership to emerge, the need to involve the laity is the way to go and of course, to do less of clergy domineering church. The synod Fathers in 1994 aware of the 'priestly' dominated Catholic Church, took the stand to define the African Catholic Church as more communitarian and less dominated by the clergy (Uzukwu 1996:10 i4).

Palaver: This is an African model of dialogue which is inspired by listening, ample time for discussions as means of achieving consensus among community inspired activities. It aims at and proposes values of collaboration which are achieved through dialogue (Mmassi, 2010:180). By Palaver is meant the inclusion of all interest groups in decision making processes and it forms the basis of this study as it is practised among the Igbo *Ohacracy* and the Roman Catholic Church order.

Ohacracy: *Ohacracy* is defined as a theory and practice that implies society-centred ventures, programmes and plans geared towards progress or common-development, Nwankwor (2013:330). Iroegbu (1997:3) on *Ohacracy* theory thought that it is an ethical-political theory which is community-centred, and which is capable of contributing to solving the long term problems of African countries, and indeed the whole human society. As will be observed in this study, the root meaning of *Ohacracy* reflects and demonstrates ruling by the people, assembly, society or community over themselves for their fundamental or basic wellbeing which revolves around the common good and development, in this case, of the Igbo communities. In the Igbo system of governance "…the entire group or population participates actively in the day to day running of life social affairs" Green (1964:133).

As a participatory model *Ohacracy* is built on collaboration, inclusion, mutual respect and listening, empathy and shared ownership of decisions which facilitates execution, indeed provides the study a ground-breaking experiment of decentralized model of governance.

Sexism: Sexism is the belief that a person is superior or inferior to another person on the basis of his/her sex. In this study, it will refer to unequal treatment of either women or men on this basis.

Traditional: This refers to beliefs and practices that are indigenous to the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria. It will express their root, and heritage which to an extent pre-dates colonial period among Igbo communities. Some of these beliefs and practises continue to exist to this day as will be noted in this study.

Inculturation: Justin Upkong (2013:531) defines inculturation as a way of undertaking Christian theology, a method of reflecting on the Christian faith in relation to the African context while applying the means of African cultural resources. As will imply in this study inculturation means a common dialogue between the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized and the Roman Catholic Church centralized orders in which they encounter each other for the ultimate goal of evangelization or enlightenment. This balancing act and a relationship between a given religion and its surrounding culture or context are described as inculturation (Cadorette 2009:38).

Sacrament: Are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to His Church Arulappa and Hrudayaraj (2003:55) by which the life and love of God is shared with a Christian believer (CCC 1131). Sacraments as will be demonstrated in this study are actions of the Holy Spirit working in Christ's body, the Church; the works of God in the Church (CCC 1116).

The Church: The Church refers to the ecclesial or faith community. This term whenever used in this study will refer to the universal Christian believers unless otherwise stated to mean particular Christian denominations. Of course, the Catholic Church will be well specified in every reference that will be made towards her in the entire study.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AA- *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People)

A.D - Anno Domino (Year of the Lord, after Christ)

AFER - African Ecclesial Review

AG - *Ad Gentes* (The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity)

AMECEA - Association of Member Conferences of Eastern Africa

ATR - African Traditional Religion

AU - African Union

BCC - Basic Church (or Christian) Community

BC - Before Christ

CCC - Catechism of the Catholic Church

CERD - Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

CMS - Christian Mission Society

DV - *Dei Verbum* (The Declaration on Divine Revelation)

ECA - Economic Commission for Africa

GS - *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)

IRA - Irish Republican Army

LG - *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)

NA - *Nostra Aetate* (The Declaration on the Church's Relations with non-Christian Religions)

NEPAD - New Partnership for Africa's Development

PPC - Parish Pastoral Council

PO - *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests)

RCM - Roman Catholic Mission (RM – Roman Catholic)

RNC – Royal Niger Company

SACBC - Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference

SC - *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)

SCC - Small Christian Communities

SJTI - St. Joseph's Theological Institute

SMA – Sons of Missionaries of Africa

UN - United Nations

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UKZN - University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

UNISA - University of South Africa

Vat. II - Vatican II Council

WCC - World Council of Churches

WSU - Walter Sisulu University

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND LOCATING THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces this study, setting the scenery for the thesis by presenting the expected issues and themes of discussion. As an introduction this chapter discusses extensively the background and motivation of the study, highlighting the review of literature, the key research questions and objectives, research problems, principle theoretical assumptions, synopsis of the research design and methodology, the limitations and the scope of the study.

On the basis that the activities and effects of governance in the Igbo *Ohacracy* model of governance and that of the Roman Catholic Church form the major focus and interest of this study, this chapter introduces the meaning of both centralised and decentralised forms of governances. Within the broader scope of literature review presented in this study, the chapter locates and discusses the background and objectives of the study.

1.2 Background to the Research

The mid 20th century, after Vatican Council II saw conversations on contextual ecclesiology come to life in the Roman Catholic arenas. A "multi" and a "poly-cultural" form of Christianity came into being as the ritual uniformity was imposed by the Council of Trent. The Tridentine/Vatican I eras before the birth of the new church, was a type that centred on Clericalism where the influence and interest of the clergy were protected by the Catholic Church. The laity was on the receiving end without much responsibility of active participation in the Catholic Church governance. The true story of Vatican II is that a new ecclesiology, a new Church was born. As Cadorette (2009:237) concludes, "…this diversity was celebrated in an open fashion." The new dawn made visible and acceptable a multicultural Church never witnessed in the Catholic tradition before. As a result, a more humane and contextual ecclesiology came to being.

Although the remnant[1] past haunted the Catholic Church, it remained relevant in the modern world that was still searching for meaning and value in life. The institutional role of the Catholic Church as an organized society was still vital and still being harnessed to enrich life. The Catholic Church has had an enormous influence in directing the course of history in every era. In both spiritual and temporal, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church remained valuable on matters of governance in both the old western and new African/Asian and other parts of the world. The Igbo[2] of South-eastern Nigerian society is have been tremendously affected by this new order and making it fertile ground for this research.

This new order of centralisation of governance in the Catholic Church that was introduced in decentralised model of cultural governance among the Igbo people displaced the values of participation and dialogue in governance by all who live in the Igbo confluence.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This study is located within the discipline of the Roman Catholic ecclesiology as an organized society. The Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria received the Roman Catholic order of governance, based on a centralized model of church governance, from the teaching and influence of the missionaries. This centralised model of the Catholic Church governance as opposed to the decentralised model of Igbo cultural governance logically provides the problem statement of this study. As will be fully discussed in chapter 2 of this study, the centralised governance of the Roman Catholic Church as introduced among the Igbo *Ohacracy* was such that power, decision making and authority was vested on 'one', 'single' and 'particular individual' - the priest or clergy. Matters of governance in the Roman Catholic Church are by right and order the priests (clergy) prerogative (Arrieta, 2000:12-18 and Cadorette, 2009:129). In other words, the common Igbo individual was barred from being part of decision making. The Igbo population, by this centralised governance of the Catholic Church became onlookers, spectators in the daily running of church affairs since they could not be involved in decision making (Uzukwu, 1996:105).

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[1] Some of this remnant past includes the teaching that without the Church there is no salvation, the non-acceptance of other faith traditions etc…

[2] The alternative forms 'Igbo' and 'Ibo' need explanation. The word Igbo presents a problem in pronunciation for many foreigners, and Ibo has been in use as a ready solution. Many Igbo words with double consonants gave foreigners the same problem and therefore got a wrong spelling like: e.g., *Agbo* town became *Abo, Akwukwo* "books", became *Abubo*, and *Gbamgbam* corrugated iron became *Bambam*, etc. Modern Igbo writers insist on the use of the correct and authentic spelling *Igbo*. In this study I will insist on the use of the *Igbo* form but in quotations I will use "Ibo" to keep the past authors usage in books that may be consulted.

Of course, since the Igbo had been active participants in their decentralised model of governance, it evidently became clear that the Igbo people were isolated and treated like 'children' without responsibility or duties to fulfil. Dialogue, collaboration and inclusion are some very critical values of the *Ohacracy* model that now became valueless in the new order. When these important values were withdrawn from the Igbo people they naturally became disgruntled, leading to the collapse of Igbo values and cultural heritage. This governing practice of the Roman Catholic Church among the Igbo alienated the community effect on governance on which the decentralised model of Igbo indigenous governance is centred. This therefore caused enormous rift between the Igbo people and the Roman Catholic Church in practise.

As noted above and as Kiarie (cited in Galgalo), argues, "strictly speaking, all theology is contextual because it takes the elements from the context" (2014:47); this suggests that the doctrine on governance has not been adequately addressed among the Igbo cultural context and the Church. Hence, the Igbo *Ohacracy* context calls for critical reflection in this case. Speckman (2001:397) agrees as he affirms that contextual theology is a type that begins with and in the context of life situation. It is not of the abstract nature of theology but one rooted in real life experience and context. This study therefore seeks such clarifications as it employs the theory of inculturation for this purpose.

The evaluation of modern or contemporary African states shows a number of political or leadership models and influences of the west from socialism to communism of the past, to the present day democracy. Yet, in all these models, the African indigenous models have not been put to scientific or systematic and practical use. Hence Ejiofor (1981:4) writes:

> It is our contention that modern-and-African political models have not been sufficiently discovered, developed, and operated in African states. Hence the social and political attitudes of the people are at variance with their political structures and institutions. Political actors fail to harmonize their knowledge, attitudes, and responses with their political institutions. Some basic concepts of politics are misapprehended and perceived as foreign by the citizens they are supposed to motivate.

Likewise, the Catholic Church models of governance among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria did not consider the *Ohacracy* model of governance under discussion. The centralization model of Church governance is directly opposed to the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralization model. Indeed, this raised some bitter demonstrations towards the foreign

Catholic religion. The isolation of the individuals and community roles towards the realization of self-governance (decentralization), full development and growth of the Igbo people has led to remoteness and sometimes animosity among the Igbo of every generation. The lack of self-determination opportunities in the centralized model of governance is a major concern among the Igbo people where dialogue and consensus in decision making are prevalent. This situation has denied opportunities and lack of individual/group expressions which have led to underdevelopment in the present day Igbo communities. Since the *Ohacracy* indigenous model of governance has not been given ample time to develop to the need and relevance for this study cannot be over emphasized as it uncovers this decentralized system.

1.3.1   The Igbo Model of Decentralised Governance

The Igbo model of decentralized indigenous governance "*Ohacracy*"[3] as opposed to the centralization model of the Roman Catholic Church governance forms the central part of the study. *Ohacracy* is defined as a theory and practice that implies society-centred ventures, programmes, and plans (geared towards progress or common-development) which in turn does not lose sight of God among the Igbo, the ultimate principle and designer of all core meaning and existence (Nwankwor 2013:330). In his distinctive edition on *Ohacracy* theory, Iroegbu (1997:3) thought that *Ohacracy* is an ethical-political theory which is community-centred, and is capable of contributing to the solving of some of the long standing problems of African countries, and indeed the whole human society. By the means of inculturation theology this study undertakes the key role of exploring a new model of governance as initiated by Vatican II Council towards the realization of a more accommodating and contextual Church by engaging the Roman Catholic ecclesiology and the Igbo indigenous *Ohacracy* model of governance. The study seeks to develop a model of participatory governance within the Roman Catholic Church, while exposing both the Roman Catholic and the Igbo indigenous *Ohacracy* models of governance.

Indeed, the envisioned model of a healthy and a contextual Catholic Church as suggested by Vatican II resulted in culturally expressed churches that have become more vibrant and lively. This observation has encouraged an exploration through this study to integrate the Igbo

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[3] As will be observed later, *Ohacracy* in its root meaning reflects and demonstrates the rule by the people, assembly, society or community over themselves for their fundamental or basic wellbeing which revolves around the common good and development of the Igbo communities. In the Igbo system of governance "…the entire group or population participate actively in the day to day running of life social affairs" (Green 1964:133; Muo and Oghojafor 2012:160).

indigenous value of *Ohacracy* into the Roman Catholic Church governance. The face of the Catholic Church is now beginning to look different as Cadorette (2009:237) notes, as it is no longer centralized and uniform but diverse. Some of the new ecclesial expressions are evident in liturgical celebrations in local languages including cultural dance now used in rituals that give Africans, Asians and other indigenous peoples a sense of belonging and meaning unlike the previous 'mysterious' Latin or Eurocentric look. The clear message that the Council brought to the understanding of this new Catholic Church is evident in the words of Cadorette (2009:239), who points out thus "…Know the Bible, participate in the liturgy, and take responsibility for your parish and Catholic community."

As a participatory model, *Ohacracy* is built on collaboration, inclusion, mutual respect and listening, empathy and shared ownership of decisions which facilitates execution. This model indeed provides this study with grounds for exploring decentralized governance among the Igbo community. In its original and first usage, *Ohacracy* was utilized by Njaka (1974) while emphasizing that the Igbo society enjoys a strong sense of communal orientation as he navigates and argues through the Igbo political establishment or civilization in his title, '*Igbo political Culture*'. Thus while defining and explaining '*Oha* or *Ohacracy*' in the Igbo usage Njaka (1974:13-15) writes that the *Ohacracy* model:

> …is far-reaching and can be extended to mean the people, an assembly, a sovereign body, an authority, government (*Ochichi*) and a way of life affecting a community. '*Oha*' may also include the dead the living, and the unborn in its membership, depending on circumstance. Sometimes, '*Oha*' is used synonymously with *Obodo* (the state). *Oha* represents community society as Leopold Sedar Senghor calls it, or 'communoracy' as Sekolu Toure prefers.

Upkokolo (2010:180) and Okafor (1992:9) concur with Njaka arguing that the *Oha* assembly is an all-purpose body. On it rests the legal, judicial and executive powers. This is why the Igbo system of government, is known as "*Ohacracy*," which is an anglicised Igbo term coined by the combination of "*Oha*" (Igbo term for general assembly) and the prefix – "*cracy*". *Ohacracy* is preferred here because it retains the Igbo meaning attached to the people as sovereign, and any attempt to translate it would weaken or distort the meaning. *Ohacracy* is further defined as the life and action of the community, collectively done; to which the people concurred; the people's will, as the people have spoken in agreement after ample discourse, dialogue and consultation co-ordinated by approved leaders. It is a philosophy and practice in the management of affairs in Igboland that ensures that decisions are easily accepted and implemented because the people have collectively decided and no individual can upturn or

reject such decisions. Based on this understanding *Ohacracy* becomes an Igbo system and institution of governance (Okafor 1992:9). Nweke (2012:206) acknowledges this traditional institution and cites Orji and Olali observing that by traditional institutions, we refer to the indigenous political arrangements whereby leaders with proven track records are appointed and installed in line with the provisions of their native laws and customs. Essentially, the preservation of institutions, customs and traditions of the people remain the focus of institutions.

As further noted by Muo and Oghojafor (2012:156) *Ohacracy* is centred on community growth, wellbeing and development among the people of South-eastern Nigeria. In his attempt to capture the *Ohacracy* system of governance, Asantehene (2004:2-3) notes:

> …Non-centralized…states… there was no sovereign…Techniques of social control revolved around what Meyer Fortes called the "dynamics of clanship." …The Sukuma of Tanzania, the Ibo (sic) of Nigeria and Kikuyu of Kenya are some African states that operate this system of governance. They feature systems that are in the existence of well-defined norms despite the absence of a hierarchical system headed by a sovereign…the direct and pronounced participation of people – members of clans, segments and so on in decision making assuring a visible democratic process.

In essence, *Ohacracy* is a socio-political order of decentralized management in the Igbo tradition, and differs from the centralized type of governance. It is decentralized since there is no sovereign authority in the management of the Igbo community affairs, rather, institutions established by tradition and culture ensure the management of the social affairs. This model is unlike the central system of governance in the Roman Catholic Church whereby hierarchy within clericalism becomes the sovereign (King) as the ruling authority and has powers of management. The decentralized *Ohacracy* system is the sum of the Igbo community consciousness as Upkokolo (2010:180) concludes, the individual is a member of the community which sets the goals that have acceptability within that community. The same community sets up reward and punishment systems. To a large extent, the individual in Igbo land is subsumed within the requirements of the community.

The *Ohacracy* system of governance can be described too as the "republic". In other words, it remains a system of public affairs or the public good - life lived in common and in solidarity with all who live in the land. No one individual or institution dominates the other for any ill personal interest in public matters; rather all (young and old, men and women alike)

participate in solidarity with all else to achieve community aspirations. With this understanding, *Ohacracy* literally becomes the public mechanism or government. This is in line with Cheka's (2008:73) thought by which he argues that republic is naturally opposed to the word monarchy, which has a base original signification. This means that power and authority in an individual person is illegal. Chika (2008) concludes that, "…in the exercise of (powers) which, himself, and not the respublica, is the object…the republic is any state governed by law without any form of administration for it to be, because the public interest simply governs…"

1.4   Preliminary Literature Review

African societies are generally classified into two first, the decentralized (consensus-based reached at by "Word" of dialogue "Palaver" (Mmassi, *AFER* 52, 2010:180) systems in which law making, social control and allocation of resources are managed by entities like village groups and age-grades. Second, the centralized (chieftaincy-based) systems which are controlled by a sovereign (Economic Commission for Africa – ECA, 2007:2-5). The guiding principles of the decentralised systems which this study focuses on include curbing the concentration of power, averting the emergence of rigid hierarchy and narrowing differences through negotiations rather than adversarial strategies that produce winners and losers.

Political scientists such as Muo and Oghojafor (2012:155) notes that, the decentralised system consists of: "Individual rights and views being respected; individuals accept and respect the interest of the community or face communal reprimand and conflicts are averted by accommodating minority views". The gap in both political and social stands in the community is reduced owing to direct full participation of all in decision making. The consensus strategy helps to calm rebel and minority views and all eligible individuals have equal right and representation among others. Despite these two distinctions of governance, the model in the Catholic Church that is addressed here has become evident particularly since the Vatican II Council in mid-20th century otherwise referred to as "a new Pentecost" (Zaba, 2015:4). The history the Catholic model will be traced, including the model of Catholic Church as family, Church as mother and participation/empowerment of the lay among others.

1.4.1 A History of Centralised Model of Governance of the Catholic Church

The central aim, purpose and focus of the Catholic Church governance or ecclesiastical organization as elaborated in the Church's theoretical documents and teachings is for the "good of souls" (Arrieta 2000:xxv). In other words, the business of attempting Church organization is for the common good of all who by choice or chance belong or fall under the organization of the Catholic Church. Based on this definition and understanding of governance therefore, at any point in time and history, the Catholic Church's organization or governance must enrich, benefit and promote the human good. As an organized society, the Church's governance is hierarchical in nature and is determined by the receiving of the sacrament of Holy Orders and is reserved for celibate male members of the Church (see Dupuis 2001:345). Ordination therefore is juridically important and forms the basis of the positions of power in the ecclesiastical society as Hornsby-Smith (2000:17) and Arrieta (2000:4) observe.

One wonders why and how the Catholic Church comes to this hierarchical nature of its organization. The historical basis of the Church governance is such that it can be identified with the 13th Century Western Europe which was solidly Catholic. In theory, everyone was said to have subscribed to a divinely arranged social order, in which Church and state were in close relationship. The two therefore worked hand in hand with the superior Church leading the state to an eternal goal namely, *eternal salvation* while the state helped to deliver resourcefully the grace of God challenged thereby. In his words Cadorette (2009:87) writes thus:

> Church and state were like an elaborate wedding cake, the pope, bishop, priest made up the *sacerdotium*, or priestly caste, while the emperor, aristocracy, and their appointed administrator made up the *principium*, or ruling caste. At the bottom of this arrangement was an enormous mass of women and men whose lives and labor (sic) made this social order possible.

Within the belief system of the time, such a notion that expressed the Catholic Church's social hierarchies was understood to have come to be as a result of the 'will of God'. However, while people were not just born, they were born into particular social groups as aristocrat, serf (slave) and or beggars. The only way to ascend the ranking was through the Catholic Church (Cadorette 2009:158). But even then, the senior clergy were usually preferred from the upper class, the aristocrats. Meanwhile, in the early nineteenth century (1848 and 1871), the French revolution and enlightenment periods in Europe were toppling all established orders

especially the Catholic social hierarchical order. Once the bourgeois liberals and the radicals usurp political powers, the exclusive rights and privileges of the aristocracy were a thing of the past (Cadorette 2009:159-161).

The Catholic Church at this period suffered the biggest loss of its political influence in the social European history. The Catholic Church's relevance diminished quickly in the 18th century European period of Christian history leading to the final separation of the state and Church. It was of this fact that Beaufort, Hägg and Schie (2008:1) argues that during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the separation of state and church was an issue of great importance for liberal politicians in European politics. Liberals all over Europe tried to encourage the separation of religious institutions and the state.

Furthermore, the subject on the centralization of governance had been a concern in the Catholic Church hence such maxims like "Rome has spoken; the issue is resolved or closed" or "We are waiting for Rome" and or "Rome is yet to make a decision" (Cadorette 2009:89) were common. Such are some of the axioms that are identified with the period that a 'single' authority of the Church was central to most major decisions on issues within the Catholic Church and society at large. The centralization crises lingered on until the 16th century which saw the birth and the introduction of Protestantism with Martin Luther's reformation of 1517 (Cadorette 2009:123-125). Subsequent schism crisis on centralization can be identified as more groups separated themselves from the Catholic Church's central authority as in the following: Anglicanism around 1534, Calvinism around 1550, Baptists around 1609 and the Wesleyans separated from the Anglicans around 1791 (Hirmer 2007:21).

The Constantine period in the 4th century Church (Cadorette 2009:46-50) and the councils thereafter have been mainly concerned with organizational issues and of course, a process of growing a centralised model of governance within the Catholic Church governance and the development of classical bureaucratic values. While acknowledging the positive influence and effect of the Vatican II Council towards the organization and business of the Catholic Church in the modern world, Hornsby-Smith (2000:17) noted the tension that is very evident in the Catholic Church's critical decision making and institutional governance structures. He thus argues:

> …Vatican II represented a break with this pattern (the old)[4] and the emergence of new patterns of authority at all levels in the Church from the collegiality of the bishops to the birth of bishops' conferences, diocesan pastoral councils and parish councils and the call to responsible participation by all the 'people of God.'

Indeed such moves to bring in new ways of governance resulted in numerous conflicts. Hence the attempt to respond to the 'crisis of authority' in an all controlling Church was disruptive and in fact, did not yield to desired results of change.

Writing from a sociological perspective Hornsby-Smith (2000) notes the paradigm shift of theological orientation and emphasis, occasioned by the event of the Vatican II Council (held 1963-1966) with regards to governance and authority within the Catholic Church. Hence, recognizing the changes in secular society (culture) such as a democratic imperative and expectations of participation in decision-making in the Catholic Church, the Council called on the Catholic Church to redefine its role in the fast changing contemporary world. Despite these expectations and challenges, the Catholic Church authority has been blamed for reversing the gains made by the very Council which had instructed or taught otherwise. It is based on such notion that Hornsby-Smith (2000:12) concludes that papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (Paul VI, 1968) was ill-fated. This was negatively received in the modern world that is starting to expect more progressive thinking than the conservative old ways of the Church governance. It also shattered the expectations of a more open, 'People of God' model of the Church, as proposed by the Vatican II council, especially in *Lumen Gentium*…in place of an older, more hierarchical model.

The centralization of power in the Catholic Church has not been totally wrong. As noted, this practice has helped the Catholic Church to respond to some religious and social challenges of the 20th and 21st centuries. One of these merits is the provision of leadership to the entire Christian world who looks up to the Roman pontiff for leadership directions on social and moral issues of this era.[5] The Vatican II provided a culture of contextual application to certain cultural, gender, sociological, political and language directives in the Church but the insistence or resistance of the new order by the Roman Catholics henceforth has not facilitated resolutions faster (Cadorette 2009:182).

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[4] The words in the brackets are mine.

[5] More will be deliberated on this point when I treat the merits of centralization in the subsequent pages.

In his consideration Uzukwu (1996) noted clearly and argues that it is not necessary for the church in Africa (specially the Igbo) to carry the burden of medieval Christianity which the church of the West finds difficult to off-load, namely centralization. In line with the Vatican II documents and recommendations, Uzukwu (1996) deems that the adaptations of Catholic culture among the Igbo with regards to culture, use of language, gender participation and a host of other social issues have not been well articulated owing to centralised governance of the Catholic Church. The mistake that 'unity' is 'uniformity' did not just happen but planned and carefully carried out in the 11th century by Pope Gregory VII reform. Thus Uzukwu (1996:57) concludes:

> …the Spanish liturgy ceased to exist. The West became simply Latin; the local bishop was gradually reduced to a representative of the Roman pope. Gradually also all the local churches became incorporated into the local church of Rome, so that the idea of multiplicity in the one church was totally lost. …the West became one local community and lost the aspect of unity in plurality.

Owing to this era described, complete centralization of the Catholic Church governance was fully established and transported all over the Catholic world including Africa and the Igbo in particular. It is such situation that Uzukwu (1996:58) calls "uniform ecclesiology." In other words, the Catholic Church of uniformity is a type that does not recognize or respect the context, history, cultural experience and or the environment of its host. Such practice of Catholic governance implicitly and explicitly introduced a very narrow understanding and way of 'being' and respect for the 'other.' Africa and the Igbo in particular were made to believe that their particular experience of the divine was not authentic and genuine. It also denies the individuality of the sub-Saharan Africans of which Uzukwu (1996:58) concludes: "…it is not surprising that in Africa we live in a church which is dependent at all levels and which is turned towards Rome – a church which, from the start, was ignorant of its autonomy as local church in the one church."[6]

However, the realization of autonomy (self-government) in the African (Igbo) Church will therefore restore the dignity and individual pride of existence as long as the local Church context is respected and accepted as genuine and true to its particular environment and experience. Therefore, the recognition of individuality in the Igbo Church will be the true application of 'one' united Church although 'numerous' in its confined location. It is to this

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[6] More will be said on this issue in chapter 4 when the study looks at the challenges of centralised governance in the Catholic Church among the Igbo.

notion that the affiliation between the centralized Catholic Church system of governance and the decentralized Igbo community context are interrogated. In essence, the idea and enforcement of centralization of church governance within the Igbo community amounts to the wiping away of Igbo history and experience since the model totally contradicts and annihilate what the Igbo people stand for. Some moves and conscious effort has been made towards the contextual realization of the Catholic faith among the Igbo namely in the theology of inculturation. However, nothing substantial has been achieved in this regard since most decisions on 'contextual change' in the Igbo Church still depend on the permission and decision of the Roman pontiff.[7]

1.4.2   The Vatican II Council

Meanwhile, as noted by The Pastoral Conference of the Sotho Region within the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (2006:125), the Vatican II Council was the 21th Ecumenical Council of the Church which was convoked by John XXIII in November 1962 and concluded by Paul VI in December 1965. The Vatican II enacted 4 Constitutions, 9 Decrees and 3 Declarations establishing the much needed reforms/renewal in the 20th century Catholic Church majorly on access to Bible, the word of God, Lay participation in Liturgy and the Roman Catholic Action (lay apostolate).

The Vatican II Council document in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* (LG no.1) terms the Church as *convocation,* and therefore calls all humankind into the Church's fold (Vat. II SC.1). This etymology is the Greeco-Roman equivalence of the term *ekklesia* which describes all believers in Christ going beyond the spatial-earthly order (Arrietta 2000:1). As a convocation the Church is designate to the assembly of those whom God's Word convokes or gathers together to form People of God (Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church - CCC.777). It is based on this meaning that the Church is presented as a reality that is comprehensible to human rationale, yet amalgamates two dimensions of natural and supernatural character. Hence the Catechism of the Catholic Church concludes in this manner that one mediator, Christ, established and ever sustains here on earth his holy Church. By the Churches faith, hope and charity God communicates truth and grace to all people. Hence it concludes that "…the Church is at the same time a society structured with hierarchical organs

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[7] The subject of Inculturation will be discussed later in this chapter.

and the mystical body of Christ; the visible society and the spiritual community and the earthly church and the church endowed with heavenly riches" (LG.8; LG. 2 and CCC.771).

It must be emphasized that owed to the Catholic Church's two main dimensions that is, 'historical and divine' natures, human reasoning has not come to grasp fully the fundamental nature of the Church so to say. Since no reason can fully grasp the essence of God, the Christian tradition has partially developed languages of articulating the concept 'Church' in imagery and symbolic forms to enable human reasoning to come closer to grasping the divine. This imagery includes those found in the New Testament texts and other historically or traditionally formulated as the Body of Christ, the people of God, the Church as a community, as an organized society and the Church as family etc. (John Paul II 1995:47 & 63). These are all symbolic forms describing the term Church. In particular Benedict XVI (2011:42-46) in the model of Church as Community as illustrated in the parish situation makes a special reference to the African Church using the "Communion" image to show how it fits to the African body of social life. Ojemen, (2013:50) in the same analysis of parish community notes that the 'community' image provides an enabling environment for the realization of new evolving theological thrusts and models that present the Church as a communion (*koinonia*). As a family and parish community therefore, it brings the African sociological concept into context.

The Vatican II Council (1963-1966) among other Catholic Church documents in ecclesiology as utilized in the study remains a single ecumenical Council that has given rise to the birth of a new Christian outlook of participation and local cultural renewal of universal participation in Catholic Church governance and self-realization, (Mugambi 1995:18 and Mupaya 2015:9-10). This Ecumenical Council was as a result of a growing/expansion of church outside its local "Roman" original circumstances in non-Western cultures. Both colonialism and World War II having taken their toll and effects in the world, the council was to open windows to let in some fresh air so to say. John XXIII called for *aggiornamento*, or modernization, of the church, abandoning the insignificant and valueless past of the church that no longer played meaningful role in the core task of the Catholic Church (Cadorette 2009:197). Due to new cultures and societies that the church has encountered through the work of her missionary agencies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, a considerable change is being noted that is slowly affecting the nature of Catholicism and its entire scenery of governance.

Having come to appreciate and accept that the church was now part of a pluralistic and secular world, John XXIII had come to grips with it, even when the church disagreed on some of the assumptions behind modernity. Therefore, affirmed and resolute to the needed changes (reform) that are eminent in the modern Church governance, Cadorette (2009:197) captures the moment for John XXIII who showed deep concern by calling the church to engaged in honest conversation with those who differed with her in order to end what he termed as "the dialogue of the deaf."

The Vatican II emphasizes the need for harmonizing and correcting the non-representative institution and centralized emphasis of Trent and Vatican I Councils. This is in support of collegiality[8] among bishops and co-operation between the clergy and the laity. Based on this vital role of reforming the Catholic Church towards a universal inclusiveness, Pope, J.S (2004:7) argues that the image of the church as 'People of God' thereby "accented the inclusive character of the church and particularly the significance of the laity within its life". Pope J. S therefore concludes:

> Correcting the older dualism that identifies the clergy with the church and the laity with temporal affairs, the Second Vatican Council taught that, in virtue of the sacrament of baptism, the entire People of God shares a common call to holiness and responsibility for the church and the world.

Moreover, the Vatican II became indeed an event that left much of the past behind and charted new course for reformulating *ecclesiology (ies)* (Mmassi, 2010:183). This new Catholic Church, according to Cadorette (2009:218) once profoundly a medieval institution became open and participatory in nature nearly in every sense of the word. Although a firm Episcopal (priestly) leadership has remained, members of the laity as will be discussed later and of course other cultures have taken up greater responsibilities and participation in Catholic Church governance. Significant progress in transforming the church from the old model of clergy centred and male dominated to that of a community of equals that collectively makes up the People of God can be observed (See John Paul II 1995:10, No.7; Kung, 1967:107). In acknowledgement of all people of good will who are created in God's own

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[8] The college of bishops is used here in the sense of the unity of the Church though divergent in nature (owe to different cultures of expression) the church is united in this one purpose and committed to one mission of Christ. Hence, the cooperation of bishops has become vital for the united function of the church. "Chosen together, they were also sent out together (the 12 apostles), and their fraternal unity would be at the service of the communion of the divine persons…for this reason every bishop exercises his ministry from within the Episcopal college, in communion with the bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter and head of the college (CCC.877; John 17:21-23; *Ad gentes* (AG) 5 and Arrieta 2000:44-50).

image (e.g. African Traditional Religion (ATR), Monotheistic religions etc.) John Paul II announces the collective great people of all religions as part and parcel of People of God, the new Church. Following this line of thought, Mmassi (2010:184), while citing the Association of Member Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA) observes that it is only through total involvement that the church as living members of Christ will be authentically the salt, leaven, and light of mankind in various contexts it finds herself.

Furthermore, the Church is described in the Vatican II *Lumen Gentium* (LG) as "…in Christ…a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men…for while men of the present day are drawn ever more closely together by social, technical and cultural bonds, it still remains for them to achieve full unity in Christ" (LG.1). In this way the Church is defined by what it does or functions not by what it is. Functionality therefore is what defines the Church. It has to provide a certain role or function for it to be relevant in the modern society (Dupuis and Neuner 2001:299). This is of course in the Sacramental Signs or nature of the Catholic Church[9]. Having noted this function as the Church's meaning and the several images, models or symbolic use of the term Church as pointed out above, the image most relevant to this study is the Catholic Church understood and described as "the Family" introduced by African Synod of Bishops in 1994. This model or image of the Catholic Church will play a vital role in this study as it brings closer the exploring theme and notion of *Ohacracy* system of indigenous governance among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria.

1.4.3 The Model of Church as "Family"

This section forms the last part of literature review for this study which applies the concept of Church as 'family' within the broader theoretical framework of the "large ear theory" as developed by Uzukwu in his *'a listening church'* (1996). The African model of Church as Family of God gives an understanding of a Church that is centred on and around the human family as originally in the African's way of life (Mbiti 1975:2). By so doing, the model of Church as 'Family' has demonstrated a particular contribution and self-consciousness since after Vatican II (Mupaya 2015:6). This model of the Church as Family of God leaves us with

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[9] The sacramental nature of the Church means the seven (7) signs or ways of Christ's presence in the Church. It is seen as an outward sign of something sacred. Sacraments are instituted by Jesus and consisting of a visible sign of invisible grace. The ordinary Catholic frequents the sacraments and one of which is the sacrament of penance by which the penitent is absolved of his or her sins by a confessor namely a priest after confession (The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia 2013).

the notion of a Christian family that is the 'first cell of the living Church community'; and indeed remains the future of the world and of the Church as noted by John Paul II (1995:63, no. 80). It is in their effort that the Synod of Bishops for Africa recommended a new metaphor (in place of Church as Rome) for the interpretation and a new paradigm shift in understanding or talking about the Church. It is also in the bishop's articulation of the African notion and practice of family that the central message of the Synod was linked to the church's intent to transform the unjust and violent conditions of life in our world via a new type of witnessing. The new form of witnessing is to represent the Church as a family, a notion where life is shared and not privatized to enrich the strongest (Mugambi 1995:198-200). While citing the bishops Uzukwu (1996:47) observes that:

> …Envy, jealousy, racism, war, division of the human race into first, second, third, and fourth worlds, cult of wealth, disparity between nations, and exploitation and humiliation of the African continent through the debt burden and unfair trade arrangements or by the media are all going to be changed when we live the church as family in the image of the Trinitarian family. "We are the family of God: this is the Good News! The same blood flows in our veins, and it is the blood of Jesus Christ."

This model "emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust" (John Paul II 1995:47, No.63). The point being noted here focuses on the nucleus of African traditional values by which the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance model also shares and as such will demonstrate family as the foundation, beginning and end for which common good is sought. As noted by Msafiri (1997:3) it is evident that the Family model highlights the unique and rare human values characteristic of a typically traditional African family. Of course, for the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance model, the image of Church as family will enhance and bring the message home since the symbol will be addressing the very value from and for which the Igbo tradition takes its meaning; the projection and protection of the Igbo family values. The Family as a symbolic extension of the Church further expressed as "domestic Church" and indeed adapts African values which the Church ought to have embraced (LG. 11; John Paul II 1995:70, No.92).

While capturing the model of Church as Family in his '*A Listening Church'*, Uzukwu (1996:142), cites Bujo Benezet in the 'mortuary rites' of the Bahema of Zaire and provides an imagery of a possible model for the redefinition of the relationship (governance) between the Churches in Africa and the original Church of Rome. Uzukwu makes an interesting finding using an African family illustration to detect the governance relationship that should exist

between these two. He notes the following, as food a symbol of sharing is distributed when grains of millet are put into the hands of the dead parent, and the sons literally feed from his hands. The sons, by this act, receive strength from their dead father. The eldest son, or either son that is more experienced and judicious, becomes the heir of their father. His hands are placed on a cow's udder by his father's brother and he begins to milk the cow (Uzukwu 1996:142).

This rite symbolizes and illustrates the custodianship of the ancestral property in an African family. The eldest son represents wisdom and closeness to the ancestors. He feeds the flock and redistributes equally the family's properties to ensure the survival of all members. It is abominable for the elder son not to ensure the progress of all who belong to the one ancestral family. Hence, in application to the governance relationship between the Church of Rome and the younger churches of Africa and of the Igbo in particular remains the emphasis of concern. The mother Church Rome, in this instance must make sure that her younger brothers and sisters elsewhere are well looked after and not be dominated (Uzukwu 1996:143).

The ancestral model of Church as family has therefore made the ministry or task of "Peter" the Pope similar to the services the eldest son must provide to the ancestral family. As the eldest brother the successor of "Peter" must be concerned with communicating and intensifying that life received from the proto-Ancestor, Christ. The successor of "Peter" must also realize that the other brothers have received the same life force from the same source (the Christ). Consequently, his presidency is directed towards encouraging a harmonious family life but not meddling or dictating unnecessarily in the affairs of the other adult members of the family.

In line with the theory of the "large ears" of the 'Manja Metaphor', this eldest brother is the one who has developed the greatest capacity for 'listening' to the will of the ancestors and to the conversations going on in the family community. When the Church of Rome is renewed with this African family social organizational model, it would have then achieved the task of the "Mother-Centre" (Uzukwu 1996:143).

Another aspect or dimension of Church under consideration and crucial to this study is the Small Christian Communities (SCC). The SCCs also referred to as Basic Christian Communities (BCC) has its origin and inspiration from liberation theology in Latin American

Church in the early 1970s. The birth of liberation theology which gave rise to the SCCs came as a result of the occasion of the Vatican II Council in an attempt to adapt the Christian message to a modern world, as well as rethink the nature of the Church, the world and the relationship between the two (see McGovern 1989:5 and Smith 1991:94). The SCCs remain the concrete realization of the communitarian model and decentralization of the Church as "communion" and as "People of God" as aspects of Vatican II teachings about the Church (LG.9). SCCs are considered as the new way of "Being the Church," at the grassroots level, in the neighbourhood and villages of Latin America, Asia, Africa, Australia and later spread to North American churches.

The SCCs have become grounds and places of practicing true participation of the laity in the Catholic Church governance. Hence Smith (1991:106-107) would agree with this observation while emphasizing further on SCCs role to motivate the Laity towards part of Church governance: The SCCs are neighbourhood churches that meet in homes and emphasize participation and equality among their members. They are led by trained laity that is committed to improving the community spiritually and establishing a more just society. The BEC participants have learned to take control of their own futures and cooperate to overcome various local problems. As "consciousness raising evangelism", BECs are the primary embodiment of liberation theology.

The Latin American Episcopate in Medellin, Colombia in 1968 was the grounds that gave birth to liberation theology by which the Church authority was asked to become involved in social change and the idea on "Option for the Poor" took root (Williams 2015:1). This challenge led the Latin American Church to become involved and engage the grassroots level of people in the Church governance, organization and management activities. At Medellin the bishops had stated that the Church needed to be involved in local communities. The shortage of clergy presented a new challenge which solution was brought about by liberation theology through the introduction of Base Ecclesial Communities (BEC) which came to be known as SCCs (Berryman 1987:67 and Williams 2015:4) whereby the laity initiated their involvement in Catholic Church governance.

As observed above such is therefore the place and role of the SCCs in the new Catholic Church. Faith practice in this instance was no longer centred on or around the "clergy." The people in their SCCs became the centre and are to participate actively in the faith

administration or governance in their communities without the permission of the clergy governor. Agreeing with this observation, Williams (2015:5) concludes:

> The "community" is derived from the idea that groups of similar class meet and exchange ideas, as well as provide a chance to grow together in collective consciousness. The "Ecclesial" refers to the relationship of the community to church and religion. The people in the communities are able to use the Bible themselves…as well as use the Bible as a reflection of their own lives. Finally, "Base" is used because not only are the members of CEBs usually of a lower class, but the community is founded on the basis of the Catholic Church.

The introduction of the SCCs communities as the Latin American model of church generated fairly good interest in laity participation in church governance. Ecclesiologists like Boff Leonardo and Gutierrez wrote quite extensively on this matter. According to Gutiérrez (1983), the "dualistic" and non-conflictual understanding of the church and world was superseded at Medellin. In fact, the New Christendom approach he says is very much resent in the documents themselves, alongside the liberationist perspective. The point of these contradictions in the Medellin documents is not, as Gutierrez (1983) notes, that the "thought of that Conference stands somewhere in the transitional phase between 'developmentalism' and the theology of liberation" as if the church were simply evolving toward the liberationist stance. Therefore, Gutierrez (1983:15) concludes rather that, the bishops, in order to meet a profound crisis in the church and society, used different models contrasted without resolution in the final redaction of the documents. Different concepts of the Church and its relationship with the world emerged. Since the liberationists were pushing for more autonomy in the Church, the institutional church began to perceive liberationism as a threat to the church itself.

Boff (1986) was more critical at the Roman Curia on its resistance to change the hierarchical church; he complains that this model of the Catholic Church still holds on the medieval Catholic Church in the modern century. In his rather ground breaking title, *The Ecclesiogenesis* (1986), Boff proposed the base Christian community model of church as a way to make the church more meaningful for its members, as well as socially significant. Noting the SCCs model of church as the way forward for Latin American church, Boff (1986) taught and accuses the Church of deficiencies and not preaching fully the liberating gospel by diocesan governance and the parish-based model of the church in the mega-cities and most rural areas. Some of his critics think that the Church by anyone else cannot pick and choose different models for the church, but as long as they conform to evangelical values and the vision of Vatican II.

It is indeed the effort of the SCCs that will demonstrate and symbolize positive Church governance approach in the Igbo Catholic Church as illustrated by Uzukwu. The SCCs organization, operation, management and indeed governance proves to be close to *Ohacracy* governance model among the Igbo towards a decentralized governance of the Catholic Church for the Igbo people to realize their place and participate fully as in their original living communities. Hence, emphasizing the role and vital place of SCCs in the Igbo Catholic Church, Uzukwu (1996:114) and Mugambi (1995:114) show the positive development (for example self-reliant, active participation, conscious feeling of belonging etc…) that this model of the Catholic Church governance has encouraged the Igbo Catholic Church and communities in general. By locating how the African Bishops' wish for the SCCs model to take root in the local churches Uzukwu (1996:114) notes that the SCCs seem to be the only way for the true evangelization and inculturation of the African Church (Uzukwu 1996). He further affirms the conviction that time had come for the church "to become really "local," that is: self-ministering, self-propagating and self-supporting" (Uzukwu 1996:114). For this to be possible, it is evidently clear that the church need to be based in the communities in which every day life and work takes place by discerning where there can be continuity between indigenous cultures and Christian life in general (Uzukwu 1996).

In essence, the SCCs model of being church remains the ground on which liberation theology has based its basic design for the laity to express and participate in Church governance that has excluded them for centuries (Mbabazi 2011:184). It is regrettable and lamentable that this model of the church is yet to take root in Igbo communities and congregations owing to the over emphasis of 'centralization of power' around the clergy and the bishops who are indicted for refusing to yield part of their authority to the laity. It is this realisation that leads Ebelebe (2009:191) to criticize the system as he notes the "…apparent unwillingness to share power, in addition to their theological conservatism, is part of why most Igbo bishops and priests are uncomfortable with the idea of SCCs as a model of being Church."

The historian Ifemesia (2002) worked on the traditional humane life among the Igbo people. Focusing on history, the ability to record and to make known one's aspects of past and present life, Ifemesia (2002:2-3) argues that the future of any generation will be fully safe with the preservation of events in a given social setting. This study is therefore inspired by this work and thought since it seeks to preserve and presents the Igbo historic past that will open a new and fresh understanding of the Igbo present while considering the future. Agbasiere (2000)

focused on the role and place of women in the *Ohacracy* cultural development of the Igbo people. Her study dwells on the issue of identity. Relying on her in-depth knowledge and appreciation of her Igbo communities, she clearly notes the cultural Igbo practices with regard to women and focuses on the role and place of women in the Igbo society.

As will be shown later in chapters 4 and 5, women as title holders played a very open and prominent role in the *Oha* model of governance. This presents this study with a central challenge in both models of governance where Mmassi (2010:182) cites Oduyoye (1986) and notes that: "…these Churches…accept the material services of women but do not listen to their voices, seek their leadership or welcome their initiatives." Arguing against the wisdom of non-women inclusion in Catholic Church governance as it is determined by the "Priestly Office" Mbabazi (2011:472) questions this stand noting Kasper's concern over the reservation of governance for priests[10] arguing that community leadership in the theological sense is possible only for one who is ordained, since it cannot be divorced from the celebration of the Eucharist. Mbabazi (2011) is convinced that such dichotomy reduces community leadership to purely functional service, thus reintroducing the fatal separation between *ordo* and *iurisdictio* and reversing one of the most important developments at Vatican II.

Hence, Mbabazi (2011) concludes that in order for more women to access leadership roles in the Roman Catholic Church, the power of governance needs to be separated from ordination; John Paul II (Exhortation on the Laity *Christifideles Laici* 1989; no.51) proposed women to be included in both the deliberate and consultative bodies in the Catholic Church. By so doing, all will be given equal chance to contribute meaningfully without any inhibition to play crucial governance role. Though little may have been achieved in this regard, special attention has been given to the segregation point against women as discussed in chapter 5.

Uzukwu (1996) therefore developed the expectations of the Christian religion to contribute to the autonomy of the African communities as a missionary religion. This thinking informs the principal argument of this study and therefore plays a significant role in this entire research. Uzukwu (1996) presents the nature of the Roman Catholic Church governance, the

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10 Canons (129, 1; 274, 1; and 1421, 1) reveals not only a hot debate regarding this on-going issue, but also a problematic fact with regard to "who can exercise the power of governance". These Canons also continue to link the power of jurisdiction with ordination despite the declaration of the Code of Canon Law that the power of governance originates from baptism.

centralization system which in time and history has taken the shape from the western socio-cultural organization. He observes:

> …these periods must help us to critique the anomaly of the historical centralization of the church in the West, linked to the local Western sociocultural and political developments. In this historical development of the Western church, the church assumed the shape of the state (Uzukwu 1996:58).

A centralized model of governance therefore became an imposition of a religious system of governance on the Igbo decentralized tradition. And ever since this historical anomaly was incorporated among the Igbo people, the Igbo communities have not remained the same. The Igbo literally became a foreigner in his own land. Challenged in both culture and spiritual communication, the Igbo were uprooted from the values that held them together for centuries (Achebe 1965:176). Indeed, things have fallen apart, and the centre cannot hold any longer!! Furthermore, Uzukwu (1996) noted the role or influence of Christian religion in the social development and or under-development of the African continent. He analyses the African history from the point of view of Africans as victims of the western country's conquest. In self-governance and religious determination, Africans (and Igbo people in particular) did not experience self-evolvement; thereby losing the trail of cultural value preservation (Uzukwu 1996: x, 2-4). In his critique of this imposition and the denial of the Igbo self-determination, Uzukwu (1996:152) further concludes:

> …For the church in Africa (Igbo) to be an agent of social transformation, she must begin by courageously changing her structures from the inside: "What is life worth!" In order to liberate the Spirit of life, to allow the Spirit initiative in the life of the church-community, this structural change is imperative. The dominance of the Spirit renews the levels or structures of communication and reinvigorates relational channels of communication.

Another challenge relating to this study which remains a concern and calls for attention is the issue that Uzukwu (1996) raises on the 'clericalization' nature of governance in the Igbo Roman Catholic Church and Africa in general. Pointing to the desire of Synod of Bishops in 1994 for African cultural leadership system having realised the gap between the Church and the laity (people); the less participation of the ordinary people of faith is becoming unbearable and does not fit in the Igbo or decentralized system in most African situations as he notes that the church in Africa wishes to chart a new course for relational leadership. The synod Fathers were aware that the present style of being church in Africa, as elsewhere in the world under the Western patriarchate, not only is dominated by the clergy but is clericalized (Uzukwu 1996:104). Hence, the emphatic call for reform in the Roman Catholic Church clerical centred

model of governance has become evident and cannot be over emphasized to allow equal representation and lay participation (Pope J.S 2004:7).

Idowu (2012), on evaluating and revisiting African spirituality and traditional values for good governance deals with the role of religion in the absence of central organised government. This captures the original state of the *Ohacracy* system of governance among the Igbo people but which was not utilised by the early Christian missionaries in the southeast of Nigeria. As an open discussion, Idowu opens the avenue for the synergy of both traditions to co-exist. While re-emphasising further, Idowu (2012:115) notes that the religious and spiritual values that promote development are expressed at the level of individual and collective behaviour. Where religion and spirituality are rooted in the everyday life of people and society they can make an important contribution to sustainable development. They can also strengthen a culture of dialogue.

Omoregbe (2003) writing on the theme of "*Religious ideals and the question of governance in Africa*" tries to raise the consciousness of "when and how" the moral tradition of Africans fall apart despite the aggressive "moral" presence of two major world religions of Christianity and Islam claiming millions of African converts. Though the Church would like to present the case otherwise, Omoregbe (2003) emphatically argues that Christianity as a religion has failed to raise the moral standard of African people including Igbo. He accuses the Catholic Church of having failed to inculcate a high sense of morality in their adherents. Despite the increase of the number of churches in the Igbo land and elsewhere in Africa, moral degeneration is still on the increase. In this case, Omoregbe points out that:

> …the bane of governments in Africa is corruption and among the corrupt members of these corrupt governments are Christians. Thus Christianity has failed in Africa; it has failed to produce morally upright men in Africa. It has failed to produce in them the New Life. It has failed to create new values in Africans and has left their hearts, values, and ways of life unchanged. Hence moral degeneration, fraud, and corruption have continued to increase all over Africa along with the continued growth and expansion of Christianity... (2003:563).

While one would partially agree with Omoregbe but whether it is true to say Africans (and in particular Igbo people) have not changed despite embracing Christianity; or rather should it read that Christianity watered down most of the values (if not all) and traditions that kept the Igbo people together? As Achebe (1965:176) rightly notes, the white man (the Church) has

put a knife on the things that held the Igbo together, and they have fallen apart. The falling apart of the values and traditions of moral growth and strength that bind the people together were abruptly removed and uprooted from their natural environment in order to 'conform' to the requirement of Christian conversion.

Magesa (2008) presents the African Religion emphasises on the moral traditions. He investigates African insights into the moral universe which develops from God, and concludes that the basis of African morality is the promotion of human life. While noting up-rootedness of the African from his natural environment by foreign religion, Magesa (2008) argues that the 19th century western scholarship, tainted by Darwinism, slave trade and colonial mentality, describes the African person as a barbarous, materialist, childish and inarticulate creature. For this reason Magesa (2008:28) concludes that Africans are described as "almost stupefied with brutish ignorance, with the instincts of man in him, but yet living the life of a beast". This impossible impression of African (and Igbo in particular) self-realisation and governance in terms of *Ohacracy* is so described that the Igbo Catholic Church governance becomes fully foreign oriented and applicable. Noting this danger of "centralization" which is the Catholic Church's model of governance and remarking on Boulaga (1984), Magesa argues:

> "…how a Christianity of the empire imposes itself only by tearing up its converts by the roots, out of where-they-live, out of their being-in-the-world, presenting them with the Faith only at the price of depriving them of their capacity to generate the material and spiritual conditions of their existence." Having been uprooted and destroyed in this way, "these dominated persons will be able to find their truth only outside themselves... (2008:29).

In essence, the ecclesiological challenges this study has narrated above, namely; the lack of an in–depth study on the inculturation of the model of Catholic Church governance by using the indigenous decentralized Igbo *Ohacracy* participatory model of dialogue (Palaver) sets the academic gap the study attempts to address. Hence, the importance of this study on the model of Igbo indigenous governance aims to propose values of collaboration, consensus in decision making, dialogue and inclusion in cultural heritage of the Igbo to enrich the Catholic Church's model of centralised governance.

1.5   Rationale and Motivation of the Study

My interest in this study was inspired by two reasons. First, the introduction of the Christian missionaries in the mid-19th century brought enormous challenges to the Igbo society as shown in most historical literatures. The alterations and inadequacy of Igbo culture in the life of the people led to the collapse of the value system and morality. This era (coupled with colonialism) led the first Igbo converts to accept Catholicism without much resistance of the western worldview with which the idea 'church' was introduced. The Igbo society thereby inherited the copy of western model of Church governance leaving it torn apart in two, since they could not entirely get rid of their first nature of *Ohacracy* model of social order. Of course, owning to the non-reference or less inculturation or integration of the new religion to the Igbo indigenous values, the practice of Catholic model of Church has become a thorn in the flesh; hence the allegation of syncretism in the Igbo Church.

The relevance or significance of this study is to make a contribution to the already existing body of knowledge towards a new awareness and improve on the already given body of knowledge in the area of governance as noted by Dahlberg and McCaig (2010:6). Hence, a study such as this on the Catholic Church and governance in the Catholic Church among the Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria as part of the existing knowledge serves as useful contribution within the Catholic Church, since it unveils the Roman Catholic Church's own understanding of governance. This will go a long way in alerting the Catholic Church to realize the weakness of her centralized model of governance. Meanwhile, this realization will aid the Catholic Church to equip as much as possible the tools to fortify the Igbo Catholic Christians to integrate the Catholic Church governance with their *Ohacracy* decentralized model of governance. Such a study will also assist to create deep-rooted Igbo Catholics who can fully participate and appreciate the Catholic Church governance model since most Igbo people cannot yet integrate these two models of governance. The study will also serve as a reference to other future studies on ecclesiology and integration of indigenous value system. Scholars in indigenous world value system will highly benefit from this study since it opens the window to the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria and Africa in general.

The second motivation that sparked my interest for this study was influences by challenges posed by urbanization, globalization, modernization, individualism and the technological world of internet which have brought crisis into the lives of the Igbo society; which remains

divided in two worlds of the Igbo culture and that of the new world. Though these have their positive contributions in the life of the Igbo, the outcome in real practice has led to a self-seeking and self-satisfaction style of Christianity. The Igbo value of *Ohacracy* is less effective in the communal level since individualism and modernity have dominated the individual lives of people. That aspect of communal living is less and less appealing to individuals and groups in the Igbo Catholic living. A shared life and communal concerns no longer appeal to both Church and in the Igbo communities; hence individuals are overcome with the self-centred style of life. The *Ubuntu*, "I am because you are"; a basic African understanding of existence has rather become a theory with no practical outcomes, words without action.

This self-seeking and self-satisfying form of western individualism is so aggressive as to tear down the *Ohacracy* communal and social life order; that have supported community living for centuries. Hence, the need for such a study to connect the Igbo indigenous *Ohacracy* value of governance as a model of community order is eminent. In this decisive dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church's model of governance is the desire to develop a comprehensive model of governance among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigerian Roman Catholic Church.

1.6   Critical Question and Objectives of the Study

The key research question which this study sought to address is:

> How can both centralised and the decentralised models of governance complement each other for the good of the Igbo society?

To respond to the above critical question, four *sub-questions* were formulated to guide this current study. These were:

1. What is the Catholic Church understanding of Church governance?
2. What are the Igbo understanding of participatory governance in its social order?
3. How does the laity participate and contribute meaningfully as provided in the Church structure and governance with reference to Vatican II council?
4. In what way can the theology of inculturation contribute meaningfully towards the full participation of both men and women of Igbo *Ohacracy* context in the Catholic Church in Nigeria?

The *objectives* of this study are purposely designed to respond to the above key research question and its significances in the following ways.

5. To interrogate the Catholic Church's understanding of church governance
6. To explore the nature of Igbo participatory governance in its social order.
7. To examine how the laity participate and contribute meaningfully as provided in the Church structure and governance with reference to Vatican II council.

8.   To explore how the theology of inculturation can contribute meaningfully towards the full participation of both men and women of Igbo *Ohacracy* context in the Catholic Church in Nigeria

1.7   Structure of the Thesis

This study is developed in seven chapters through which every introduction in each chapter serves to introduce the focus of the chapter within the overall coherence of the thesis. Practical suggestions and findings on how to sustain good governance in both the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralization and within the Catholic Church centralization systems are explored. Concise descriptions of the expected content of these chapters are as follows:

Chapter One generally introduces and locates this study, setting the scenery for the thesis by presenting the expected issues of discussion. As an introduction this chapter offers discussions on the background and motivation of the study, delineating review of literature, the key research questions and objectives, research problems and the rationale of the study are all noted.

Chapter Two will deal with the theoretical frameworks and the methodological considerations which this study has applied in exploring, examining and interrogating in order to make discussion for the study possible. Moreover, both "large ear" and the "inculturation" theories have been applied in this study. The study has utilised the qualitative method as its methodological approach.

Chapter Three examines and discusses the ecclesiological issues and the theologies of governance as understood, taught and practiced by the Roman Catholic Church among the Igbo people. The chapter looks at the interface between governance and the Catholic Church. The models of the Catholic Church governance adopted and the theories which inform the understanding of such models are also discussed. This chapter unveils the dilemma with the centralized system of Catholic Church governance structures with reference to the Igbo experience of multi-cultural humanity as opposed to the mono-culture of the Western worldview. The chapter concludes with references to the inculturation theory, slavery and colonialism as they affected the centralised model of the Catholic Church governance among the Igbo people.

Chapter Four discusses the entire philosophy regarding the *Ohacracy* tradition and model of governance among the Igbo. The historical origins and roots of the Igbo people, history of the Igbo settlement and a brief general world view. The Igbo people's belief in *Chukwu*, the earth spirit goddess and the ancestors are discussed too.

Chapter Five explores the Igbo institutions as a means of individual and group participation in the *Ohacracy* decentralised model of governance. While it focuses on Igbo *Ohacracy* symbols and institutions, the chapter aims to illustrate and demonstrate the symbolic meanings and roles of the institutions that exist among the Igbo people in view of achieving meaningful governance. This chapter also discusses the structures within the Igbo *Ohacracy* order while focusing on the family as a basic institution among others. The chapter mainly aims to explore how the laity participate and contribute meaningfully in the Church structure and governance in reference to Vatican II within the Igbo indigenous governance and Catholic Church models of governance. This chapter therefore utilises the Igbo *Ohacracy* symbols and institutions with an aim of illustrating the symbolic elements and roles of the institutions that exist among the Igbo people in aiding and supporting the laity to participate and contribute meaningfully in the Catholic Church structures of governance with reference to Vatican II.

Chapter Six provides a dialogue between the two models of governance namely the centralised and the decentralised systems of both the Roman Catholic Church and the Igbo indigenous *Ohacracy* respectively. In complementary approach, both models will be highlighted; while noting their relationship and relevance for governance in the Roman Catholic Church within the context of the Igbo society. This chapter also discusses some key themes such as authority, the laity, and women participation in the Roman Catholic Church governance, effects of inculturation and religion/culture that have emerged between the two models of governance. The chapter concludes by offering a critical evaluation through which the study illustrates the balance between the two opposing systems of the Catholic Church centralization and of the Igbo decentralized models.

Chapter Seven forms the conclusion of this study which synthesizes the entire study. The chapter proposes a practicable yet a viable model of governance envisioned to manage the situation within the lived realities within the context of these two systems or traditions. The summary of the conclusions drawn from the study findings from chapters two through to six

are pointed out while practical suggestions are offered with regards to good governance as the significance for this study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has generally introduced this study and unveils both the Roman Catholic centralised model of governance and that of the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model of social order. As an introductory chapter it has offered discussions on the background, motivation of the study, outlining review of literature, the key research questions and objectives, research problems and the rationale of the study in overall. The next one, chapter 2 will discuss the theoretical frameworks and methodological consideration.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION

2.1   Introduction

Chapter one introduced this study by describing the background and motivation of the study, outlining the review of literature, the key research questions and objectives, research problems and the rationale of the study. In order to examine both the Roman Catholic centralised model of governance and the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model of social order, this chapter will discuss the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and the methodology applied for this study. The first part of this chapter will deal with the conceptual frameworks guiding this study. Second part will deal with the research method and design as it explores the two major theories namely: the "Large ear" and the "Inculturation" theology which focuses on lay or common participatory in governance.

2.2   Conceptual Frameworks undergirding this Study

This study utilises two major theories namely the "large ears" theory and the Inculturation theory. The first is the "large ear" theory which was originally used by Uzukwu (1996) is an application and emphasis on pastoral ministry centred on philosophy of listening, in the decentralised model among the Igbo *Ohacracy* social order. The concept of listening with "large ears" as a theoretical perspective comes from the African tradition of a "listening chief" to the society. The African tradition of a listening chief is a Manja paradigm of the Central African Republic by which the chief is known of his totem, the rabbit; owing to this inconspicuous animal's "large ears." Capturing this theory, Uzukwu (1996:127) writes:

> …the chief is considered to be very close to God, to the ancestors, and to the protective spirits of the community. He does not replace the ancestors. But along with other elders, he makes them present (represents them) in his person and behaviour. The Manja underline listening as the most dominant characteristic of the chief…

This large ear theory demonstrates the *Ohacracy* governance in Igbo tradition whereby plenty of time is given for all to participate and take active role in the community organisation, affairs and management. No one is side-lined or eliminated. Dialogue at all levels of social life must be observed in order to be humane in Igbo living. For the chief to be fair, he must be

a patient listener. Such listening takes ample time. Describing this process as African "Palaver"[11] Uzukwu (1996:128) notes it as the liberation of speech at all levels of community in order to come close to that Word which is too large for an individual mouth, the Word which saves and heals. The ample time devoted on communication is not so well received in the western (European) tradition. This brought conflict in the nature and manner by which missionary work was brought to the Igbo and elsewhere in Africa.

Overall, the sharing of the Word among the Igbo people Uzukwu (1996:128) differs on levels and patterns of listening and communicating depending on whether the system of social organization prefers authority in many hands (as with the Igbo *Ohacracy* of decentralized governance) or centralized in one hand authority (as in the Roman Catholic Church). The centralized Catholic system of governance did not find it peaceful among the Igbo since the *Ohacracy* tradition is in conflict with power concentrated on one or few individuals over the entire community. In this case therefore, the listening concept of the "large ear" theory enables me in this study to explore the dialogue, consultative, collaborative and inclusive nature of the Igbo *Ohacracy* tradition as identified in the decentralized system of social order. This, of course, allows me to interrogate and explore new and alternative ways for governance to the Roman Catholic Church's conflicting centralized model of governance in the Igbo society.

The heavily centralised system referred to as the "short ears" attitude which still persist today in contrast with the "large ears" was not readily embraced by the early missionaries among the Igbo communities where they were compared with dictators, charlatans and fanatics to the traditions. In today's Roman Catholic Church in some indigenous communities (among the Igbo and elsewhere), the bishop or priest is addressed as local chiefs given the "large ears" paradigm as proposed by Uzukwu (1996). Though this image is being alluded to, the reality on the ground remains a highly centralized governed church; which does not "talk or listen" much of what the community says or discusses. This kind of "imposed" governance did and does not find favour among the Igbo people who are free thinking and communicating people to find a humane just and equitable community. It is however based on such challenges faced

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[11] African "palaver" refers to the ample time given for all necessary discussions and agreement to be reached without any party involved feeling cheated or side-lined. It must not be mistaken with incessant, time-consuming, endless, aimless, useless discussions. It is rather the ever-living process by which Igbo traditions have provided to take all on board at all levels of social engagement for good and fair governance. This process is evident in the decentralised system of Igbo governance where the *Oha* rules.

by the Igbo Catholic Church of today that the "large ears" sociological theory[12] falls under the functionalist perspective (Crossman 2018). Hence, Uzukwu (1996:130) concludes that we must take care to underline that the image of the chief or community leader which will influence a truly Christian and truly African ministry in our Church is not the bastardization of the image of the chief by African tyrants, nor the imported Roman and medieval autocracy which dominates the present ministerial or governance practice of the Roman Catholic Church.

The second theory applied in this study is 'inculturation' as a missiological approach to contextualization of the gospel which illustrates that the result from the impact of the Christian faith in a particular culture should reflect in the context. Inculturation as a theory therefore aims to appropriate meaning and value in a given cultural context or situation within the Roman Catholic Church governance. While etymologically defining inculturation, Waliggo shows inculturartion to mean:

> … the insertion of new values into one's heritage and world-view. This process applies to all human dimensions of life and development. …inculturation signifies the movement which takes local cultures and their values as the basic instrument and a powerful means for presenting, reformulating and living Christianity. Within this process effective dialogue between Christianity and local cultures is carried out. …therefore, becomes the honest attempt to make Christ and his liberative message better understood by people of every culture … (1991:506-507).

The significance of employing this theoretical framework according to Kiarie (2014:48) who cites Minichiello and Kottler is that "each theories attempts to understand how people perceive and make sense of the world as well as what motivates them to act the way they do." Hence, the inculturation theory as applied in this study acts as a conceptual frame to analyse and interpret the understanding of the Catholic Church's governance in the Igbo *Ohacracy* social order. Indeed, the contextualisation, indigenization, Africanisation or the movement towards cultural independence among indigenous cultures while embracing Christianity becomes real in inculturation theology. Context in this regard becomes very vital since it serves as a practical means of "communicating the message of the Gospel" (Kaufmann 2001:9).

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[12] This represents the functionalist perspective, also called functionalism, and is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. It has its origins in the works of Emile Durkheim, who was especially interested in how social order is possible and how society remains relatively stable.

Meanwhile, in its historical inception, scholars are not certain who first used the term 'inculturation' as noted in the theological circles (Ukpong 2013:531). Even so, Ukpong was certain that the term "inculturation" however, was first used in the Roman Catholic arena (2013:532). In its application, Ukpong (2013) concludes that it expresses the process of rooting the church in a particular culture. It was in the first plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Catholic Bishops' conference in 1974, that the first use of the expression: "a church indigenous and inculturated" finally appeared. In their 32nd General Congregation of the Jesuits at the 4th General Synod of the Catholic Bishops in Rome in 1977, the term 'inculturation' was used to replace the use of the term "adaptation" (Ukpong 2013:532). John Paul II however became the first to utilize the term 'inculturation' in official Roman Catholic Church document in his Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in October 1979 (Shorter 1988:10).

2.3   Limitations and Scope of Study

The Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria are located across the River Niger. Igbo land is not a homogenous society. Hence, it is not culturally uniform but would be characterized by different sub-cultures with significant differences among them. Therefore, the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities referred to in this study are limited to two areas or communities of Owerri Igbo. Onwejegwu (1981:8-11) pointed out five cultural sub-groups of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people[13] of which this study focuses on the Southern or Owerri Igbo *Ohacracy*. This comprises of two major neighbouring towns of Owerri and Okigwe among others in the old political division of present Imo state, in Nigeria. Ukpokolo (2009:5) and Afigbo (1981:137) identify these towns as the heartland of the Igbo *Ohacracy* society. This will form the central geographical context and limitation for this study. It is presently located in the south-eastern Nigeria.

Catholicism came among the Igbo society that is across the Niger in 1857 by the French Holy Ghost Fathers. Njoku (2006:3) and Ebuziem (2010:1) note that the Igbo worldview changed forever as it encountered the new world of Catholicism. In essence, the scope of this study is

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[13] The 5 sub-Igbo *Ohacracy* groups as noted by Onwejegwu (1981: 8-11) are as follows: a) **Northern or Onitsha Igbo** which includes towns like Akwa, Udi, Enugu, Enugu Ukwu, Nsukka, Aro Ndizeogu, Onitsha, Agukwu Nri, Igboukwu, Nanka, and Ihiala. b) **Southern or Owerri Igbo**, which includes towns like Aba, Umuahia, Owerri, Ahoada, Okigwe, and Orlu; c) **Western Igbo**, which is the part of Igbo land in Delta State and includes towns like Asaba, Agbor, Kwalle, Ilah and Aboh; d) **Eastern or Cross River Igbo**, which includes towns like Abam, Ohafia, Afikpo, Arochukwu, and Abriba. e) **North-Eastern Igbo**, which includes towns like Ezza, Uburu, Okposi, and Abakkaliki.

limited to the historical period extending to the mid-19th century when the era of Catholicism was dawn among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria.

The study is therefore limited both by its geographical location and its scope. From its scope, this study is limited within three dimensional phases, namely: perception, tradition and inculturation of Roman Catholic Church governance among the Igbo of Nigeria. On the perception level, the study presents the Roman Catholic theology of ecclesiology as thought down the history and its presentation in the Igbo Catholic Church to bring understanding on the whole idea of integration of decentralised indigenous model of governance among the Igbo social order. With reference to tradition, the study take interest in evaluating established practices on governance of daily participation in tasks and responsibilities of individuals or groups towards the common good of Igbo social order.

Finally, in relation to inculturation the study explores models of Catholic Church ecclesiology like 'Church as family' and 'Lay participation in governance' etc., in order to evaluate the activities of the Roman Catholic Church among the Igbo indigenous people. This effort is geared towards the common good and enrichment of both the centralised and the decentralised models of governance in the Roman Catholic Church and the Igbo social order. While consulting African theologians on models of African ecclesiology (for example 'Church as family'), this study will buttress and strengthen the *Ohacracy* model of participatory governance as an alternative model of Igbo Catholic Church's contextual understanding of Roman Catholic Church governance.

2.3.1 Research Methodology

Methodology refers to "a strategy of enquiry that guides a set of procedures" (Petty, Thomas and Strew 2012:278). Methodology therefore justifies the use of particular research techniques. Research methods can be defined as the kind of tools that are used to gather data for specific studies of this kind (Lapan *et. al* 2012). In other words, methods refer to "techniques used in acquiring and analysing data to create knowledge" (Petty, Thomas and Stew 2012:278). This study is non-empirical in nature and therefore will not involve the use of primary data such as survey and interviews. In order to address the objectives of this study, a qualitative research method will be utilised and I have heavily relied on analysing secondary data obtained from library research in books, periodicals, theses, relevant publications, church

archival documents and internet research materials. On the basis that qualitative research seeks to answer questions through examining various social setting and the individuals who inhabit these settings. Nieuwenhuis (2016:53) points out that qualitative method of research "relies on linguistic (words) rather than numerical data, and employs meaning-based rather than statistical forms of data-analysis." While applying library and desk-top research, this study will answer the how it will use these secondary sources to analyse and interpret data to achieve the objectives set in chapter 1 in addressing the Roman Catholic centralised and the Igbo decentralised models of governance in this study.

Furthermore, on the basis that Qualitative research views "social life in terms of processes that occur rather than in static terms" (Nieuwenhuis 2016:53), this study is interested in how the Igbo social setting is organised and how they make sense by their *Ohacracy* model of governance by use of symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles and their established institutions. In other words, this study will describe the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model as it interacts with the centralised model of the Roman Catholic Church's governance. According to Creswell (2013:43), qualitative research begins with a supposition and the utilization of interpretive or theoretical frameworks which inform the investigation of research problems, and while articulating the meaning persons or groups attribute to either a human or social problems (Eze 2012:32).

As situated in the qualitative research model, this study will seek to investigate how the Igbo *Ohacracy* and the Roman Catholic models of governance differ, relate and motivate each other in behaviours as informed by their cultural and religious practices, belief systems and traditions. The qualitative approach has supported this study to examine the meaning and interpret the practises of these two governing models thereby shaping the life stories and behaviours of the Igbo *Ohacracy* and Roman Catholic adherents. As distinguished by Collis and Hussey (2003), qualitative method is different from quantitative research method since it gives a full analysis and description of the subject under study and consideration. This remark adds to my option for utilizing this approach for this study which strives to examine the conceptions of religious practises and cultural beliefs around the centralized and the decentralized forms and models of governance.

There are five diverse approaches that are applicable to qualitative research. These include the narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and Case Study (Creswell

and Petty 2013:379, Thomas and Stew 2012). With reference to the approach applied in this study, I have utilised the ethnographic approach.

As a comparative cultural anthropology approach, ethnography is used to interpret cultural groups or people. As an approach its focus is to examine the shared patterns of behaviour, belief systems, and language within a cultural group and to do this requires an extended period of time (Creswell and Petty 2012:380). A variety of data will be collected to help inform the description (Creswll 2007) of a cultural group. In this case both the Igbo and Roman Catholic Church cultures sharing communities will be analysed and interpreted to obtain meaning of behaviour, language and interaction between the two centralised and decentralised groups. The research will make use of already available and published ethnographic literature focussing on the Igbo and the Roman Catholic Church governing models experienced among the people of south-eastern Nigeria.

In its description, ethnography is derived from two Greek words, *ethnos* (people) and *graphein* (to write), and essentially meaning "writing about people" (Nieuwenhuis 2016:80). It is designed to explore a cultural occurrence and in our case the decentralised Igbo *Ohacracy* model of social order and the centralised Roman Catholic Church governance culture will serve as focused communities. Within a particular cultural setting, information notes, textbooks, documentary materials (class notes, diaries and minutes), other artefacts such as stories, songs and poems of both cultures are explored and being the data that is documented and analysed to yield a planned result (Bless 2014:353).

In this case both the Igbo *Ohacracy* order and the Roman Catholic Church governance models (who shared values, beliefs, symbols and institution) are explored to yield a common good result to both models under consideration. As the study shall demonstrate, the Igbo *Ohacracy* and the Catholic Church as community or group, a social order and cultural heritage are investigated in both cultural contexts. From this consideration, an ethnographic study approach to qualitative research method finds justification for this study on the basis that the key research question would have been adequately addressed; and that is: How the centralised and the decentralised models of governance complement each other for the good of the Igbo society?

This study is a library-based (desktop) research on the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised and the Roman Catholic centralised models of governance. A Library research centres on the investigative studies carried out by others to develop knowledge (Britton, 1996). Library, Document and Desktop researches are all used interchangeably for the same term to describe secondary research. In Library research, previous studies and findings such as published periodicals and research projects are used to get to a conclusion (Ngwaru 2018:32). Hence the use of published articles, textbooks, journals and university academic projects have all been utilised in this thesis to denote secondary research approach.

With regards to library research, weakness with the data available maybe irrelevant to the objectives of the study become a serious concern (Surbhi 2016). In this kind of research therefore, the researcher examines various documents like textbooks, periodicals, reports and newspapers etc., which offers a ground to work with (Silverman 2000). Care must be taken to limit the materials to relevant potions of the materials available. Based on this notion, this study will limit itself to selected texts and documents relevant to the topic of governance in both Roman Catholic central and the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised models of governance. It is indeed within this methodological consideration, 'research design' becomes vital in enabling data collection and analysis methods to achieving the major objectives of this study. It is to this consideration that next sections will be devoted in this study.

2.3.2 Research Design and Process

Parahoo (2006:142) notes that a research design is a process or a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analysed. Creswell and Poth (2017:49) in agreement with this view, urges that research design means the plan for conducting a study. Based on this understanding the next sections will present data collection and production, random sampling and data analysis and interpretations.

2.3.3 Data Collection and Production

Documents or textual data gathering form the central source of data in this study. As no interview was conducted, written documents (literature) alluded to sheds light on both the decentralised Igbo *Ohacracy* model of governance and the centralised Roman Catholic model of governance under investigation. As noted by Nieuwenhuis (2016:88) written sources of this kind include: "…published and unpublished documents, letters, reports, e-mail messages,

faxes, newspaper articles, company reports, memoranda, agendas … or any document that is connected to the investigation." As earlier indicated secondary sources serves as the major bases for this study aim at achieving the purpose and objective of the research. This aims to unveil the gap that exists: namely the lack of all-inclusive model of Church governance.

Primarily, the researcher made use of University libraries such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Walter Sisulu University (WSU), University of South Africa (UNISA) in East London area of the Eastern Cape and St. Joseph's Theological Institute (SJTI) Cedara. Some personal collections like Igbo *Ohacracy* story book and proverbs have been utilized. Other primary sources like oral traditions in the form of folklores, wise sayings and common knowledge among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria have been used too.

The researcher made use of explanatory research design to examine both the centralised system of the Catholic Church governance and the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised social order. Explanatory research method is a holistic concept covering a collection of information techniques which seek to describe, translate, decode, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social order (Welman 2005:188). This approach applies a qualitative research methodology in this study.

In addition, explanatory qualitative research not only tells the story but it also analyses or interrogates and also explains the why of an event and account for the life activities of a particular group or a community of people (Welman 2005).

2.3.4 Data Sampling

This research utilised information already in the public domain to explain and describe both the centralised model of Roman Catholic Church governance and the decentralised Igbo model of governance. The Igbo context of *Ohacracy* and the Catholic Church model of governance offer this study the histories, stories and available literatures, such as the Vatican II texts, Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Igbo indigenous political system, Christianity and Igbo culture and so forth. This research utilised simple random sampling to gather the above mentioned literature. Marlow (2005) defined simple random sampling as the easiest of the sampling methods where each individual case in the population theoretically has an equal chance of being selected for the sample (Marlow 2005:228). In this case, the research made

use of accredited journals, relevant articles, and Igbo artefacts and stories, revised canon law codes of the Catholic Church and the Igbo ethical codes of conducts. However, some relevant reference materials that deal with the issues of women and lay participation in governance in the Catholic Church and among the Igbo *Ohacracy* also form part of the literature. The choice of these literatures is aimed at acquiring a holistic understanding of this study on the centralised Roman Catholic model of governance and the decentralised Igbo *Ohacracy* model of governance. As Petty *et al* (2012:380) noted, purposive sampling as this is known is purposely randomly chosen to serve the relevant objective in this study.

Furthermore, the purposive sampling is chosen to respond to the sub-questions which have been designed to address the objectives of this study. Hence, sub-question 1 which asks, what is the Catholic Church's understanding of Church governance? This will be addressed by the objective question 1: To interrogate the Catholic Church understanding of Church governance. Likewise, the sub-question 2: What are the Igbo understanding of participatory governance in its social order? The objective: To explore the nature of Igbo participatory governance in its social order.

2.3.5   Data Analysis and Interpretation

With regards to the research design, the study is interpretive in nature. As an interpretive approach, this study examines and explores symbols, proverbs or sayings and value which do not bear meanings on themselves; instead are given values in the social context where they exist. As Jansen (2016:22) notes, interpretive approach to this study focuses on the meaning that individuals or communities assign to their experience. With this understanding therefore, meanings and interpretations become very subjective to the context of reference. Jansen concludes that since behaviour is constituted by social conventions or agreements, interpretations are required to retain meaning or values as given. While the study adheres to this understanding of approach, both the Igbo *Ohacracy* and the Catholic Church models of governance shall retain their social conventions, norms and standards of original community assigned meanings to enable this study arrive at a valuable and acceptable conclusions.

Based on the secondary sources of data collected, the researcher made use of thematic approach to identify the themes that emerge from in the study in restpect to creat a dialogue between both the Igbo *Ohacracy* model and the Roman Catholic order of governance with

overall interpretations. First, thematic analysis is a quest to ascertain themes that surface as being significant in the narrative of the occurrence (Feraday and Muir-Cochrane 2006 in Nosisi Feza 2016:464). This aims to "uncover themes that are prominent in the data." The objective is to thematically analyse the Igbo *Ohacracy* governing institutions like the family, the development unions, the *Oji* and *Ofo* symbols among other means to actualise the dialogue between the two models. Also the governing structures of the Roman Catholic centralised model like the Pontiff, the Episcopate, the local clergy and the role of the laity also form part of the analysis. The key themes the study identified for such a dialogue include the possibility to participatory authority, active laity, women participation, inculturation, faith and religion in search of communalism. This method is therefore appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to shape, interpret and allow data to rigorously and speak for itself.

Second, the systematic and logical method will aid this study to be critical and coherent in its presentation. By so doing Bless *et el* (2014:8) concludes that "…logical predictions cannot be made before a description has been given and an explanation of the observed phenomenon found." Hence, the data collected will form the body of this study which will explain how it arrives at the conclusion of the knowledge on the Igbo *Ohacracy* order and the Catholic Church model of governance which will involve historical analysis and contemporary stands on models of their governances.

2.3.6 Ethical Consideration

Research ethics is not only about the welfare of research participants. It also extends to areas of scientific misconduct and plagiarism (Drake, 2016:98). Since the researcher utilised secondary data already in the public domain, it may not be easy for the researcher to identify the authenticity of the data collected and used. However, effort was made to interpret and analyse the data as it is without compromising the original ideas of the scholarly works. Effort was equally made to ensure that all books, journals, Church documents, unpublished thesis, conference papers and etc., were appropriately cited to avoid plagiarism.

2.3.7 Research Reflexivity

According to Terre Blanche *et al* (2008a:563), "reflexivity is the plain recognition and examination of the researcher's role in the research process, including the assumptions with

which they operate their identifications and dis-identifications, and their possible influence on the research process." At this juncture as the researcher, it is important I make this observation. I have spent over thirty-five (35) years of my life among my Igbo *Ohacracy* people of south-eastern Nigeria. I have therefore observed, actively participated and lived my life among the Igbo people. Equally, my experience as a Roman Catholic priest has informed and grounded the knowledge that will come through in this study. With these experiences therefore, this study has applied the explanatory research design to present this study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter Two has explained theoretical frameworks and the methodological considerations which this study applied in exploring, examining and interrogating both the centralised Roman Catholic model of governance and the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised order. Moreover, both "large ear" and the "inculturation" theories that undergird the study have been applied too. The qualitative method used in the methodological approach is all addressed.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORICAL STRUCTURE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CENTRALISED MODEL OF GOVERNANCE

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two theoretical frameworks and methodological considerations have been discussed and dealt with. However, in chapter three the ecclesiological understanding of Catholic Church governance, the clergy, the laity, the place of women in Church governance and the history of the centralised Church governance will be considered. This chapter will broadly review literature tracing the history of the centralised model of governance in the Catholic Church while alluding to the Vatican II appeal to modernity; and how this has influenced the Igbo *Ohacracy* land of South-eastern Nigerian Catholic environment. As power and authority is vested in the Clergy in the Catholic Church model of governance, the Igbo *Ohacracy* model argues for full participation of all who belong in the social order, including the laity. Governance therefore as understood, taught and practiced by the Roman Catholic Church shall be well explored.

3.2 The Roman Pontiff: A Brief Account of Papal Authority

The early Church history with regards to Catholic Church governance indicates what Nichols (2004:111) called "Participatory Hierarchy." While defining the model and citing the principle of common discussion which was later affirmed by the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, Nichols (2004:118) notes that the holy fathers, who have gathered at interims in the Four Holy councils, have followed the examples of ancient times that is well practised by the apostles at the Council of Jerusalem; (Acts 15). Nicholas (2004) concludes that:

> They dealt with heresies and current problems by debate in common, since it was established as certain that when the disputed question is set out by each side in communal discussions, the light of truth drives out the shadow of lying. The truth cannot be made clear in any other way when there are debates about questions of faith, since everyone requires the assistance of his neighbour.

It is indeed with such wisdom in communal model of agreement that the early Church was able to govern with almost reaching consensus level before decisions were made that had wider implications and applications binding on all believers and followers of Christ. This

common responsibility or governance was such that it was the duty of the Lay people to select, elect or recommend their local bishops. Clear examples were Ambrose and Augustine chosen by the communities to be ordained bishops and to represent their communities in all aspects. While confirming this participatory hierarchy, Nichols (2004:118) cites Hippolytus writing in about 215, and notes: "Let the bishop be ordained being in all things without fault chosen by all the people." While emphasising on participatory hierarchy, Nichols (2004) agrees that the achievement of consensus or common agreement is a sign that the decision expresses the will of the Holy Spirit, not merely human will, which then would mean single or independent mind. Hippolytus insists further that the early Church Councils of 1st and 2nd Nicaea 325/787, 1st and 2nd Constantinople 381/553, and Chalcedon 451, all took place in the circumstances of dialogue, discussions and near consensus for decisions concerning faith to be made (Dupuis and Neuner 2001:5; 99). It is therefore only through participatory discussion and not imposition of a hierarchical command that the truth about faith can be made clear for all the faithful (Nichols 2004:119).

Alluding to the New Testament scriptures, Nichols (2004) notes that Peter the apostle without doubt acted as the spokesperson for the group or community in both the gospels and in Acts. In many instances he was noted to have been the facilitator and proclaimed consensus, as common discussions had taken place; not from a command hierarchy or point of view, but from a shared, common or participatory governance (Matthew 10; and Luke 9; the calling and sending out of the first missionaries together as a group; John 17; the prayers of Jesus that the community may remain united and in common; Acts 1 in the election of Matthias and in Acts 2; the event of the Holy Spirit was a community centred event; Acts 6; the choosing of the first Deacons was done in conjunction and in consensus with the community's discussion and of course, the 1st Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15; where consensus and agreement was reached only after a participatory hierarchy or decisions took place; 1Cor. 12; the emphasis of the participation of all the members with their gifts in the one body of Christ) (see Nichols 2004:116).

Of all this instances Acts 15 (1st Jerusalem Council) remains the ideal of how issues and differences ought to be handled in the Church governance. No session of the faithful (ordained and or lay) should be side-lined or neglected when there are serious issues of faith governance on the table.

However, having considered the true history of Church governance in the early church, one wonders at what point the institutional Catholic Church deviated from the ancient and original practice of participatory hierarchy evident in the Scriptures? According to Nichols (2004:119), this deviation took effect in the reign of Pope Siricius (384-389). It was in the 4th century that a different language and style of governance began to emerge. While citing Klaus Schatz, Nichols (2004) notes that it was in Siricius era we find: "…the commanding style of the imperial court. …Before this, only synods could create new law in the Church. Now papal writings were placed *de facto* on the same level as synodal law." Pope Leo the Great in the 5th century went further in declaring himself as the head of the whole church, because he was the vicar of Peter. In this case Pope Leo wrote: "When, therefore, we utter our exhortations in your ears, holy brethren, believe that he is speaking, whose representative we are (*cuius vice fungimur*).[14] More so, by the late 5th century in the reign of Pope Gelasius (496), he held the view that "the Roman See judges the whole church, but can itself be judged by no one." Thus, in the medieval era the papal monarchy took root. By the 11th century with the reforms of Pope Gregory VII to rescue the church from the Lay lords who were then installing bishops of their choices, a new ecclesiology emerged that changed every view of the church as in participatory hierarchy. Highlighting this 'dangerous' development in the Church while citing Yves Congar, Nichols (2004:119) notes that this was the greatest change that Catholic ecclesiology has ever known. Ecclesiology changed from a conciliar mode to an imperial mode, in which the authority of the church derives from the pope, its head, who alone represents Christ on earth, and who has not only primacy, but jurisdiction over all other churches.

Nichols (2004:120) concludes on the unprecedented move by the Popes to arrogate the entire power of governance of the Roman Catholic Church to the See stating:

> The ancient idea that the unity of the Body of Christ was to be found in the principle of consensus was replaced with the idea that its unity is based on monarchical papal authority and obedience. The Spirit is mediated only through one, not through many. By the reign of Innocent III (1198-1215), the title "Vicar of Christ" was reserved for the pope alone, whereas in earlier times it had been used by both kings and bishops. It was Innocent who declared: "The Pope is the meeting point between God and man…who can judge all things and be judged by no one."

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[14] This is as noted and cited by Nichols (2004) in Leo, *Sermo* 3, 4, in J. P. Migne, (ed.), *Patrologiae Latinae cursus completus* (Paris, 1881), vol.54, pp.147A.

Therefore, for this study, the order of command-hierarchy or full centralization of power in the Catholic Church led to the 12th century Schism of the Byzantine of the Eastern Bloc Orthodoxy. Of course, to the later 16th century Protestant Reformation in the West had also emerged in this regard. Martin Luther reacted against the papacy in disagreement of discussions and common agreement on certain Church governing issues - like the sale of Indulgences and assertions like Outside the Church there is no salvation - (Cadorette 2009:125; Nichols 2004:121 and Barker 2000:147).

The Catholic Church governing structure is therefore described by such events as a 'hierarchical society' and the medieval (Middle Ages) Church period of 11th and 14th centuries was such an eventful era when this practice was alive and powerful in the Western world. One of such happenings as described by Cadorette (2009:87) was the assumption that most people of the epoch pledged allegiance to a divinely arranged social order, church and state closely associated, the church superior to the state, each playing a vital function in that most central of all events, the everlasting salvation. The church in this period became the ultimate authority to be obeyed unequivocally and explicitly. The Church had the privilege and upper hand on power and issues of governance until the 14th century when her power declined owing to the conflicts with both the Holy Roman Empire and the French crown. Hence, the following chronological order of catastrophic events of both internal and external including the above mentioned crises could be identified signalling the loss of both power and centralization of authority in the Western Catholic Church:

    i.   In 1302 Boniface VIII's attempt to arrogate power to the Church failed as the papacy became the mannequin of Charles IV, king of France.

   ii.   In 1307 was the exile of pope Clement V to Avignon, known as the 'Babylonian Captivity' and for more than 70 years there was no resident Pope in Rome.

  iii.   By 1377 Gregory XI (who was part of the on-going debauchery) returned to Rome by the single effort of a great woman and her companions Catherine of Siena but at his death after just one in Rome (Nichols 2004:119-121).

  iv.   1378 brought the reign of two Popes Urban VI, who showed some mental instability and leading to the election of Clement VII.

   v.   In 1409 there were three Popes, all of them claiming the legitimacy of Peter's authority, but was resolved in 1415, but by the mid-15th Century there was a new problem of the Reformers that hit yet hard on the central authority and governance of the Church.

vi. 1417 to early 16th Century brought Luther's reformation and gave birth to 'Protestantism' in the West, the Western Schism was a continent-wide scandal that called into question the very nature of the papacy. The question that went through the mind of many was how could a divinely established institution become so blatantly corrupt and church leaders so distrustful? It should be noted therefore that though there were popes and theologians of moral uprightness who worked tirelessly to address the scandalous era in the Western Schism, chaos was the order of the day with various plaintiffs to the papacy playing clear day light filthy politics to outdo each other (Arrieta 2000:27-30 and Dupuis & Neuner 2001:704; 717).

vii. In 1517, finally came the killer blow to papacy domineering power and centralization. The 16th century Martin Luther's call for reformation took root and spread like wild fire in the entire Northern Europe leading to a massive split (schism) that has characterized the Catholic Church (and the entire Christian world) governance authority until present day. Luther accuses the pope of tyranny; hence rejecting a command hierarchy of the pope over the entire Church of Christ (Cadorette 2009:116-121).

Furthermore, there are three more epochs that are of significant contribution to the understanding and definition of the pontiff's authority and the centralization history in the Catholic governing structure. This includes the French revolution, Modernity as a socio-cultural theory in the West and the Vatican II Council of 1963/66 in the Church. Each of the eras and events will be discussed briefly to note the challenges that came thereof with regards to governance and centralization of authority in the Catholic Church.

3.2.1   The Effects of the French Revolution

The French revolution of the 1789 was part of defining moments of the Church's domination of power and centralization in Church governance. In 1789, the year of the outbreak of the French Revolution, Catholicism was the official religion of the French state. The French Catholic Church, known as the *Gallican* Church, recognised the authority of the pope as head of the Roman Catholic Church. However, it had negotiated certain liberties that privileged the authority of the French monarch, giving it a distinct national identity characterised by considerable autonomy. France's population of 28 million was then almost entirely Catholic, with full membership of the state denied to Protestant and Jewish minorities (Betros 2010:1).

Being French effectively meant being Catholic. Betros (2010) would yet note that by 1794, France's churches and religious orders were closed down and religious worship suppressed.

A watershed event in modern European history, the French revolution that ended in the late 1790s with the ascent of Napoleon Bonaparte brought enormous pressure on the Catholic Church's authority being challenged to reform in matters of domination of power and centralization. During this period, French citizens destroyed and redesigned their country's political landscape, uprooting centuries-old institutions such as absolute monarchy, (headed by Louis XIV) and the ecclesiastical feudal system. The French Revolution was influenced by Enlightenment ideals, particularly the concepts of popular sovereignty and inalienable rights Komanchak (1997:357). Although it failed to achieve all of its goals and at times degenerated into a chaotic bloodbath as noted by Komanchak (1997), the movement played a critical role in shaping modern nations by showing the world the power inherent in the will of the people. However, owing to the interference of the revolution into the Church's internal affairs, the Catholic Church lost its independence and all clergy were made to take the oath of allegiance to the state. France still recognized Rome as the spiritual head but the appointment or rather election of bishops and priest into dioceses and parishes respectively was now in the hands of the people (Cadorette 2009:152-157). With the revolution at full force, the Church lost its domination on power and centralization authority in France and many other nations in the 18th century Europe.

3.2.2   The Effect of Modernity on Church Governance

Modernity was a reaction against certain religious opinions, the monarchical and feudal medieval practices and ways of life in the European understanding of contemporary era. According to Berman (2010:16), modernity is a European terminology used to describe humanities and social sciences. It designates both to a historical period (the modern era), as well as the collective of particular socio-cultural norms, attitudes and practices that arose in post-medieval era. Modernity in this sense also refers to fashion, approach and warfare. It can also refer to the subjective or existential experience of the conditions these new approaches have produced, and their on-going impact on human culture, institutions, and politics (Berman 2010:20-35).

Modernity has had a tremendous effect on the subject of this study, especially the Catholic Church's domination of power and centralization of governance. Hence, the movement towards change in human culture and institutions always affects age-long institutions when human opinion varies in terms of perceptions and contemporary practices. Matunhu (2011:65) notes and alludes to Hussain *et al.* (1981), that modernization is the movement of the mid-20th century which is an economic theory that is rooted in capitalism. As a concept, it incorporates the full spectrum of the transition and drastic transformation that a traditional society has to undergo in order to become modern. While yet reiterating Coetzee *et al.* (2007), Matunhu (2011:65) listed the following characteristics to identify modernity:

I. Readiness to accommodate the process of transformation resulting from changes.
II. Continuous broadening of life experiences and receptiveness to new knowledge.
III. Continuous planning, calculability and readiness towards new experiences.
IV. Predictability of action and the ability to exercise effective control.
V. High premium on technical skills and understanding of the principles of production.
VI. Changing attitudes to kinship, family roles, family size and the role of religion.
VII. Changing consumer behaviour and the acceptance of social stratification.

As this study critically analyse the implications of such events and theories for the centralization of power and governance as Catholicism battles to hold on to its authority, it is vital to note therefore that all age-long traditional institutions like the Catholic Church cannot withhold human aspirations towards improvement and redefining its environment and central role around the people. Change therefore is the only permanent experience of human endeavour. Indeed, the Church's fight or battle against the theory of modernity is obvious in the different ways of its promotions of ritual activities to still show its relevance in the modern world. It is to this understanding that Komonchak (1997:363) notes that the Catholic Church's alienation from the emerging society, polity and culture of modernity was also a major factor in the promotion of many of the devotions which were to mark Catholic life in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

There is no doubt that modernity was said to have brought grievous blow to Catholicism and its traditional values of keeping its power and centralization. The Catholic Church has to put up a courageous fight to still maintain its vital place in the human societies amidst the changes that human soul and hearts long for. Slowly but surely, the Catholic Church lost its religious authority and social prerogative and control. The Church had become defensive because of

the cultural, political, moral and intellectual attacks which it could never have expected. As Cadorette (2009:149) observes, the Catholic Church was no longer a predictable and impenetrable stronghold, and for the insiders there was uncertainty of what is becoming a progressively more secular (material) and basically non-religious world and societies. Having considered the reality the Church faced, Komonchak (1997:371) concludes:

> …since the challenge represented by liberalism had spread across national boundaries…an effective Catholic defence would have to be mounted also on an international level; and for this only the papacy could be an adequate means. …the nineteenth century was the increased centralization of Catholic life upon Rome and the figure of the pope.

Secularization in the social culture has since indeed deviated from the Catholic Church regulations and control showing a departure or different approach from the following of religious ideals previously determined by the Church. It was to this that Komonchak (1997:380) refered, while noting Cardinal Manning's blunt denunciation of the era that he affirmed modern civilization as one without Christianity. Of course, modernity henceforth challenged the ideal religious human establishments and was therefore condemned by the religious authority controllers, namely Catholicism.

3.2.3   The Effect of Vatican II Council on Church Governance

The last era under consideration of events that has affected the centralization and power domination in Catholic Church governance is the Vatican II event of 1963-1966. This 20th century Catholic Church ecumenical council was as a result of an expansion of church outside its local "Roman" original circumstances in non-Western cultures. Both colonialism and World War II having taken their toll and effects in the world, the council was to open a new door and window to 'let in some fresh air' so to say (John XXIII, 1963). Due to new cultures and societies that the church has encountered through the work of her missionary agents in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, a considerable change was being noted that slowly affected the nature of Catholicism.

Having come to appreciate and accept that the church was now part of a pluralistic and secular world, John XXIII had come to grips with it, even when the church disagreed on some of the assumptions behind modernity. Affirmed and resolute to the needed changes (and reform) that are eminent in the Roman Catholic Church in the modern world governance, Cadorette (2009) emphasised on the moment for the need of the Vatican II Ecumenical

Council. John XXIII convinced of Catholicism, recognized that if the Church were to engage in an honest conversation with those differed from her views, it might be possible to end the "dialogue of the deaf" that had been going on since the Enlightenment and French Revolution. He called for *aggiornamento*, or updating of the church, letting in some fresh air, letting go of the meaningless symbols of the church that no longer had anything to do with its core mission (Cadorette 2009:197), the proclaiming of the Gospel.

The Vatican I difference from its successor was much about definitions and defensive language for instance, addressing the fundamental question of the relationship between faith and reason, and on the papacy, it offered the sovereignty and infallibility of the pope and the universal jurisdiction (Nichols 2004:121) and yet, strengthening the centralization of power by the church (Dupuis and Neuner 2001:831-840; Komonchak 1997:376). Though Vatican II repeated some declarations of Vatican I, that the pope has "full, supreme and universal power over the Church" (LG.22); the Vatican II tried to adjust some statements such as 'each bishop and not just the pope alone is a Vicar of Christ' (LG.27) (Nichols 2004:121). Vatican II thereby decentralized to a certain extent the Church governance to the level of local bishop's territories who however had to share in the authorities of the apostles of Christ. It is important to note here as vitally observed by Pope S.J (2004:7) that the Vatican II emphasis on the church as the "People of God" (LG.9-17), truly changed and distinguished between the hierarchy and the laity at large. Yet, its emphasis harmonizing and correcting the not representative institutional and centralizing emphasis of the Vatican I Council supports collegiality[15] among bishops and cooperation between the clergy and the laity. Based on this vital role of the reformation of the church to a universally inclusive one, Pope S.J (2004:7) concludes:

> …the image of "People of God" accented the inclusive character of the church, and particularly the significance of the laity within its life. This imagery not only acknowledges that the church includes all the people (and not just members of the hierarchy, as is often taken for granted when average Catholics refer to "the church"), but also emphasizes the universal equality of Christian dignity and discipleship. Correcting the older dualism that identifies the clergy with the church and the laity with temporal affairs, the Second

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[15] The college of bishops is used here in the sense of the unity of the Church though divergent in nature (is as result to different cultures of expression) the church is united in this one purpose and committed to one mission of Christ. Hence, the cooperation of bishops has become vital for the united function of the church. "Chosen together, they were also sent out together (the 12 apostles), and their fraternal unity would be at the service of the communion of the divine persons…for this reason every bishop exercises his ministry from within the Episcopal college, in communion with the bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter and head of the college (CCC.877; John 17:21-23; *Ad gentes* AG.5 and Arrieta 2000:44-50).

Vatican Council taught that, in virtue of the sacrament of baptism, the entire People of God shares a common call to holiness and responsibility for the church and the world.

The Vatican II was much of listening and responding to a modern world in need of hope. Noting in one of its famous theologians, Cadorette (2009:184) cites Karl Rahner (1984) referring to this era as a 'Second Pentecost' in the Catholic Church. By this, Catholic Church governance were to change or reform forever. Issues of local language, liturgy, laity involvement in Catholic Church governance and socio-cultural acknowledgement of different societies namely inculturation were all reforms we can identify with Vatican II. It is to such reforms that Komonchak (1997:384-385) identified Vatican II with encouraging local Catholic churches to engage in an active effort to achieve culturally distinct and relevant realizations of Catholicism in their several areas. Recognizing three vital effects to this reform, Komonchak (1997:385) concludes that "the first of these as the traditionalists have rightly urged, compromised a long-standing suspicion of modernity. The second weakened the taken-for-granted character that is the authority, of everyday Catholic practices. And finally, the third challenged the normative character of European and especially the Roman ways of understanding and realizing Catholicism."

In essence and effect, the Vatican II brought about some reforms as desired and longed for by human societies of modern movements and contemporary era. The church in this ecumenical council became open to contemporary human situations and identified with contextual demand. Though not fully achieved yet, but the human desire for equality, respect, listening and mature involvement of all who belong to the church had their open opinions heard and discussed. The Vatican II event opened up the window of church governance to societies that embraced its governing structural functions by its open acceptance of the involvement of all who belong to the Church to partake in the running of the Church. In the section that follows, this chapter proceeds to look at particular ministries in the Catholic Church as pertains to governance.

3.3 The Episcopate: The Local Ordinary and Church Governance

Briefly noting the history of the offices of the bishop and deacons, Cardman (2004:53) points out that these two were differentiated from others (e.g., apostles and prophets) towards the end of the 1st century, with Ignatius of Antioch promoting the function of the bishop in the

early 2nd century. With the likes of Irenaeus of Lyon and Hippolytus having recorded these offices' roles in the 2nd century, the office of the bishop became fully established in the Western Church in the 3rd century when Cyprian held the office of the bishop of Carthage in North Africa in the year 248. The quick expansion of ecclesiastical structure and hierarchy came into being owing to the conversion of Constantine the Roman emperor in the 4th century and hence affirmed Christianity as an official religion. It was within this era and the gradual but irreversible progression that quickly followed, that the gap between the 'Clergy' namely the 'bishop' and the laity widened further and further as Church structural hierarchy firms. As Cardman (2004) observes, up to the 4th century period, the laity (ordinary people) was still involved in the selection of the clergy therefore being part of the Church governance before the centralization era that removed them from the picture. Further discussion will be made later in this study when considering the role or place of the laity in the governance of the Catholic Church.

Considering the episcopate that is the second personality or office in the ecclesial governing structure, though he is referred to here in the second personality, he is an equal of the first person the pope (pontiff) who is also called the bishop of Rome and of a global level (dimension); while the bishop is of local level as designated. In other words, the episcopate office belongs to the 1st degree in the ecclesial principle juridical offices (Arrieta 2000:11). In its definition and description, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1555; LG.20) states this:

> …amongst those various offices which have been exercised in the Church from the earliest times the chief place, according to the witness of tradition, is held by the function of those who, through their appointment to the dignity and responsibility of bishop, and in virtue consequently of the unbroken succession going back to the beginning, are regarded as transmitters of the apostolic line.

Though it is observed that the Vatican II council opened the door again for the laity to be part of Church governance, the clergy continued still to dominate church power and authority. It is because of this that the episcopate was further removed based on such teachings thus stated (LG.21; CCC.1557) that the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred by Episcopal consecration. This position as described in the liturgical tradition and the language of Church Fathers, is called the high priesthood, the acme (summa) of the sacred ministry.

Likewise, the status of the bishop was elevated to a little less than that of the bishop of Rome, the Pontiff. The (LG.22), states:

> Together with its head, the Roman Pontiff, and never without its head, the Episcopal order is the subject of supreme and full power over the universal Church; but this power cannot be exercised without the agreement of the Roman Pontiff. The Lord made Peter alone the rock-foundation and the holder of the keys of the Church...

Indeed with such 'hierarchical language', noting authority (power) in the Catholic Church to exist entirely on the Pontiff, shows further distancing and separation of its members from the already hierarchical class based church. The further centralization of power around the clergy or "High Priesthood" of the "summa-level" in the church creates ill feeling on the part of ordinary members of the church who are on the receiving end of the uncontested and unaccountable authorities and powers in the church. Having noted strongly the place of the episcopate in the power structure in the Catholic Church, this study will go on to the next in line, and that is the presbyter. These are local parish priests as they are known and they remain the closest Catholic authority personnel to the laity in their worship assemblies.

3.3.1   The Presbyter: The Local Priest and Church Governance

The clergy in the Catholic Church comprises of three personnel Orders[16] namely the episcopate as noted above, presbyter and diaconate. These three orders are gendered and are conferred only on the men as the Church determines that it is keeping to the tradition and practice of Jesus and the apostles and therefore not open to women (Dupuis and Neuner 2001:750, No:1752). In matters of governance the priests and bishops govern by possessing the "power of jurisdiction" within the institutional Church as authorize by the Code of Canon law (Pope S.J 2004:4-5). These go through rigorous training of usually four to six years in seminaries maintained by the bishops, the religious orders and or the Vatican. Members of the clergy are ruled by the discipline of celibacy (non-married) except the priests of the Eastern rites and recently with the acceptance of married men into the order of permanent diaconate due to the shortage of priests in administering the sacraments in certain dioceses and missions of the Church (Roman Catholic Church, 2015).

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[16] The "Order" is from the Latin word *ordo* meaning rank which is used to distinguish in the Church the traditional degrees of the clergy, conferred by the Sacrament of Holy Order ("*The Holy Orders*" www.cc.columbia.edu/cu/cup/orders Accessed 9 March 2015).

The priest falls under the second degree of the sacrament of orders and or of the second juridical ecclesial office. As a member of the clergy, the priests are described as follows:

> …function of the bishops' ministry was handed over in a subordinate degree to priests so that they might be appointed in the order of the priesthood and be co-workers of the Episcopal order for the proper fulfilment of the apostolic mission that had been entrusted to it by Christ (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* PO.2; and CCC.1562).

One could only see more and more regulations that encourage and strengthen centralization of power around the bishop and even further separated from the fellow clergy at the ministry service to the gospel. It is to this notion that the Church's documents affirm that the priests depend on the bishops in the exercise of their proper power. This means that the priest's sacerdotal dignity depends on his loyal association with his bishop. Hence, modelled on the image of Christ, the supreme and eternal priest, the priest can only exercise his ministry in dependence on the bishop and in communion with him (LG.28; CCC.1567).

Finally, the last group order of degree in Church official governance personnel to be noted here is the diaconate. These men, mostly married, were slowly included in the Church's governance. Lately, owing to massive lack of priests in the Catholic Church, there is need to supply clergy (deacons) to places where the regular priests could not reach or attend. In fact, it should be noted though, that the Catholic Church has sanctioned this ministry of married deacons, yet in most dioceses (for example in the South-eastern Nigeria); resistant to lay men to be part of the order of ministry is very high. Deacons, Arrieta (2000:13) notes, are not ordained to priesthood, but rather to a ministry of service in the liturgy, the preaching of the gospel and for charity work for the people of God. It is to such function that the Church states that deacons are ministers ordained for tasks of service of the Church and they do not receive the ministerial priesthood. The deacon's ordination confers on him important functions in the ministry of the word, divine worship, pastoral governance, and the service of charity. These tasks are only carried out under the pastoral authority of their bishop and the presbyterate (CCC.1596, 1588; LG.29).

The work presented here elaborates the church structural and hierarchical order of governance. In what he calls "Participatory Hierarchy," Nichols (2004) proposes a unity of power that carries the common consensus, voice and vote of all who belong and profess Catholicism. Hence, he writes noting:

> …Thus, in a Catholic participatory hierarchy, authority is vested in the bishops and the pope, but also in the priests, the theological community, the religious, and the people. The Spirit acts simultaneously at many levels. …the current crisis in the church has been precipitated by its long drift into command modes of hierarchy. This has affected popes, bishops, and priests. Yet if the Spirit is given to the whole church 1Cor.12) …then we must believe that the Spirit speaks to the church through many members, not just through the pope or even pope and the bishops (Nichols 2004:124).

The state and office of the clergy elevates all the ordained men (bishops and priests) into the office of administrators of dioceses and parish communities by which the "centralized nature of the Church governance" is established and experienced by all in a given Roman Catholic community. Women are not in any way part of this governing body. They have been made just as observers of men who are elevated to rule or govern. The question that may arise here therefore is where does this leave women? Are women not also called to governing or priestly ministry? The Catholic understanding and treatment of the priestly group in the exclusion of women among all the entities identified above, remains one of "high-class-group," "uppermost class," "top-special-group" and the like of such position the clerical state occupies in the Catholic Church governance among the Igbo of Nigeria and elsewhere.

Noting the clerical group as the top most interest in the agenda of the Catholic Church while critically analyzing the Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum of Dakar, Senegal in addressing the question of the recruitment, training, and adequate maintenance of all church personnel in the 1994 synod, Uzukwu deduced that: "…the poverty-stricken church in a poor Africa is first preoccupied with the adequate maintenance of her clergy!" "However, it is a very well-known fact that with foreign aid the clergy has been more than adequately maintained…" (Uzukwu 1996:91). This clearly shows part of 'how' and 'why' the Catholic Church governance is seen as centred on and around men who are the clergy.

The clericalism question in the church cuts across a number of governance issues in the Catholic communities among the Igbo. This includes decision making which is reserved for the priest, who owns the power to change or to remain as usual, power of appointment to different positions and ministries in the community. The priest also decides on finances and the time factors that affect the entire community's activities among a host of other organizational and managerial issues that is centred on and around the priest in the Catholic Church. Of course, the priest also has the 'veto' power over issues that linger around

communities for further discussions and consensus. Expanding further on the governance question in the Igbo Church, Uzukwu (1996) notes how and where the management challenges of the centralization governance and power in the Catholic Church lie. Such he calls "an incurable disease." It is to such situation of 'Clericalism' that Groome (2004:200) accuses the Church of clerical colonization of the consciousness of the laity; thereby denying full and equal participation of the laity in matters of Church governance.

Hence, Uzukwu (1996:120) paints a challenging and damaging graphic picture of "centralization" and "clericalism" that has almost discouraged growth and development in the Igbo Church and elsewhere. His thoughts are summed up as follows:

I. The church in Africa inherited this pattern of clericalism from the missionaries who naturally communicated the post-Tridentine[17] image of the church. The training of the clergy did not permit any questioning of such structures.

II. In fact, our bishops and priests have no evident interest in changing the 'status quo' in this church which is "essentially an unequal society" made up of those who "occupy a rank in the different degrees of the hierarchy and the multitude of the faithful.

III. Those who occupy rank and possess the authority for promoting and directing the church are not inclined to tell the faithful who are led that there is an alternative.

IV. The privileged clergy are the principal beneficiaries.

V. The clergy are also victims of circumstance because they are inserted within the highly centralized and autocratic world church (of the Western rite).

VI. The pyramidal command structure of the Roman Catholic Church is an "imperial, monarchical, centralizing authority.

The Igbo *Ohacracy* governance tradition under consideration detests such structure of governance and management of life activities of a community as already noted above. Hence Uzukwu (1996:121) concludes that in spite of the revolutionary changes instituted by Vatican II, the church governance still comes through in such organizations that merit its study to be called "hierarchology" instead of "ecclesiology." Indeed, the bishop remains the extension of the pope. The priests are the bishop's extensions while the lay people remain at the receiving end of the ruling clergy. Of course the theology of Vatican II rejects such a "hierarchology."

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[17] The Tridentine period relates to an Ecumenical Council held by the Roman Catholic Church in Trent, Italy, from 1545 to 1563, as a response to calls for reform and the spread of Protestantism which again centred on governance and authority in the Church of 16th century whence Luther protested against a host of issues that finally divided the church.

It rather prefers the theology of the "People of God" where all who belong to the family participate actively in its governance. But little has been done to put into practice this radical revolution of ecclesiology.

As pointed out in chapter 1[18], the presence of two kinds or natures of 'statehood' of nations in Africa which predate the colonial and Christian missionary adventure eras, the Igbo communities belong to the stateless or decentralized political arrangements. This is in contrast with other nations of centralized authority arrangements like the Oyo of Yoruba, the Edo of Bini, the Ashanti of Ghana, the Zulu of South Africa, and the Swati of Swaziland kingdom to name but a few (Uzukwu 1996:16). Although these African states can be identified as centralized nations, they are differently warded or organized in comparison with the Western style of centralised system as noted in the Catholic organization and governance. The Oyo of Yoruba for instance was organized in a confederation grouping together as Uzukwu (1996) notes, different units, chiefs, heads of clans and families, associations and age grades who played important roles on different levels and commands in the administration of the Kingdom. But, one important point remains that decision making on issues were much collegial in nature. Consultations and the search for consensus remain at the centre of governance in these kingdoms.[19] It is from such a background and understanding that the study of *Ohacracy* model of decentralised governance tradition among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria is inspired to contribute and evaluate the need for modification towards the unconventional governance of Igbo Church as a response to a better life development and growth of Igbo Church communities in Nigeria. The next section proceeds to evaluate role of the laity in the Catholic Church governance.

3.3.2   The Participation of the Laity in Church Governance

The laity is described as the faithful people of God in the Church. According to the Vatican II Council, the term "laity" is understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders that is the clergy. The faithful remain those integrated by Baptism into Christ, and are placed in the People of God's expression in the Catholic use of the term. The faithful in their own way share in the general priesthood, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. Yet in their lives as

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[18] Please refer to the "Background to the Research Problem" in Chapter 1.
[19] Clearer discussions on the challenges on none consultation or consensus in the Church governance will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Christians they witness for Christ's mission both in the world and in the Church respectively (LG.31).

The laity as laymen and women are full members of the people of God through the sacraments of initiation and therefore share in the full mission of the church. It is from the laity that belongs the People of God (LG.30-38). In this regard, while emphasizing on Edward Schillebeeckx's thought on the place of the laity, Pope S.J (2004:7) acknowledges that by their incorporation into the Church, that is, by their baptism, the laity consequently receives a share in this real function of the Church which means they receive, the charge to give visible stature to the faithful communion with Christ in grace, in and through their whole life.

Moreover, if one steps aside to consider critically such affirmation, you would not but have a strong sense of 'hierarchy' still hanging around such a positive remark and somehow separating the "clergy" from the "laity." It resonates as though the theology around the 'People of God' teaching of the Vatican II only apply to the laity. The clerical state seems to remove the clergy from being described as part of the 'People of God' or worst still not the 'Body of Christ', or even 'The Faithful,' but all these also apply to laity, religious and clergy alike (LG.30). Indeed, it should be clear though that it is the same Spirit that apportion spiritual gifts to each individual as the Spirit wills in the same one Body of Christ as we read in 1Corenthians (12:11). By so doing, each faithful including the clergy takes up their tasks and offices which support them to play their vital role in the building up of Christ's body, the Church. But, as Pope (2004:8) furthermore observes, pastors conversely, are not to inculcate passivity by leading their parishes as monarchs or treating their parishioners as if they were children. Rather pastors should evoke and coordinate the talents, gifts, and ministries that exist in their local churches so that "all may cooperate unanimously, each in his or her own way, in the common task."

Emphasizing on the governance role the "laity" have to play in the Catholic Church, the CCC (911) notes:

> …lay members of the Christian faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this power (of governance) in accord with the norm of law. And so the Church provides for their presence at particular councils, diocesan synods, pastoral councils, the exercise in *solidum* of the pastoral care of a parish, collaboration in finance committees, and participation in ecclesiastical tribunals, etc.

The term "laity" in a rather critical understanding gives a description that has "disenfranchised" the ordinary populace or members of the Church. It describes and denotes the centralization of the Igbo Church governance on and around the clergy, who are the "rulers" and the "kings" of the same Church of God. This term has removed the ordinary persons in the Church far away from active participation and governance of the same institution owned by all who belong to the Church. It is therefore such disenfranchisement that has necessitated interest in a study of this sort. With the meaning and governance role of the laity as noted above, and as one reads in between the lines, it is evident that the emphasis on the laity's task described as "can cooperate" in governance; not decisively (or resolutely) a governing body, makes it difficult for the laity to be fully in-charge and fully part of the organization and governing body of their Church.

By this, the laity of course, remains or participates at the periphery of the Catholic Church governance. The emphasis of governance remains with the "clergy." While agreeing strongly to this blink picture painted on the role and place of the common laity in the Catholic Church, Hornsby-Smith (2000:14) reiterates Collins (1997), noting how the gains of Vatican II is being resisted by the official Church in the strengthening of centralization writes:

> …Progressive theologians, such as Hans Kung, have been stripped of their official teaching roles, and progressive bishops, such as Helder Camara, have been replaced by conservative traditionalists. Indeed, the strategy of appointing conservative bishops throughout the world has been followed ruthlessly under the present papacy.[20]

This style of governance is less transparent, non-inclusive and less tolerance of other voices in the Church governance eventually stifles the mission of Christ entrusted to the entire People of God, the Church. While insisting on the teachings of the Vatican II on the relationship between the clergy and the laity on church governance, Pope S.J (2004:9) notes that it does not regard the hierarchy as holding an exclusive role in teaching, sanctifying, and governing the church. The laity, he argues can "participate" in these functions of governance through "consultation," "deputation," "collaboration" and "cooperation" (Pope 2004).

Based on such observation, Hornsby-Smith (2000:14) concludes that "…there are numerous instances of autocratic styles of leadership at the diocesan and parish levels, often without forms of due consultation which the rhetoric about collaborative ministries in the post-Vatican

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[20] The papacy being referred to here is that of Benedict XVI (2005-2013).

Church would lead one to expect. …". Such instances of massive and luxurious presbytery or parish building ventures and the abolishing of long standing parish councils without due consultations truly make a mockery of governance defined as collaborative in nature in the new Church of Vatican II. In a way, one could only describe the Catholic Church's declaration on governance as "collaborative" to be a sought of 'sugar/chocolate coated,' empty words if there is no actual commitment among the church clergy to work in collaboration with the laity on all activities and at all levels of church business and administration.

While indicating the place of the laity as the Church in Africa maps a new paradigm shift and course for relational leadership and governance, Uzukwu (1996) in the *A Listening Church* notes the attitude that is now changing among African bishops about the laity in the 1994 synod. The Roman Catholic Church is indeed too clericalized. The Clergy remains the focus and most important personnel and person of authority or command in the Church set up. The participation of the laity becomes a factor not mentioned or talked about.

Hence, the clergy dominated and centralized Igbo Church governance remains a huge challenge to the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized system (society) of governance within which the Igbo communities participate actively in their day to day dealings with social life and organisation of their communities. This is unlike the onlookers (pure spectators) which the centralized church system has made them to become. It is to such that Uzukwu (1996:105) further observes:

> What the interventions in the synod appear to indicate is the desire for a new kind of clergy, a new kind of ministry…"future priests" who will be true servants and animators of the Christian community. They want people who will be formed to work with and to recognize the laity as full members of the church…the laity do not simply want to observe what the clergy are doing; rather, they want to participate and make their contribution to the up-building of the church-community. …"collaborative ministry[21]" becomes essential…

Such indeed should inform the participation of the laity in the Catholic Church governance among the Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria under consideration. But whether the participation of

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[21] Collaborative ministry in this regard means that the clergy and laity will work in equal teams with each other towards the realization of the Church's mission in the world. Collaboration stands for equal rights, responsibilities, duties and participation towards the achievements of the goal of the Church among the people. It stands for teamwork that both the laity and clergy must do for the Church to realize its task and responsibilities among the Igbo people.

the laity is happening in the local Catholic Churches among the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model of governance is another question altogether. At this juncture the study will consider the women's participation in the governance role in the Catholic Church.

3.3.3 Women and Ordination in the Catholic Church

With reference to the female participation in Church governance, this study argues that women as part of the laity in the Catholic Church who have not been given the time and space to realize their full potential in the Church. This study remains incomplete unless the 'hypocrisy' and double standard practised by the Catholic Church with regards to the full participation of women in the governance of the Church is examined and discussed. Amazingly, the 21st century Feminist Movements have generated high interest and a considerable sympathy both in and outside the Catholic Church on the very issue and on questions regarding women's full participation in Church governance.

The place and role of the faithful Catholic women in church governance can no longer go unheard, displaced or be silenced. For this study, concern on women's place in religious space become a 'human right' issue. Especially when women continue to experience discrimination in matters of governance in the Catholic Church, it calls for a rethinking. The Catholic Church cannot continue to be hesitant on the ordination of women. It cannot continue to base its decisions on the 1st century Jewish/Palestinian understanding and treatment of women in the present day 21st century when we all know that traditional culture continues to renew itself as it comes in contact with new reality. The Vatican II Council in *Gaudium et Spes* (GS) informs this study to a common understanding for the equality of both men and women in the Church's tradition and practices, while promoting an open culture where all will be comfortable and have a conducive space for cultural experiences. Thus *Gaudius et Spes* concludes with the following regarding women:

> At present women are involved in nearly all spheres of life: they ought to be
> permitted to play their part fully according to their own particular nature. It is
> up to everyone to see to it that women's specific and necessary participation in
> cultural life be acknowledged and fostered (GS.60).

It is rather interesting to note that the Vatican II used the expression '…to be permitted.' In other words, women are to be permitted by **whom**? And who gives men permission to fulfil their so-called 'natural tasks and roles' in the Catholic Church? This is so because, it seems there is no equality after all. With particular attention on female participation in the ordained

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ministry, it is obvious that no equal treatment between men and women when it comes to ordination. However, the official stand of the Catholic Church on the issue at hand is stated on its response to the question who can receive the sacrament of Orders? It is to this effect that the CCC (1577) states:

> …only a baptised man validly receives sacred ordination. The Lord Jesus chose men to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry. The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. The Church recognises herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible (Canon Law 1024; 1Tim 3:1-13).

John Paul II among other pontiffs had a resounding preservation of centralized and hierarchical stand on the ordination of women in the contemporary time while showing which ministries are open to lay people, the Pope stresses the part which women can and must assume in the Church's mission, and reaffirming that in fidelity to Christ's will the Church may not allow the promotion of women to the ordained ministry. Therefore, he writes through his apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* of 1989 (CL.51):

> …in speaking about participation in the apostolic mission of the Church, …a woman is called to put to work in this apostolate the "gifts" which are properly hers: first of all, the gift that is her very dignity as a person exercised in word and testimony of life, gifts therefore, connected with her vocation as a woman.

While holding strongly on the view of non-ordained ministry for women, John Paul II conclude as cited by Dupuis and Neuner (2001:759) that, "… in her participation in the life and mission of the Church a woman cannot receive the sacrament of Orders and therefore cannot fulfil the proper function of the ministerial priesthood." This is a practice that the Church has always found in the expressed will of Christ, totally free and sovereign, who called only men to be his Apostles.

Yet, in another instance John Paul II would finally conclude on the issue of women ordination while stressing the definitive nature of the restriction of priestly ordination to men stating that "I", he declares that the Church does not possess in any way the faculty (powers) to confer priestly ordination on women. And of course, thought that this statement ought to be considered as definitive by all the faithful of the Catholic Church (Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacedotalis*, 1994, 4; and Dupuis and Neuner 2001:761).

By so doing John Paul II brings the argument or discussion to an end and closed; "Rome has spoken, the issue or case is closed" so to say. But is it closed really? The issue of inequality into which women are subordinated cannot be closed at any point in time wherever it may occur, whether within or outside the Church.

In any case, on the issue that Jesus chose only men for the task and function of the ministerial priesthood in the Church would be equal as to accusing Jesus to be "mad" if he were to do otherwise in the 1st century Palestine world. As Uzukwu (1996:141) observes, life in a church developed in a 'Semitic milieu' which is noted for looking down upon women. Indeed the place and role of a woman is almost non-existent in the era in question; and for Jesus to have made any attempt to choose a woman would amount to a suicidal approach towards his full mission to be accomplished among nations. Nevertheless, the question that arises is, who are we reading in the Bible? And who (men or women) wrote what we read about women's place in the priestly ministry of women? The situation in which Jesus lived and worked cannot be under estimated in making a strong case in view. Hence, the 'contextual understanding' around the case of Jesus' non choice of women in his era as Apostles could have been the choice of men writing to soothe their ego in the domination of women.

Moreover, in her submission on women's ordination or inclusion among the apostles, Rakoczy (2004:202) would argue from the perspective of 'Apostolic' qualification or determination as noted in the scriptures. Hence, in support for women's inclusion by applying the New Testament three criteria she states thus:

I.   A person must have accompanied Jesus during his lifetime (Acts 1:21)

II.   Must have seen the risen Jesus (1Cor.15:3-9) and,

III. A person must have been commissioned by Jesus (Gal 1:11-17).

However, Rakoczy (2004) noted clearly that Mary Magdalene (a woman) fulfils all three conditions and therefore qualifies to be addressed as an apostle;[22] thereby nullifying the argument that no woman was ever chosen as an apostle in the Jesus' tradition.

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[22] Mary Magdalene accompanied Jesus during his ministry (Lk. 8:1-3); she saw the risen Lord at the tomb (Jn 20:11-18) and she was also commissioned by Jesus to "go and find my brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my father and your Father, to my God and your God" (Jn. 20:17-18). Not only Magdalene, other women also accompanied Jesus, were at the tomb, and also communicated the message of resurrection. (See Lk. 23:49, Mt. 28:1-8, Mk. 16:1 and Lk. 24:1-8, Rakoczy, 2004:203-205).

Recalling the aim of the synod Fathers of the 1994 Special Assembly for Africa, this study would agree that a paradigm shift towards the inclusion of women in Church governance has become unavoidable. Women as part of the Church as family as proposed by the synod should be encouraged to take their place and participate meaningfully in the Church governance. While applying the 'large ear' listening model for the new all-inclusive and participatory Church, Uzukwu (1996:138) suggests that in traditional and modern Africa, women have generally exercised effective power in a corporate manner. On the issue of individual rights and privileges, Africa has had its share of the oppression of women. In modern times the oppression and subjugation of women may have increased with colonialism but continues with the practice of mainline Christianity which of course remains Western cultural imposition.

In other words, this study submits and suggests that given these clear evidences, no cogent reason should prevent women from being added or given equal chance and space to participate in the governance of the Catholic Church just as their male counterparts. The Christian faith practice is all inclusive and embracing all her children to participate equally whether they are men or women. No one's gender or sex should exclude them from playing their God given role and task in the governance of the Church. All practice and understanding of exclusion of any gender therefore goes against the equality of all who belong to the Church as family. The application of power to dominate by using male structures in the Catholic Church among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria is therefore challenged not only to include women in all ramifications of the Church's life but also to consider women as active partners in governance. As this study suggests, the model of a listening church already noted above cannot continue indefinitely. The exclusion of women in the Catholic Church governance needs the listening gifts of the Church to help women make a meaningful contribution in the Catholic Church communities in the Igbo society.

3.3.4   The History of Igbo Catholicism

The coming of Catholic Church in Igbo land (Nigeria) faced various difficulties largely because it came to Igbo culture where religion was a way of life and daily practise of the communities. The idea of religion among the Igbo communities is clearly expanded in chapter 4. In the words of Ekechukwu (1977:141) "…to be an African (an Igbo) in a traditional society is to be a religious person, to have a religious interpretation of life. God is genuinely

present and active in the African religious experience." In addition to the difficulties of Catholic establishment among the Igbo, was the problems of multi-Igbo language dialects and ethnic groups that are not identical and differ in cultural expressions. Besides, when the pioneer Catholic missionaries arrived in Onitsha, in December 1885 the Holy Ghost Fathers met the Church Missionary Society (CMS) who had been among the Igbo 28 years earlier (Obiwulu 2009:2). The missionaries also "came into a territory occupied by a British trading company (the Royal Niger Company - RNC) which was deeply involved in the trade and politics of the area, and which had thereby antagonized many local communities." (Nwosu 1985:xii). According to Nwosu (1985), two unpleasant options were open to the missionaries; and that is either associate with the RNC and suffers the anger of the communities who hate the RNC or support the natives and lose the support and anger of the company. Facing this delicate dilemma and dance of balance, the missionaries eventually succeeded having danced with the natives whom they supported for their ownership of land and properties which the RNC had usurp and denied the locals.

The missionaries were considered right from the beginning as the bearers of peace, the restorers of the good aspects of life and the well-being aspired by the people's tradition and culture (Aligwekwe 1991:263). It was therefore not a surprise when the missionaries were given a hearty welcome by the people. Eventually the work they did among the people made them even more acceptable to the natives (Obiwulu 2009:3) having provided Western education and medicine.

The religious intolerance which exists in some parts of the country today contributes to one of the many problems of the Church. The religious autonomy and discrepancies between Christians and Moslems started as early as the missionaries began their work of evangelization in Northern Nigeria (Obiwulu 2009:3). Historically as early as 1889 the political administrator of the Royal Niger Company in Nigeria as noted by Ekechi (1971:5), George Taubmann Goldie inscribed a letter to the superior of the Holy Ghost Congregation in Nigeria stopping him and all missionaries from evangelizing the Islamic North. Despite this hostile letter, the CMS was going on to converting the Moslems at Lokoja. For Obi (1985:6), the reason was clear. The CMS view itself was friendly to the British administers and therefore had nothing to fear for. Igbo communities having been evangelized by the Holy Ghost Missionaries and falling out against the activities of the RNC was therefore not the favourites of the British authorities. It is based on this view that Obiwulu (2009:4) argues and

explains the role played and support of the British government for Nigeria during the Nigerian-Biafran civil war. The British took sides for their economic gain and let down the religious affinities with the Igbo communities.

Indeed, it was for the missionary activities of the Holy Ghost Fathers and the CMS in South-eastern Nigeria as well as the courageous evangelization of the Sons of the Missionaries of Africa (SMA) in South-western Nigeria that sowed the imperishable seed of Catholic faith among the local population. The Catholic population (faith) is still thriving today in Igbo land and it is estimated to be above or close to ten million people (Ebelebe 2009:199). Finally, as Ozigboh (1985:127) rightly notes, "the Father Lutz era (1885-1905) founded the Catholic Church among the Igbo while the bishop Shanahan era (1905-1967) took it to the nooks and corners of Igboland… Indigenization, which should have been its hallmark, was very poorly conceived and executed." The "non-indigenization" issue will be looked into in chapter 4 which brings this study to inculturation of the Catholic faith among the Igbo people.

Njaka (1970:1) in his maiden lecture on 'Igbo nationalism: Old and New' writes:

> The excitement one gets from the Political Science of this Age lies in the study of authentic African political systems. African studies give us a wealth of insight that may help us escape from the values into which the study of Western social systems has plunged us. Thus, the West should not take the lead in the new African studies lest it pollute the value of the findings as it is aiming at polluting the planets.

Indeed, it is such a leadership role that this study explores to make a meaningful contribution on the defined Igbo *Ohacracy* political tradition in which organization and management engagement belong to the community or the assembly. While observing bitterly the above noted enigma, Ubah (1987:172) writes that the most important factor was that the British were not interested in finding out how the Igbo *Ohacracy* people administered their public affairs. They instead imposed a system which was contrary in every sense and opposed the Igbo system of social order.

According to Nmah (2012:77) the Igbo, unlike their West African sub-region neighbours of the Yoruba and Edo (Nigeria) and the Ashanti of Ghana, were the only ethnic group of a huge size and status that have no centralised state. Each community or clan had a considerable autonomy based on patrilineal decent of social group organization. The Igbo system of political organization is *Oha*-centred (Njoku 2013:259; Oghojafor and Muo 2012:156). The system would have developed to a standard governing tradition if colonialism had not

intervened and stopped the indigenous governing system. This is unlike the Western political tradition whereby organizational order is invested on a patriarchal order and practice, the centralized order; and in the case of this study, the Roman Catholic Church 'Priest-King' occupies the position of perpetuating centralised governance or system.

As noted in chapter one, Igbo people (nation)[23] have a decentralized socio-political system of governance, whereby the assembly or community fully and actively participate in the day to day running and organization of the social order. The power of the Chiefs do not apply or it could be said is totally redundant in the Igbo tradition (Ebbe and Onyeozili 2012:38 and Drake 1963:22). While emphasizing the decentralization system of the Igbo, Ubah (1987:167) would conclude that the Igbo experience is of great interest not only because the people are the third single largest ethnic group in black Africa but also because they are numerically speaking the most outstanding example of those pre-colonial African societies with no tradition of political centralization on a large scale.

The academic and political value that lies in this study is that the Igbo were able to manage their large societies through the village system of governance. Though with high democratic values imbued, and a very numerous number of over six million people in 1906 and twenty-five million in 2004, a good standard of respect for life and property was maintained (Njoku 2006:5). Of course, it was not without difficulties and social conflicts, that is very normal of all human societies.

Chronologically this study notes the times and periods of different events among the Igbo people as cited by Njoku (2006:3) and Ekechi (1972:218):

   I. 1830 – The Lander brothers travelled down the Niger from Badagry (Lagos) to the Delta, and this being the first time Europeans entered to explore the Igbo land, most were taken captive

   II. 1846 - The Scottish Presbyterian and Church Missionary Society – CMS arrived in Calabar coastal towns of the Eastern part of the Igbo land

   III. 1849 – The British appointed a consul to a large area of West Africa including the Delta, the Western area of the Igbo land

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[23] It should be noted here that though seminal texts have refered to the Igbo as 'nation' this thesis will utilise the expression of the Igbo as 'community or a people'.

IV. 1857 - The French Roman Catholic Missionaries (RCM) arrived around the Onitsha Northern area of Igbo land.

V. 1860 – The people of Aboh expelled the Lander brothers, the trading factory owed to some conflicts caused by land grabbing by the foreigners (Isichei 1976:111)

VI. 5th June 1885 – the British imperial power declared the Igbo land as part of British Empire and also saw the Royal Niger Company gained a Charter to govern following the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 as its awarded to the area; these began the systematic use of violence to maintain its economic interest (Afigbo 1981:284)

VII. 1901- March 1912 The destruction of the Arochukwu oracle by the British; opening up the Igbo tribe for political and religious incursion.

VIII. 1900 – 1960 The lived experiences of the political elite in a local society in constant flux, over six turbulent decades of colonialism (Searle 2007:50 and Nmah 2012: 82).

The Igbo people living around the banks of river Niger, legend said they saw men they described as not having "human foots"; of course, white men putting on shoes; arriving in boats that shocked the Igbo communities and which will change the Igbo land and its environment forever (Nmah 2012:78). The change in the Igbo society still remains a political earthquake that will only be settled when the Igbo societies go through a cultural and value introspections and renaissance as a people to determine their identity and political personality.

Based on this observation, Nmah (2012:79-83), identifies a number of aspects, individuals and entities in the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised system that lived with some difficulties with the new Roman Catholic Church in the Igbo missions.

First, the Igbo *Dibia* fraternity was one of the most influential institutions among the Igbo *Ohacracy* system, the equivalence of today's Western doctors in the Igbo society. They commanded enormous respect, wealth and influenced the community's decision making mechanism (Isichei 1976:163 and Ekechi 1972:224). As the new RCM faith arrived in 1857 among the Igbo the *Dibia* was faced with competition of losing out in their famous tricks with the local clients. Hence, they created false stories and allegations against the new religion in

order to maintain their place and economic positions and benefits in the Igbo societies which the Christians had disrupted (Nmah 2012:78). It is not surprising though that the old Igbo *Dibia* institution should fight back to survive the new wave of change of RCM in the society.

While alluding to the incident that took place between Demetrius and Paul (Acts 19:23-29; 16:16-24), Nmah (2012) notes where the silversmith complained against Paul's missionary activities which he claimed had misled their local clients from whom they made their living. This economic and status conflict is still very much on the ground in the Igbo society where Christian syncretism is readily available among the Igbo Catholics; who during the day are Catholics, but in the night seek the local religious solution (Kanu 2012:243). The conflict of who is in charge over power control of both spiritual and material well-being of the Igbo is a huge concern of the present day Igbo Catholics.

Second, the inter-denominational conflicts and alliances also provoked the local Igbo population to sometimes rise against the RCM or their counterparts the CMS group. A clear incident that caused such conflicts was the alliance between the economic gain driven trading Lander Brothers Company and the CMS in Aboh (1860) and in Onitsha with the Niger royal company (1888). This caused the CMS the loss of great membership to their RCM counterparts who showed visible support for the local population against the illegal land grabbing of the imperialist trading companies (Ekechi 1972:219-233). Yet as Nmah (2012:78) contends, this religious upheaval is still very much present in our contemporary Igbo world and he notes that at times many bishops and priests become unsolicited chaplains, counsellors and political advisers to the president, governors and parliamentarians. The aim is not to feed them spiritually, but for their egocentric material gains.

Third, the Igbo vernacular suffered and still bleeds from wounds sustained from the missionary activities among the Igbo; since the missionaries preferred to promote their foreign (French and English) languages than learn and communicate in the local lingua-franca. The CMS group though should be acknowledged and praised for given attention, training, schooling and catechizing in Igbo language. It was to this great remarkable work of Archdeacon Dennis on the Igbo vernacular that Afigbo (1981:355-374) praised and acknowledged his missionary (CMS) sensitivity to the Igbo context. Noting remarkably the outcome of this language conflict and dilemma, Ekechi (1972:235) would write indicating: "…furthermore, the insistence on the part of the Church Missionary Society to use the

vernacular instead of the English language as the medium of instruction in the schools, led to a "pronounced" drift to Roman Catholic Schools…".

The challenge of language in every culture and context is very sensitive and crucial. No culture will remain authentic if the vernacular language is neglected or disregarded for another. In fact, it is true to say that all cultures die first when language is neglected or is not developed. It is in the language that all values are hidden and imbued. Language remains the vehicle through which values, cultures, education, wisdom, morality and ethics are communicated and transferred from one generation to the other. The loss of any vernacular becomes the loss of values. Hence, social values and meanings lose their values if vernacular is redundant and could lead to social crisis and conflicts in a given society. Language is so rich that it's vanquish in a culture becomes the whole loss of human identity, cultural heritage and a basket of values in disarray and disorder. Part of this challenge at hand with Igbo Church context, has drowned or stalled meaningful progress and development in areas like science and technology, but most relevantly on Catholic theology. Decrying this ugly situation in the present day Igbo Church Ebelebe (2009:195) argues that if the Igbo elites can neither read nor write Igbo well, how are they going to produce credible biblical, catechetical, and liturgical translations in Igbo? The major concern remains that Igbo elites do not know Igbo culture. They do not speak, read, nor write the Igbo language well. The challenge therefore remains the blinking future of the Igbo *Ohacracy* Church. Hence, one can noticeably claim the stalled nature of the inculturation realisation in the Igbo Catholic Church communities.

Fourth, while noting other current problematic issues of Catholic Church governance among the Igbo, Nmah (2012) indicates a difficulty that has arisen between the two traditions (the Catholic Church governance and Igbo *Ohacracy* system), owing to the 'differences in civilization' crisis that should be clearly understood and heeded too. Though two traditions may differ, they do not necessarily revolt. Hence, two cultures can equally borrow or learnt from each other, they also can stimulate some effect on each other as cultures change and grow from foreign contacts; but this must be done freely and without any force or coarse inducement. This expectation is not dependent or limited to one culture but the two in contact with each other. And as the right saying goes: 'No culture is an island, and of course 'change' is another name for culture.' It is based on the understanding as Nmah (2012:79) concludes, that while the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities are often ready to borrow foreign ideas and

fashions, they do this of their own free will. Yet, the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities can be noticed resisting any fashion of change in their traditions or cultures just to preserve their identities and heritage.

Indeed, at the end of every tunnel is the light; and at the end of every dark cloud is a silver lining! Despite these challenges therefore, the Catholic Church has made tremendous progress. This thesis cannot forget to note in this history the remarkable improvement and growth the Catholic Church has achieved in a short history among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria and the country on the whole. Within a century (100 years) the Igbo Catholicism has grown from an Apostolic Prefecture into two giant-size ecclesiastical provinces; namely Onitsha (in the northern Igbo) and Owerri (in the Southern Igbo). Yet the Igbo population constitute a greater percentage of some other dioceses outside the two ecclesiastical provinces of Igbo Catholicism. As Ihenacho (2004:74) notes, there are about 15 dioceses distributed in seven Igbo states of the 36 states of the Nigerian nation. The Igbo faith and presence is still felt in the other 7 ecclesiastical provinces of Nigeria. These 15 dioceses are entirely populated and administered by Igbo local indigenes. Hence, in the Igbo of the South-eastern Nigeria a teaming Catholic population of about 9 million followers exist, based on 2004 statistics (Ebelebe 2009:202).

However, more attention will be given to the challenges facing the Catholic governance among the Igbo in chapter 6. More so, as the study has noted the antagonism and conflict between Christian denominations around the Igbo decentralized society, its causes and effect has been very prevalent. Between past and present as noted above, this early history of Catholic Church governance among the Igbo had not been totally peaceful and just. In clear cases the reception of Christianity among the Igbo (with institutions of learning-schools, hospitals, hostels, and cottage industries) was characterized of internal conflict and rivalry.

Moreover, applying the 'large ears' theory in the Catholic Church in her governance activity in all that is noted above appears to have a very long way to go in her development towards decentralization to aid create a harmonious and dynamic society or family among the Igbo of Nigeria. The Catholic Church seem to be centred in its own-way, structure and system to achieve its evangelization not so much in consideration or in conversation with the Igbo context. She seems not to have reason to seat down and listen to the environment and dialogue with the Igbo situation. It is because of such attitude that Stuart Graham, writing on the

caption "*Church needs to listen, not preach*" in the Southern Cross of August 11, 2015 quoted Archbishop Slattery saying the Church must get close to people. He continues thus:

> … If we want to communicate, we must listen and share. Church communication has often been reduced to issuing documents and preaching… Communication is conversation. It is interactive and participative. People want to participate and ask questions. They don't want to sit and be preached at in church…this is why many young people are leaving formal churches…

While reiterating on the lack of the Church's 'large ears' listening abilities, the theory notes the frustration of the African bishops in trying to speak in a number of ways and end up repeating themselves without being listened to by the Roman Pontificate. This stiff and uncompromising centralization of governance in the Catholic Church is so deafening that in most subsequent assemblies of Bishops all one hears or expects is "Go back to the drawing table". Pressing African issues on inculturation and marriage for instance are referred back to "enough studies and commissions" that has taken repeated recommendations without any conclusion. The Igbo and Nigerian Church as a whole is governed by Rome regardless of the context and real situation on the ground. The lack of grip and comprehension around these issues has not helped the Igbo Church to grow towards self-determination and governance.

Chapter Summary

In a rather brief conclusion, this chapter has extensively reviewed literature tracing the history of centralization as a major nature in the governance of Catholic Church and how this has informed the Igbo land of South-eastern Nigerian Catholic Church. As power and authority is vested in and around the Clergy, the *Ohacracy* model of governance argues for full participation of all who belong to the Catholic Church. The laity remains valuable assets to the faith community with their gifts, talents and expertise. They should be encouraged to realize these in the Church family. This will not just be for the laity, but for the entire Catholic Church to also realize its full mission of salvation by the task entrusted to all and not just to the ordained ministry.

The contemporary world has opened and challenged ancient-traditions or institutions like Catholicism to respect and acknowledge the place and role of all human beings. Religion and its model of governance have gone beyond its limited parameters of Church buildings and praying chapels and grounds; hence the wider audience of Catholic Church governance cannot be neglected any longer by mere arguments of traditions that are immemorial. Change

in the Catholic Church governance is now most imperative and inevitable. However, such dialogue as presented in this chapter calls for the Catholic Church to listen to its contemporary adheres and to be true to its situation and time. The paradigm shift of order, time, place and practice can no longer be ignored by any human institution bound to change in time and space.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DECENTRALISED (*OHACRACY)* MODEL OF GOVERNANCE AND FACTORS AFFECTING IGBO CATHOLICISM

4.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses the entire philosophy regarding the Igbo *Ohacracy* traditional model of governance among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria. The objective of this chapter 4 and 5 are to show how the Igbo *Ohacracy* social order through its belief system, cultural heritage and traditional practises have achieved dialogue and consensus in participatory governance. By so doing, this chapter addresses the question 2 and sub-question 2 respectively which is to explain the nature of Igbo participatory governance. While discussing the historical origins and roots of the Igbo people, the history of their settlement, factors affecting the Catholic Church governance and a brief general world view will contribute immensely towards achieving the set objective. The Igbo people's belief in Chukwu, the earth spirit goddess and the ancestors will be discussed too. Engaging with other Igbo scholars and writers, the study demonstrates the rigor of academic conversation relating to the Igbo *Ohacracy* traditional governance while remaining critical to such scholarship.

As the study considers *Ohacracy* in its role in the Igbo rural governing development, the study owes this knowledge to the historical culture that has passed through numerous generations of scholars who have made efforts to identify the Igbo people from a historical perspective. Victor Uchendu (1965), Basden Green (1966), Elizabeth Isichei (1976), Adiele Afigbo (1981/2005), Ifemesia 2002 and Okwu (2010) and many others have all written extensively on the history of the Igbo people, and in one way or the other informs this study. This chapter is therefore divided into two sections. First, the chapter looks at a brief history of the origin of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. Second, the Igbo world view and some belief systems and practises will be discussed to demonstrate how the Igbo social order has achieved participatory governance in the communities. The chapter looks at the interface between governance and the Catholic Church. The models of the Catholic Church governance adopted and the theories which inform the understanding of such models are also discussed. This chapter unveils the dilemma with the centralised system of Catholic Church governance structures with reference to the Igbo experience of inculturation theory, slavery and

colonialism as they contributed towards the centralised model of the Catholic Church governance among the Igbo people.

4.2 A Brief History on the Origin of the Igbo People

Igbo land is the home of millions of Igbo people and it covers most of South-eastern Nigerian area. This area is divided by River Niger into two unequal fragments – the Eastern region (which is the largest) and the Midwestern region. The West of Igbo land area is bounded by the Urhobo people and the Benin, while the Igalas, Idomas, and Tiv are found on the Northern borders. The Efik and Ibibio people occupy the Eastern boundaries of Igbo land.[24] The African history in general and the Igbo[25] in particular, have not received their rightful place in modern day studies. As Afigbo (1971:158) notes, the British colonizers would even describe the Igbo history in a degrading manner as: "…the Igbo who were sprawling in political and social morass as the time of our advent, a people whose history is summarised by the phrase 'culture none, religion none,' it was exasperating."

This play-down attitude towards African history may be attributed to what Ifemesia (2002:6) observed as "…African history do not possess that peculiar and indefinable African-ness which would make their indigenous readers freely relate to their spirit and message." It is, therefore, based on this concern that any aspect of history in this study would be appreciated, focused and commendable. In anyway history in this regard helps us understand and appreciate the Igbo *Ohacracy* system by which the Igbo is understood and interpreted. The interpretation of the past in the present for a future outlook remain at the focus of this study and central to the development of the Igbo idea of governance and its general contribution in the full development and growth of both human and material nature of the Igbo society.

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[24] Igbo land is surrounded with the River Benue in the North, the River Niger in the West, the Cross River in the East and Atlantic Ocean in the South. The word "Igbo" is used in three different senses, to describe the Igbo territory, domestic speakers of the language and the language spoken by the people (Afigbo, 1981:10 and Shaw, 1970:268). The population of the Igbo people is estimated to be about 40-45 million in the present day Nigeria. They also occupy about 25, 280 square kilometres or 15, 800 square miles (Okwu 2010:1) in which is found 8 states (Anambra, Abia, Enugu, Imo, Cross River, Akwa Iybom, Delta, Ebonyi and River states in the present day political divisions in Nigeria) among the 36 current existing states in Nigeria (Ukpokolo 2009: 4). Until the mid-twentieth century, most Igbo people were farmers, cultivating Yam, Coco-Yam, Palm-Tress and engaging in other agricultural activities as their major occupation. Traditionally, the Igbo people lived in villages or village-groups surrounded by their farm lands.

[25] The alternative forms 'Igbo' and 'Ibo' need explanation. The word Igbo presents a problem in pronunciation for many foreigners, and Ibo has been in use as a ready solution. Many Igbo words with double consonants gave foreigners the same problem and therefore got a wrong spelling like: e.g., *Agbo* town became *Abo, Akwukwo* "books", became *Abubo*, and *Gbamgbam* corrugated iron became *Bambam*, etc. Modern Igbo writers insist on the use of the correct and authentic spelling *Igbo*. In this study I will insist on the use of the *Igbo* form but in quotations I will use "Ibo" to keep the past authors usage in books that may be consulted.

As African nations participate in modern day technology and science to improve the common lives, the continent's history plays a very vital role to determine the future and redress the present system to enhance the life of the majority. This argument concurs with Ifemesia's (2002:7) who argues:

> African history has a responsibility to inform young Africans and all, in appropriate terminology, of their immemorial heritage and traditional manner of living, to encourage them to have greater confidence in their own, and even to stimulate them to take a hard look at some of their current problems and see if the past could not help them, in some measure at least, to redress the imbalance of the present.

In a nutshell this remains the focus and purpose of the Igbo history. The Igbo *Ohacracy* tradition under consideration is based on such an understanding of social practice as a historical value system among the Igbo. The study considers this chapter as a means of historical tool to critically re-evaluate the present day challenges towards the Catholic governance of the Igbo Church and the progress necessary to enhance governance with regards to indigenous model of participatory governance among the Igbo of South eastern Nigeria.

The Igbo of the hinterland is 200 miles off the Nigerian Atlantic coast line. It is suggested that the Igbo are the last major ethnic group to encounter the White traders and the Christian missionaries in the 16th century in today's Nigerian world (Okwu 2010:vii). And while referring to James Horton an Igbo born ex-slave, the Igbo population as of early 19th century was estimated to run between ten to twelve million people (12 million); while Duru (2005:204) puts the Igbo population at conservatively about 15 million and yet, others believe the Igbo were more than 27 million as of this time. More so, at the point of Igbo contact with the West in the 1830s, they were estimated to number over five (5) million people (Obi and Onyeozili 2012:30).

In his classification of African languages, Greenberg (1949:7) groups Igbo with the speech communities of the *Kwa* sub-family in the Niger-Congo linguistic group. Meanwhile, indicating the possible chances of Igbo origin while appropriately locating the Igbo language Afigbo points towards the Niger-Benue confluence. Linguists note, it was likely here that speakers of the member languages of the *Kwa* linguistic sub-family, in which Igbo is one, separated from their ancestral stock and moved out to occupy their present locations (Onwu 2002:5). Overall, Falola (2005:76) subscribes to the opinion according to Yehuda Karmon

that the Igbo probably originated somewhere further north than their present territory, in the sub-Guinean zone of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. There they multiplied rather faster and then invaded the forest region where they made their home till this day.

The map below demonstrates the Igbo group discussed in this chapter http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Nigeria (Accessed 17 November 2011)[26].

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[26] See the map of Languages of Nigeria below.

Map No. 4.1 Igbo land in Nigeria.

MAP OF IGBOLAND IN NIGERIA

Map No. 4.2   Linguistic Map of Nigeria, Cameroon, and Benin

Citing Uchendu (1965), Onwurah (1984:22) observes with difficulty the nature of the Igbo language as he writes:

> It is marked by a complicated system of tones used to distinguish meaning and grammatical relations, a wide range of dialectical variations that is a source of difficulty to westerners, but not to the Igbo, and a tendency to vowel elision which makes it difficult to express a few of the spoken words in writing.

While this difficulty is true of every language, the Igbo language and the people in Nigeria remain distinct, with oral and written language. Appealing to Robert Armstrong's glotto-chronological evidence, Afigbo notes that the *Kwa* linguistic sub-family started separating from their ancestral stock between five and six thousand years ago. While linguistic scholars remain sceptical over this estimations, archaeological research by Hartle in the Nsukka

(Northern Igboland) shows that by the 'early Neolithic' period (as in the later part of the Stone Age), Igboland was already under occupation (Falola 2005:77).

During the 20th century (from 1900 onwards), the colonizers described the Igbo as a people 'without history'. The Igbo people had no Kings (Onwumechili 2000:1), Chiefs or known cities. Ebbe and Onyeozili (2012:30) observes with Henderson who rather refers to the situation and practice among the Igbo as '*The King in Every Man*'. They therefore conclude that this means the Igbo have no kingship system. They do not believe in owing allegiance to any single authority. Only the Earth-God has that authority. Every married male is the head of his family and has authority only within his family.[27]

This was not the case among Igbo neighbours of Benin and the Oyo people who had already developed structures of a centralized government before the advent of colonisation (Afigbo 1981:1). The Igbo were said to be stateless. This idea has raised questions among Igbo scholars. A people with culture, myths, proverbs, folklores, and pithy sayings cannot be described as being 'without history'. Afigbo (1981:2) gave reasons for this negative perception by the colonizers. He outlines four aspects in relation to the Igbo cultural histories in this way:

   I. The Igbo did not know (have) a literate culture.

  II. The Igbo land lay outside the areas traversed by early travellers (Arabs or Europeans). The result was that the development of Igbo culture throughout the millennia before 1900 went undocumented.

 III. The fact that the Igbo did not evolve centralized state systems comparable to their neighbours (Benin or Oyo), that had well developed institutions for the preservation and transmission of oral traditions, has meant that information which survives about the Igbo past is scanty and scrappy.

 IV. Finally, and most importantly, scholars have not as yet made a determined effort to tackle the problem of reconstructing the Igbo past. Historians are only beginning to exploit what little information that exists on pre-colonial Igbo society (Afigbo 1981:2). There was a basic lack of interest in grand history among the Igbo as a people. Both

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[27] The village-group is the primary unit of socio-political activity as we will later see in the main body of this study. There was no sustained model or system of centralised states within the Igbo society. Rather, there were strong ties of the village community, the extended family system, age-group/grade associations and various religious or social groups that maintained law and order in the Igbo communities. All these will be treated in this study of *Ohacrasi*-leadership.

Green (1964:7) and Isichei, (1976:19) agree on this later point. Onwu (2002:4) concurs to this notion and further observes that the less interest in the Igbo history has come as a result compounded by the fact that some Igbo people did not accept other Igbo as being 'Igbo,' for instance, the *Mbieri* people do not accept *Onitsha* people as real 'Igbo.' Yet, in this regard, some groups in *Onitsha* area do not regard themselves as Igbo people since they think their ancestors have migrated from the neighbouring Benin Kingdom into the present Igbo area where they reside.

It was based on this attitude that foreign writers such as Meeks (1937) and Green (1964) describe the Igbo as lawless and ungovernable people (Onwu 2002:5). This misconceived notion about the Igbo being described as "Igbo *enweghi Eze*", that is *the Igbo crowns no King*; must be decried out rightly. This is true since the colonizer's description does not occur from the notion whether they had noted or acknowledged the difference between the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralization tradition and the western centralization system (see Obi and Onyeozili 2012:38). However, the description of the Igbo as such was informed by a negative view that the Igbo are unruly or the Igbo are in rejection of law and order. No society can survive for such a long period without respect for law and order. Law and order is therefore obtained in the *Ohacracy* system in this manner as expressed by Ubah (1987:180):

> …Collectively the leaders were involved in taking decisions that affected the community's relationship with other people …Before a decision was taken on any issue members were given the chance to express their opinions freely, and the arguments for and against were carefully considered. Importance was attached to the views of highly experienced men (women) and those who possessed particular skills or special knowledge of the matter being discussed. However, no particular individuals or groups could impose their views on others. Consensus and ultimate harmonization of opinions were the objectives aimed at…

Having developed the *Ohacracy* system of common participation of all who live and ply their lives in the Igbo society, history shows that the Igbo are a very law abiding and conscious society which had maintained their string of laws in love of property and life in and around the Igbo communities. The lengthy listening discussions, dialogue and consensus decision making processes therefore for this study lies in the 'difference' between the two traditions as already noted, namely the centralization of the Catholic Church authority among the Igbo and the decentralization of the Igbo *Ohacracy* system.

'Difference' cannot be confused with or seen as unruly, disorderly or unacceptability. Difference is another alternative description for the human and nature in general. Our natural environment is solely wonderful and colourful with the presence and acceptance of 'difference.' It is the refusal and the non-acceptance of this fact that had caused dominations and wars in the human societies. Indeed the *Ohacracy* system of social organization (governance) is different from the western or the Catholic Church's centralization of power tradition, and must therefore be duly described, acknowledged and accepted. The Igbo are a people proud of their identity and cultural heritage, though highly enthusiastic (aflame) to acclimatize or tolerate other cultures and traditions, for instance the "Westernization" (see Ubah 1987:178 and Nzirimo 1987:168) and should therefore be commended for their openness.

The Igbo *enweghi Eze* notion (which is at the very heart of this study) must therefore be understood from the point of view that it simply describes the *Ohacracy* decentralized tradition of two systems that might have existed of the Igbo social organisation by which the *Oha* (people) remain the centre of governance. The other system being monarchical like the centralized system of the West and the Catholic Church in particular as well expressed in chapter 3 above. Most importantly as this study focuses on the former typology of social order (which is noted about the *Owerri* Igbo, comprising of the *Owerri* and *Okigwe* zones in the present day Nigerian political divisions on which this study confines itself),[28] it should be noted that not all the Igbo country practised the decentralized social order system. A number of Igbo scholars such as Onwumechili (2000:1; Ubah 1987:169; Njoku 2013:256; Falola 2005:77) and host of others believe that the Northern Igbo areas of Onitsha, Nri-Awka, Agbo and Arochukwu among others practised the centralized system of social order. These are said to have migrated from the Igbo neighbours of Benin and Igala, and kept their tradition of chiefs and kingship systems.

The Igbo society therefore, belonged to the two system typologies of social order and organization as mentioned above. However, one would really ask, in the absence of a "King", "Chief" or central governance among the heartland of Igbo society, how the Igbo *Ohacracy* maintained law, order and stability in their communities? This critical and central question is addressed categorically by the existence and roles of the age-grade associations, title-making

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[28] Please note the scope description in chapter 2.

associations, *Dibia* fraternities and oracles and secret societies among other Igbo governing institutions that kept the social order. These institutions are fully discussed in chapter five which also incorporates participation as a way of life.

With regards to literacy, this study differs from Afigbo (1981:2), Onwu (2002:13) and Ifemesia (2002:16-17), who claim that the Igbo were among the pre-literate people of Africa. The Igbo history was not committed to writing in any appreciable manner before the 18th century. Though the Igbo developed an ideograph (written language using symbols or characters) known as *nsibidi*[29], literacy as it is understood today came to Igbo society in the 18th century (see Ifemesia 2002:17). *Nsibidi* took the form of formalised pictograms, like Chinese writing. Isichei (1976:35-38) pointed out that, had colonialism not disturbed the Igbo people and their neighbours from their own patterns of development, it seems likely that literacy would have been developed. *Nsibidi* writing would have acquired more characters, becoming a richer and more flexible vehicle of literary expression and communication. Below are illustrations of the *Nsibidi* signs writing as demonstrated by Isichei (1976:36-37). Two *Nsibidi* writing charts are noted below. The section which follows therefore discusses a brief history of Igbo *Ohacracy* settlement and opens up the Igbo world view.

The next two pages show:
No. 4.3 and 4.4 seen below the *Nsibidi* Charts (Signs and Key to understanding a demonstration of Igbo *Ohacracy* literacy work)

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[29] *Nsibidi* was a pre-colonial sign writing developed among the Igbo and their neighbours. It was mainly used by secret cults to preserve their valuable communications and also by the travelling smiths and could not easily spread rapidly because of its secrecy and not open to the commoners or public to learn.
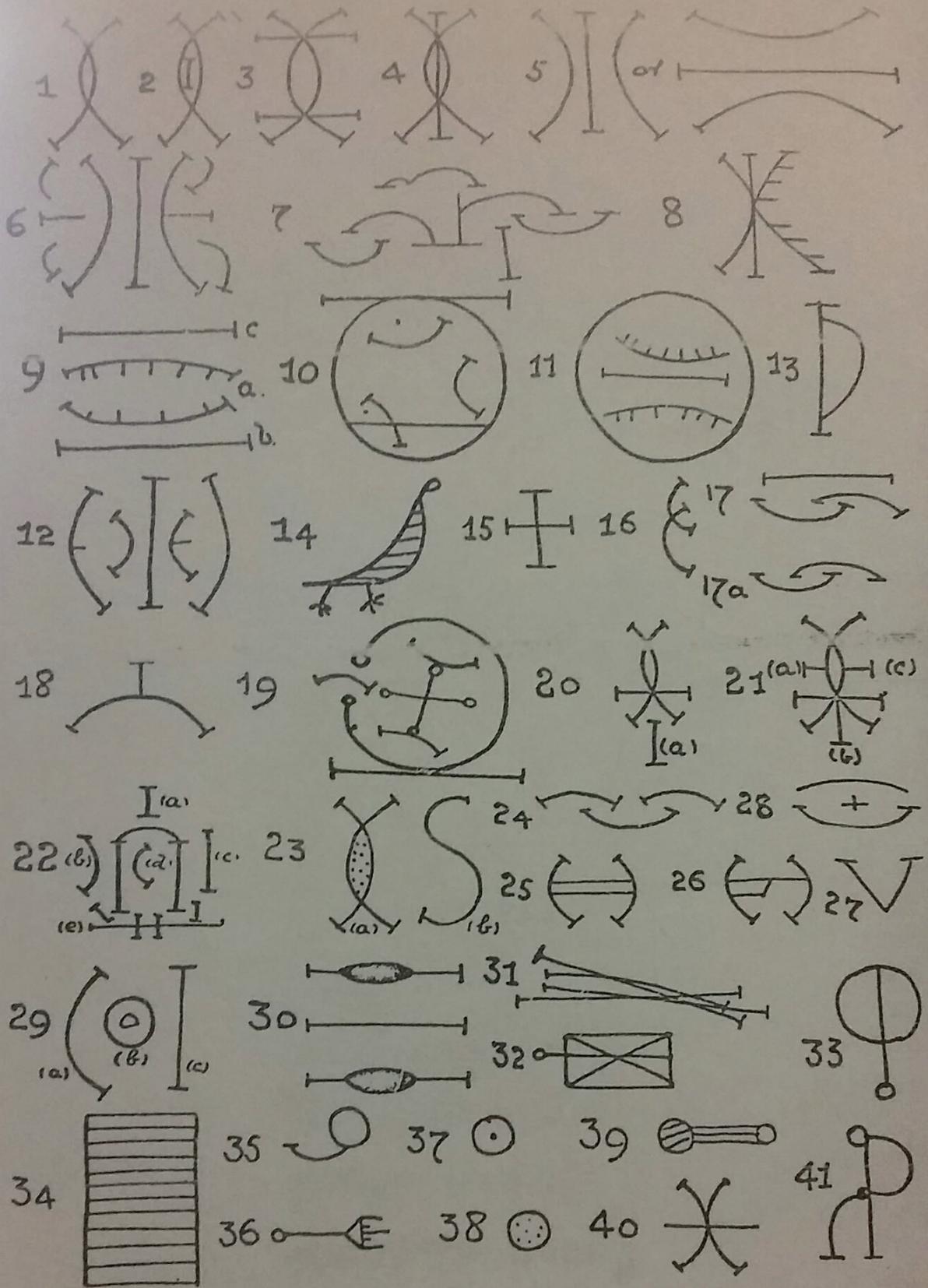
Source: Rev. J. K. Macgregor, 'Some Notes on Nsibidi', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, XXXIX (1909) 215.

1 2 Married love (2, with pillow)
3 Married love with pillows for head and feet – a sign of wealth
4 Married love with pillow
5 Quarrel between husband and wife, indicated by the pillow being between
   them
6 Violent quarrel between husband and wife
7 One who causes a disturbance between husband and wife
8 A woman with six children and her husband; a pillow is between them
9 Two wives with their children (a), of one man (b), with the roof-tree of the
   house in which they live (c)
10 A house (a) in which are three women and a man. The dots have no mean-
   ing
11 Two women with many children in the house with their husband
12 Two women on each side of a house. One on each side has a child
13 A woman with child (general sign)
14 The same; if a man writes this sign on the ground, it means that his own
   wife is with child
15 Palaver, the general term, by no means confined to marriage palavers
16 A woman who does not want her husband any more
17 A woman who wishes to put away her husband
17a Embracing? (unconfirmed interpretation)
18 A harlot
19 Two women who live in the same house have palaver every time they meet.
   A third woman is entering by the door
20 A man (a) who comes to a woman who has a husband and asks her to live
   with him
21 (a), (b), and (c) are three men who sought the same married woman, and
   quarrelled because of her
22 (a) is a man who committed adultery with a woman (b), who now lives
   apart from her husband (c). The guilty man has to pay compensation to
   the woman's family and her husband. (d) is the money paid, (e) are the
   parties to whom the money was paid
23 A man and a woman were 'friends'. The man wished to leave her, but she
   would not agree. One day he wrote this sign all over her house, and took
   his departure. (a) means that he curses her, saying that she has 'craw-
   craw'. (b) means that he has gone to another town
24 Love without agreement
25 Heart with true love
26 Heart without true love
27 Inconstant heart
28 Two persons agree in love
29 (a) is a woman who goes to bathe in the river at a ford (b), while her hus-
   band (c) watches to see that no one shoots her
30 Juju hung over a door or on the road to a house to keep danger – especially
   evil spirits – from the house. Sacrifices of fowls and goats are offered to it
31 Firewood
32, 33 Looking glasses (Also used for a man with a looking glass)
34 A native mat, used as a bed
35 A gourd for a drinking cup
36 Native comb
37 Toilet soap
38 Basin and water
39 Calabash with 400 *chittims* inside it. A *chittim* is a copper wire worth one-
   twentieth of a rod. Such calabashes have hinges of three strings
40 Slaves
41 Fire

4.2.1   A Brief Historical Settlement of the Igbo People

The question of Igbo origin is most complex among scholars of Igbo history. No particular scholar has a clear answer to this question of where did the Igbo come from? However, it is not the task of this study to address this question, rather the study seeks to support efforts of past and present scholars of Igbo history to respond and contribute to the question of origin of the Igbo people of south-eastern Nigeria.

According to Isichei (1976: 19-20) people have lived on the Igbo territory for the past 5000 years, long before the advent of colonialism. The heartland of the Igbo, which includes the old Okigwe and Owerri divisions, was the first area to be settled. This claim of Igbo identity is also mirrored in proverbs such as Igbo *enweghi eze*, 'the Igbo had no King or crown no King'. This is true according to Achebe (1965: 135) "…but the villagers told them that there was no king. We have men of high title and the chief priests and the elders…" These men of honour and respect lead the people. Okwu (2010:11) stresses the regular and constant migration as both individuals and groups in the *Nri*-core series of population movements. This northern Igbo area identifies strongly with their neighbouring Oba of Benin kingdom from where it is believed the *Nri*-kingship practice among the Northern Igbo had emerged. It was to this fact that Okwu writes:

> About 900 A.D. the migrations began to cross to the western valley of the River Niger for arable lands and continued to the frontiers of the emerging Benin Kingdom. It was not until about 1500 that the powerful Oba Esigie (1504-1550) checked the Igbo expansion westwards. The Anioma, Aniocha, Ndi Ika or Ndokwa Igbo groups of Abbi, Asaba, Ibuzo, Illah…and Owa have oral traditions that point to Nri as their ancestral origins and they all shared closely many important customs and cultural practices that affirmed their common *Nri* origins (Okwu 2010:11).

The other view of Igbo settlement, according to Ifemesia (2002:29) is that *Nri*[30] right up to the end of the nineteenth century, acquires the reputation in parts of Igbo land as conferrers of high titles and cleansers of abominations. Major A. G. Leonard a British political officer, observed in his memoirs that within the neighbourhood of Nri*,* was found "the heart of the Ibo nationality." Ifemesia (2002) claims that Nri-Awka belongs to the area that is described as the

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[30] *Nri* is the hometown of a priestly cult known as *nri* priests, whose particular services was connected with the coronation of kings and purification ceremonies. These priests had travelled so widely that they became well known all over Igbo territory. *Nri* remains the Awka area of Igbo land who were the first to come in contact with the European visitors own to the fact and presence of the River-Niger by which they came to Igbo land.

traditional Igbo heartland the area by which the people earlier migrated to other parts of the Igbo country where they are found today. It must be emphasised here that the interest to conclude the studies on the Nri-Awka kingdom between 1964/65 was a great and welcomed venture when it started by researchers who developed interest on the Eastern region of Nigeria. Regrettably, as Afigbo (2005:95) shows, the Nigerian/Biafra crisis of 1966-1970 argues that "the would-be grand research design petered out into as-yet-unconcluded stories into Ijo and Nri studies."

Using archaeological data to determine the age of a particular excavation by applying the radiocarbon date was the means employed by historians to reconstruct the Igbo past regarding the above concerns. Excavations made in some Igbo old sites have opened this window of the distant past. These include those of Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa Rock Shelter, which produced stone tools and pottery shreds dated 2935 B.C. – 15 A.D (see Ifemesia 2002:18) and (Afigbo 1981:31-65). Similar artefacts of the Late Stone Age have also been recovered in the Isi-Ugwu Obukpa Rock Shelter and on the University Agricultural Farm Site, both in the Nsukka area (Ifemesia 2002:17-18).

All these were said to be the earliest found artefacts in the Nigeria area of research. Yet, the Igboukwu excavations found in the Njikoka (Awka) division of today's Anambra State consist of the most detailed information to date on the Igbo society (Ifemesia 2002). The storehouse or shrine, burial chamber, clay pit, bronze objects, iron weapons and implements have been radiocarbon dated to the ninth century A.D. (Ifemesia, 2002:18). These facts are evidence of two or three millennia the Igbo had spent in their present day location before the Christian era.

In another observation, Afigbo (1981:5) argues that it is likely that the Igbo may have lost all memory of their migration into the area they now occupy. This is also the case of *Nri* of the Northern Igbo who evolved an elaborate and highly ritualised priest-kingship tradition (Ukwu 2010:7 and Ebelebe 2009:7). Yet, in the present time *Nri* cannot produce documents with respect to migrations from outside Igbo land. According to Afigbo (1981) the loss of memory, has led to the myth of their having been created where the Igbo are now found.

Moreover, given the role and place of history in all human endeavours, it can only be that the Igbo had a lax-affair attitude when it came to knowing and acknowledging their history. The colonial masters did not help in regard to this issue either. The Igbo people were seen as opposition to all the British stood for in Nigeria; and therefore did not get equal attention unlike the Hausa north and Yoruba west who had their own histories well researched. This regrettable attitude towards the realization and better interpretation of history in terms of human heritage and preservation of values comes from a comment of a known Igbo university academic when he disregarded Igbo ventures into the past. He said 'the Igbo historians celebrate the dead and better-forgotten past.' To this, Afigbo (2005:96) writes thus: "…It may well be that our elite share the erroneous belief that a modernising society should not bother itself with the retrieval of its past, and so show their commitment to modernism and the present by concentrating on the study of the colonial and proto-colonial periods of our history."

4.2.2   A Brief General Outlook of the Igbo World View

As in many African societies, no man or woman lives for him or herself in the Igbo society. The individual does not exist alone; he/she exists because of other people. While articulating this idea, as an African philosophy of the personhood, Mbiti (1969:142) writes: "I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am." In this rural African setting everyone knows how he/she is related to members of the village and clan or in the neighbourhood. This understanding of personhood is not just found among the Igbo people but also seen in other African societies. Emphasizing on this common and shared principle among Africans, Uzukwu (1996:37) using the rite of passage observes:

> …One may thus appreciate the importance of initiation and passage rites in the growth and development of persons in Africa. Through these rites one learns about and experiences the channels of relationship in order to become a person. One is human because of others, with others, and for others (*motho ke motho ka batho ka bang* – a Sotho, South African proverb): "I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am. 'I belong, therefore I am.'

In fact, among the Igbo it is the society, especially and in particular the family; - either nuclear or extended that gives one a desired identity. As we shall discuss later, without the family, one is nothing and is a no-body. The family makes one. It remains the fundamental and basic foundation for all life that exists in any given Igbo community and the larger society as such. The point being emphasized here is that, the family is the beginning of the Igbo

worldview. Every effort in life begins and ends with the family, extending to village, community and to the entire Igbo society. At large the Igbo tribe has been described as one of the most conspicuous and distinguished tribes in Africa. It is to this light that Ihenacho (2004:1) cites Afigbo contending that Igbo people need no introduction to the outside world. Famous for their "easy adaptability to and avidity for Western values," the Igbo people are found almost in every continent pursuing entrepreneurship, education and various interests.

The Igbo view of the universe seems to come from the known idea of space-time events which has propelled their life activities. Ebelebe (2009:2-6) and Onwu (2002:37) conclude therefore that the Igbo concept of the space is in three-staged notion namely:

I. **The sky (*Eligwe*)**; this is the abode of the great God, Chukwu. The messengers include all the heavenly related elements like the thunder and lightning (*ebe eligwe na amuma mmiri*), the rain (*mmiri ozuzo*) and the sun (*anynwu*).

II. **The earth (*Ala*)**; this is of course the abode of humans, animals, plants and all the created things to serve the human need. The good and bad (evil) spirits are equally located on both earth and underworld. Hence, the earlier idea that there is essentially intertwined and closely relationship between the earth and the invisible world; namely spirits and ancestors that influence and affect the daily human activities. But most importantly is also the Earth goddess spirit whose abode is the earth.

III. **The underworld (*Ime Ala*)**; the under earth is a place or abode of the dead. The ancestral spirit is located in the earth. The famous *ala-mmuo* the spirit abode is located under the earth. The evil spirit is equally located in the underworld. More clearly and explained work will be done when the work deals with the *Ohacracy* religious notion of governance in the upcoming pages.

Time, is seen to be cyclical (Ebelebe 2009:2). Ebelebe contends that the human person remains at the centrepiece of the Igbo worldview. Distinguishing this further, Ebelebe (2009:2) listed thus as the key ideas in the Igbo traditional worldview namely *Chukwu* (Supreme God), *Ndi-muo* (deities), Ancestors, the Earth goddess and Religious rituals among others. The following section gives attention to next three main aspects that further illustrate the Igbo world views. Each of the following 'three personalised' aspects discussed here, fully and entirely corresponds to the 'living abode' of the Igbo three-stages of the concept of the space among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities.

4.2.2.1 The Belief in *Chukwu* as means to *Ohacracy* Model of Governance

As a belief in the divine origin and control of human and spiritual affairs, religion played an important role in the daily life of the Igbo people. *Chukwu* is believed to abode in the sky; that is, *Eligwe* as noted above. In one of the earliest reports on Igbo religious affairs, in 1841 James Frederick, a missionary, wrote about the Igbo people stating:

> God is continually heard. 'Tshuku' (a misspelling of *Chukwu*, the great God) is supposed to do everything… Their notions of some of the attributes of the Supreme Being are, in many respects, correct, and their manner of expressing them striking. God made everything: He made both 'White and Black', is continually on their lips. Some of their parables are descriptive of the perfections of God (Isichei 1976:25).

Religion among the Igbo is very complex and every Igbo is aware of its role and function. Religion is not farfetched in the Igbo daily affairs. In the actual practice of religion, every Igbo family is required to keep its own religious worship space, known as personal *chi* god (Agbasiere 2000:23) where he/she relates with the divine different from the public or general consulting spaces of the divine. In fact, religion is not separated from every other activity in the land (God, politics, business (trade) and agriculture), as in the modern day religion where for instance politics is separated from religion. In the daily life of the Igbo one would notice religious affairs going on. In this understanding, the Igbo believed that God is the creator of both material and spiritual worlds. While the humans rule the physical world, *Chukwu*, controls the spiritual world.

The concept of *Chukwu* the great God in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance tradition falls to the invisible world of the divinity. According to Onwu (2002:36), the earthly material world mirrors the spiritual in which *Chukwu* shows in the different degrees. Hence Onwu concludes that the "Igbo are aware of the supreme reality and ultimate explanation of all the things... the Supreme Being is conceived under two major principles – (1) the principle of creation (*Chi-Okike, Chineke*); (2) the principle of Absoluteness (*Chi-Ukwu*) – *Chukwu* - (Onwu 2002:14). The Igbo thought of *Chukwu* is that of a Supreme Being who is the creator and sustains the material world. Ebelebe (2009:2) notes that though the Igbo are convinced about God's existence, their reasoning abstract expressions of this Being, does not exist. The noted

expressions remain in names attributes like *Chukwu, Chineke*, and *Osebuluwa*[31] and these mean themes in relation to God's creative power, the greatness and providence respectively.

Chukwu is believed to be the creator of all things and for this reason is known as *Chineke* as Achebe (1965:162-163) notes. As god who carried, fashioned and sustains the world, *Chineke* is called *Osebuluwa*. This god has the control of all things in existence and has power over all things. All good comes from *Chukwu*. *Chukwu* is the maker of all human beings and all things in existence. All created things, both physical and spiritual are all under *Chukwu's* control. As Uchendu (1965:94) rightly affirms "… the idea of a creator of all things is focal to Igbo theology; the Igbo believe in a supreme god, a high god, who is all good." According to Ebelebe (2009:2) this understanding of God by the Igbo people stands similar like that of the Judaeo-Christian concept of God. The belief in one great god (spirit) makes it possible for the Igbo to see unity and commonality in their religious practise hence creating a unifying effect to all who live in the land as in *Ohacracy* daily governance as the organization and ordering of both individual and communal activities in and around the Igbo country of south-eastern Nigeria.

The Igbo religious expression of believing in one great god has enforced unity of purpose and interest since all in the land see *Chukwu* as the creator and owner of all human and existing beings. In other words, the Igbo people have the conviction that all people in the land are one god's family. All belong and must be treated as such. No one must be discriminated against because all belong to this one family of a great god. Individuals are to be respected and honoured amidst the activities of the community. It is from this principle that the notion of "*Chi*"[32] better interpreted as 'personal god' is to be understood.

In *Ohacracy* philosophy *Chi* would therefore be seen as the reasoning and explanatory nature of Igbo world in a rather intellectual manner of expression and understanding. In its speculative answer to Igbo individual natures, *Chi* explains to the Igbo the elements of luck,

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[31] These three attributes of God mean the following in English equivalence: *Chukwu* equals to Supreme God; *Chineke* means God the creator and while *Osebuluwa* means, you are among the carriers of the world.

[32] In ordinary usage *chi* refers to light in contrast to darkness. With reference to Igbo religion chi has been understood and interpreted in different ways like 'a kind of tutelary spirit', 'personal genius', and or 'a personal guiding spirit'. It is best known as an individual's personal god and is symbolized in Igbo traditional religion by a sacred tree that is planted near the front of the house in the family compound. This *chi* is associated with either personal fortune or misfortune. It is seen as a complex principle affecting every individual's existence for good or ill. *Chi* therefore represents the focal point of a 'personal religion' (Agbasiere, 2000:54). *Chi* in this sense emanates from the spirit messenger of the godhead, *Chukwu* in Igbo religion.

fortune, destiny or fate unique to an individual. This belief unveils the idea of how the Igbo treat destiny and fate as with regard to the outcome of events in one's life. While writing from a perspective of law and order, Njoku (2013:258) maintains that the Igbo notion of *Chi* has tremendous effect in the ordering and the imposition of law in the Igbo Cosmic view. Hence God is the source of law and through Chi, God manifests God self. The arena where God operates is the earth the abode of human. To understand further the centrality of the religious beliefs on *Ohacracy* model of Igbo governance, the next section highlights the important role played by *Ala*, the mother-earth.

4.2.2.2 The Belief in Earth Spirit "*Ala*" as Basis for *Ohacracy* Model of Governance

As already mentioned, *Chukwu* the great one God in the Igbo religion is considered to operate or function through other intermediaries namely spirits or divinities. The mother earth spirit is believed to abode on the earth, that is, *Ala*. This of course explains why the Igbo *Ohacracy* pay high respect to the earth as this section will explain. Among these spirit intermediaries are the *Igwe*, the "sky-spirit", *Anyanwu*, the "sun-spirit", and the *Ala*[33]; the "earth-spirit" otherwise known as Mother-earth goddess/spirit (see Onwu (2002:16). *Ala,* the land as the main focus in this section is to be understood as a major force in Igbo understanding and practice of *Ohacracy* governance and is most important among all other spirits as an agent of Life's sustenance. *Ala* is known and regarded as the 'custodian of morality' since she is also attributed with the ownership of all human beings (Agbasiere 2000:63).

Given the vital place and role *Ala* spirit plays in the *Ohacracy* governance among the Igbo, it is therefore essential that this study spends some lines to explain why and how the cult of the Earth-Spirit or mother earth goddess *Ala* came to existence in unity with the *Eri* myth of Igbo origin. According to Okwu (2010:10-13) and Uzukwu, (1997:100-101) the *Eri* Igbo myth stresses a very vital moment of Igbo *Ohacracy* origin and existence. Thus they narrate:

> …the recognition of *Ala* as spirit-subject began to emerge through the action of *Chukwu*, who demanded human sacrifice. Eri brought this fruition through

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[33] *Ala* in the Igbo religious understanding is a major spirit intermediary otherwise known as "Mother-Earth-Goddess". The earth spirit is considered to be a prominent spiritual force (a deity agent) that controls morality among the Igbo and is believed to be offended if natural laws and customs are violated. In the case of moral violation of natural laws like intentional murder, the mother-earth spirit is offended and a number of sacrifices and punishment is duly pronounced on the culprit (Okafor 1992:78).

the sacrifice (priestly action) of his son and daughter[34]. The action of Eri is a primordial priestly act creating the recognition of the sacredness of the land (*Ala*). The burial of the sacrificial victims was the primordial act of presenting sacrificial offering. If the offering was made to *Chukwu*, it was the mouth of the land that was opened to receive the victims. From this founding act it emerges that spirits are fed when gifts are presented to them. …the important point is the exalted position of *Ala* in worship. The result of the extreme and violent act of Eri is the consecration of the land-it became a spiritualized subject intimately bonded to the community. She protects her people as mother by providing them with food (principally Yam) and by establishing a covenant of peace whereby bloodshed is outlawed. But the fact that the land receives the dead creates awe and dread in regard to this deity. At the burial of young people or notables, the exclamation is still heard today: *chei! Ihe ala na-eli*! Behold what the land eats! …

Having established the origin of the sacredness of the mother-earth in the *Ohacracy* governance, it is very insightful to note with interest what Okoro (2013) calls the "African *Inochi* paradigm" as he demonstrates the true value for human life, the sacredness of the earth and the cosmos in general, through his title: '*African Concept of Inochi: A new Paradigm for Peace Education in the Contemporary Society*'. The term *Inochi* is a Japanese word for life. Okoro (2013:93) argues that *Inochi* is a Japanese daily term expression referring to life, death and nature; this is the African term equivalence for *Ndu* (Igbo, Nigeria), *Ubuntu* (Xhosa, South Africa), *Ujanma* (Tanzania), *Botho* (Ba Sotho) and *Umuntu* (Zulu, South Africa). Emphatically, Okoro (2013) holds the view that the African *Inochi* (with reference to Igbo *Ohacracy* in this context) maintains the interconnectedness and absolute inseparability of origin and common sources of existence. Okoro (2013:99) cites Mashiro who insists and agrees that humanity have realized that all *Inochis* are connected and formed into one. Each individual *Inochi* is voluntary and independent; all are equal in value and every individual exist in its adequate position giving life to every other one. Thus when humans misbehave without respect towards nature, they suffer and get sick since the same nature gets sick and dies; human beings in existence also get sick and die.

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[34] According to the north Igbo *Eri* myth of the *Nri*-Awka bloc, it was from the *Eri* son's sacrificial tomb sight that Yam sprouted and Cocoyam from the daughter's side respectively, and thereby providing the Igbo the two most important food crops in the *Ohacracy* governance emerged from the sacrifice *Chukwu* (the Igbo great God) demanded as noted above. These food crops represent, symbolize and sustain life which had come from the blood sacrifice for which the two first son and daughter of the Igbo father founder gave their lives. And having opened the mouth of the land to lay them to rest, brought about the sacredness of the land and why *Eri* demands that no other blood of his sons and daughters must be shed, otherwise suicide is the only option Achebe (1965:113; 185-187; Ebelebe 2009:6-7;14 and Okwu 2010:11).

This view therefore remains the central focus of my discussion in this current section. The *Ala* Goddess in the *Ohacracy* governance bore such sacredness and reverence in agreement of the interdependent and interconnectedness of all existence that is in need of each other for their respective survival and sustenance. *Ohacracy* governance strongly emphasizes the equivalence of respect for the land, Mother Earth, the *Ala* Goddess in honour, acknowledgment and recognition of her protection and sustenance of human life in the general life's environment. The earth as a sacred source for life tasks us to a great responsibility on all individuals and groups to respect the land. The erosion and pollution of the mother earth through the industrial and technological development activities are reaching a very dangerous level and is capable of destroying human sustainability on earth.

The human existence depends on earth sustainability. The catastrophic consequences that had befallen humanity for failure to respect the mother-earth in this regard cannot be taken lightly. Hence, the value Igbo *Ohacracy* governance offers to the Catholic Church in South-eastern Nigeria is to open her mind towards this unmistaken philosophy to save the human life through the respect of mother earth.

Therefore, the obvious benefits await humanity if the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance philosophy on *Ala*, as in mother-earth Goddess conception are observed and respected. The transpersonal view of human potential reflects how life is interconnected, which should inspire changes in behaviours that make an important contribution to the well-being of the world and all forms of life. Okoro (2013:110) concludes that if we base the foundation of peace education on the African concept of *Inochi*, it will not only curb violence but it will also eliminate entirely in the mental construct of the global citizen the idea of individualism. The elimination of over competition, exploitation, oppression, domination, violence, terrorism and war will signify communal and common sensitivity for each *Inochi*. Indeed, this common understanding will in turn encourage and create humanity, community, friendship, care and respect for human life and properties.

Finally, the moral development in reconciliation and settlement of certain conflicts among the Igbo people is assigned to the role of earth-spirit *Ala*. *Ala* is further tasked and connected with reconciling or mediating between people in the *Ohacracy* governance in any form of conflict. In effect of this role, every Igbo community has a shrine referred to as *Ihu-Ala* (the face of the earth) where regular sacrifices are made and major trials, discussions and decisions are

reached and given a ritual binding force (Agbasiere 2000:52). In any of the instances, the elders of the land known as representatives of *Ala* try to settle such cases before the *Ihu-Ala*.

This shows that it is *Ala* who actually and ultimately reconciles the two parties in conflict. All concerned are expected to show full cooperation by living in solidarity with all again in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. By this function, *Ala* serves as a symbol of solidarity and unity. Peace and harmony is always the focus of the mother-earth spirit in the *Ohacracy* governance and all are expected to respect and revere the mother-earth spirit in all the regards as narrated thus in this session. Yet, while observing the loss of this credible, authentic and valuable practice among the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance owing to one modern day reason and the other, particularly the centralized Catholic Church governance among the Igbo, Uzukwu (1996:26) proposes that today more than ever such humane living eludes the Igbo and Nigeria in general. The attack on human life and its sustenance should send shocking waves to all who respect life. It is an "offence against the earth, against the owner of the earth, and against the inhabitants of the earth" Uzukwu (1996) emphasizes, that human life and its sustenance do no longer inspire/arouse respect among humans or communities.

With such observations made, the next section on the emphasis on ancestors necessitates the values and meaning for this study towards the common good of all who live in the Igbo society of South-eastern Nigeria.

4.2.2.3 The Ancestors as basis for *Ohacracy* Governance among the Igbo

The ancestors are believed to live (abode) in the underworld; that is in the *Ime ala*. This likewise explains why after life, the Igbo *Ohacracy* buries the body inside the earth. The ancestors form part of the spirit force intermediary by which the *Ohacracy* governance among the Igbo people become custodians of the land and the future. The ancestors are identified within the functions of *Chukwu* in Igbo religious experience. The ancestral cult among the Igbo and elsewhere remains a cultural heritage of every tradition recognising the generations past, present and the future. It brings the past role players in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance into the life reality and their influence continue to create vital impact on the present living generation. The living-dead generations as they are known in the *Ohacracy* governance of Igbo occupy a special place in the Igbo religious affairs and therefore are considered to have strong authority in the *Ohacracy* social order of the Igbo people of south-eastern Nigeria. As Uchendu (1965:102) emphasises, the Igbo people picture their ancestors as the invisible

segment of the lineage. According to Uchendu (1965) the ancestors are not worshiped but honoured or respected (venerated). There is reverence for the ancestors who though not visible, are believed to still live among the *Ohacracy* environment. This is the reason why the ancestors are referred to as the living-dead members.

In the *Ohacracy* governance, the living-dead command such enormous influence on the entire social order and as original founders and sustainers of their generations in the order; their past history, heritage and life values remain very much alive in the ordering of the daily life activities in the community. The ancestors are believed to possess power over humanity and creation in that they have been endowed with a stronger vital force as spirits who lived among humans being. Ancestors are known to have experiences of two worlds of the living and the spirit world. It is to this social order that Magesa (1998) alludes to the role of the religious leader as the custodian of the values or the order of the ancestors that he defines the ancestral place by the task and work of religious leaders in the African religion of any *Ohacracy* governance. He notes that it is the responsibility of the religious leaders of the society, as well as of the elders in the household, to pass on orally and be examples of all the moral codes of the clan and ethnic group from generation to generation. Life beyond this material world is guaranteed only by a good life in the world as indicated in the tradition. Leaders therefore, are invested with unique responsibility to pass on tradition to next generations. By virtue of leadership, one ontologically has closer union and communication with the divine and the ancestors than the rest of the population (Magesa 1998:70).

Hence, one can trace or sketch out the task of ancestors by noting the use of the following expressions from the above observation: *to pass on, the moral codes, the clan and ethnic group, from generation to generation, by tradition, life beyond and closer union with God.* These expressions refer to and indicate the presence of ancestor within the African setting (cosmology) and are represented by the life and action of the religious leader.

The understanding of the relationship between the ancestors and the living members of the *Ohacracy* governed communities is vital to the understanding of the role of the ancestors in the preservation of solidarity and unity among its members and who live in the land. As Mozia (1987:181) affirms that whether living or dead, the Igbo community remains a single and continuing unit. Some elements of superior power are ascribed to the ancestors.

The need for connectedness is very central to life in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. It is indeed with such close contact or relationship that the Igbo people hold the ancestors with high esteem. The influence of the ancestors on the living members is still so strongly felt that all seek the good and development of the *Ohacracy* communities as ordered by the ancestor's moral codes and traditions. The ancestors are believed to manifest interest in the solidarity welfare of their living relatives, for whom they had lived, toiled and even died.

As founders and custodians of the *Ohacracy* traditions of Igbo people's moral, social, political, religious and governance institutions, the ancestors are accorded with great respect and reverence by the living members of their lineage. The Igbo people's *Omenala*[35] is a very wide source of moral codes that guide the people's social order and is attributed to the institution of the ancestor's (Duru 1980:90-95). It is through such ancestral paradigm that the Igbo people are inspired to moral and social harmony. *Ohacracy* governance as an end result leads to the common good of all who live in the land among the Igbo people founded by the great ancestors. Emphasis must be made in this study that the negative and disrespectful attitudes towards the ancestral veneration is noticeably unappreciated. Duru (1980) concurs that Catholicism has done more harm than good in the regard to link life with the ancestors. That the emergence of Catholicism and their disrespect for the ancestors has rather promoted negative moral behaviours of stealing, rubbery, incest, disrespect of elders, human property and life. He therefore concludes that "Now these offenses happen because the Christians no longer observe the ways of their fore fathers…and the younger generation will have to live with the consequences" (Duru 1980:95).

Indeed, the fear of the ancestor's punishment (as practiced in the traditional Igbo) has disappeared in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities owing to the fact that Catholicism has watered dawn the practices that kept the meaning of life together. The fact that individual offenders can go to reconcile privately with the Catholic minister (sacrament of confessions) over an offence against the community, gives the leverage for 'easy sin and forgiveness.' The fear of heavy sacrificial punishment for certain offences (example, murder) in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance model is no longer in place; thanks to the new religion.

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[35] *Omenala* are the moral customs and guides founded by the ancestors to regulate the daily life of the Igbo (Duru 1980: 207). Recently Igbo scholars and writers have compiled these to be the juridical institutions of the Igbo people. This is a type of constitution that guides all human activities in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance tradition.

Finally, the Igbo belief in the reincarnation of the ancestors remains a religious dimension that contributes immensely to the *Ohacracy* governance among the Igbo people. This belief has a strong social and moral influence on the Igbo people. A person who has lived a morally good life, which is identified as life conducted in accordance with *Omenala*, can attain the status of reincarnation. Any Igbo who lived and died for the promotion of moral and social development among the people earns the status of an ancestor (Agbasiere 2000:56). Reincarnation remains a pivotal institution for the maintenance of political and moral cohesion since the dead parents are believed to have made a comeback, owing to their well modelled and high moral life in the former life. Reincarnation in the Catholic Church's language is equivalence to resurrection. Though not in eternity; in the Igbo *Ohacracy* sense but, in the form of "a come back to life" on earth in the particular Igbo community.

4.3   Key Economic Bases for *Ohacracy* Governance among the Igbo

The Igbo social order organised under the influence of *Ohacracy* has in its civilization developed three areas of its economic governance namely agriculture, trade and manufacture. Sustenance and survival as solidarity that led to this economic development can be described as engineering the advent of Igbo contacts with its neighbours including the far distant ones. Without doubt the Igbo, like their Edo, Igala, Ibibio and Yoruba neighbours, are an example of successful adaptation to the tropical rain forest environment of Northwest Africa. As noted above the Igbo economic system can be studied under three major headings namely: agriculture, trade and manufacture. This section therefore highlights these three economic aspects of this study. Each of these three main realms of economic activity played an important part in the *Ohacracy* governance of the Igbo people.

Ebelebe (2009:12) notes, among the early pre-colonial Igbo observers and writers (such as G.T. Basden (1966), A.G. Leonard and D. Forde 1965) there was a negative and uninspiring observation of 'laziness' surrounding these three economic aspects of the *Oha ndi* Igbo (among the Igbo people). This wrong observation was based on the life cycle of the local Igbo whose economic activities were shaped around their market days and farming seasons outside which the *Oha* was governed by recreational activities like the youth wrestling and dancing competition (entertainment) seasons which occurred outside the busy periods of agricultural activities. Therefore, Ebelebe (2009:12) insists that the Igbo *Ohacracy* economy was

"dynamic, diversified and market-oriented" resulting from "centuries and decades of meaningful dialogue between the Igbo genius and the environment."

As this study is not focused on anthropological history of the Igbo people under which the detailed study three economic activities would fall, I will rather summarize how these three areas cemented the *Ohacracy* governance among Igbo people and their development. As this will be treated with some degree of importance, it should be noted that agriculture is the main and most vital economic activity, with trade and manufacturing coming as subsidiaries.

Survival for the Igbo depends so much on the activities on the land that is agriculture. Economically, Igbo men, women and children practised agriculture. Every age group had to contribute to the tilling of the land and production of food. Citing Olaudah Equiano[36] on how agriculture and its produce remained central among traditional Igbo, Isichei (1976:27) writes:

> …Our land is uncommonly rich and fruitful, and produces all kinds of vegetables in great abundance. We have plenty of Indian corn (maize) and vast quantities of cotton and tobacco. Our pineapples grow without culture; they are about the size of the largest sugar loaf, and finely flavoured. We have also spices of different kinds, particularly pepper, and a variety of delicious fruits, which I have never seen in Europe …all our industry, is exerted to improve these blessings of nature.

The Igbo people used crude implements in their tilling of the land. Such included hoes, axes, shovels and beaks or pointed iron used in tilling the soil. They produced vegetables, yams, beans, plantain, cocoyam and fruits (Ebelebe 2009:13). Yet among all these farm produce, the farming of yam (the King of all crops) is seen by the Igbo people as man's main duty to cultivate (Ukachukwu 2007:252) and it remains a major crop that is sold in all Igbo community markets. As I noted above, the myth of how 'Yam and Coco-Yam' came to be the major crops among the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance; the blood of Eri's children gave origin or brought into existence the cultivation and domestication of these two most vital crops among the Igbo. Okwu (2010:7) comments that until this day the "yam god, *Ifejioku/Ahiajokuji*, is one of the principal deities in Igbo-land and the crop, *ji*, itself, the most important cultivated plant, as a symbol of wealth and well-being among the people."

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[36] A remarkable Eighteenth century Igbo man was sold into slavery. Olaudah Equiano, otherwise known as Gustavus Vassa the African! He published his autobiography in London in 1789 in which he narrated his experience of village life that is today attributed to the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria. He was born around 1745 and in 1756 he was kidnapped with the sister and sold into slavery and was brought to Virginia in the United States of America. He was removed later to England, and sold again to a sea captain who gave him the name Gustavus Vassa. In England, Equiano bought his freedom in 1766 (Ifemesia 2002: 27-29).

New Yam festivals or *Iwa-Ji* (as in Igbo language equivalent) are occasions therefore for socio-cultural celebrations among Igbo communities whereby a new harvest season is celebrated by the entire community to commemorate a good harvest signalling food security among the entire community (Achebe 1965:34). Yam as the main agricultural crop of the Igbo people and their staple food, calls for celebration after a harvesting season. The *Iwa-Ji* is a celebration depicting the prominence of yam in the socio-cultural life of the Igbo people. The *Iwa-Ji* is celebrated in the month of August of every year just before the beginning of the harvest season among the Igbo rural agricultural communities as noted by Ifemesia (2002:71-72). Each rural Igbo community has its own date and day of this august occasion. This day symbolizes the conclusion of a work cycle and the beginning of another. Invitation to the new yam festival is usually open to all who wish to attend meaning that, abundant food is ready for all; and not just the harvesters but for the entire community in celebration. A variety of festivities like cultural dances, masquerades parades and parties, etc. marks the beginning of the eating of new yam. This festival remains vital since it symbolizes the abundance of the produce. Similar festivals are held in the West African region like in Ghana where it is called the "*Homowo*"; that is "To Hoot at Hunger" Festival. By so doing the entire people hope for a good harvest to overcome famine in the coming planting year.[37]

The Igbo *Ohacracy* order also kept bullocks, goats and other domesticated animals. Trade and craftsmanship took the Igbo people beyond their territory. The Igbo were entrepreneurs and highly industrious. It was from this business-mindedness that the traditional Igbo were able to develop the four-day counting for a week calendar. In the traditional Igbo calendar, a week (*Izu*) has 4 days (*Ubochi*) namely *Eke*, *Orie*, *Afọ*, and *Nkwọ*; while seven (7) weeks make one month (*Ọnwa*), a month has 28 days and there are 13 months in a year (see Afigbo 2005:80). In the last month, an extra day is added. The traditional Igbo calendar is fully demonstrated in the table below.

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[37] Igbo Land 2011 'Iwa ji ofu, new yam festival in Igbo land' (http://www.africanloft.com/iwa-ji-ofu-new-yam-festival-in-igboland/ (Accessed 18 April, 2016).

TABLE NO. 4.1 Igbo Market Weekly/Monthly and Yearly Calendar[38]

THE FOUR WEEK DAYS ➡	AFOR	NKWO	EKE	ORIE
IZU NTA (SMALL WEEK) ➡	4TH DAY (A SMALL MARKET DAY)	4TH DAY (A SMALL MARKET DAY)	4TH DAY (A SMALL MARKET DAY)	4TH DAY (A SMALL MARKET DAY)
IZU UKWU (BIG WEEK) ➡	8TH DAY (A BIG MARKET DAY)	8TH DAY (A BIG MARKET DAY)	8TH DAY (A BIG MARKET DAY)	8TH DAY (A BIG MARKET DAY)
7 WEEKS OF 4 DAYS EACH ➡	28TH DAY IN ONE MONTH	28TH DAY IN ONE MONTH	28TH DAY IN ONE MONTH	28TH DAY IN ONE MONTH
13 LUNER MONTHS ➡	364 DAYS A YEAR			

The small and big market designations attract different audiences, populations and interests. The small market days of every 4th night attracts the short distant or home based marketers whose base is walking distance to the market grounds; while the big market days attracts the far distant marketers who trade in bulk goods of their choice in which 8 days is required for these markets to repeat it activities of trading in different goods and services. As Ebelebe (2009:14) concludes, these two variations came into existence to effect to apportion or allocate every *Ohacracy* Igbo town its own market day; while avoiding and preventing each other's market from clashing with the other nearby market. But of course, the system is

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[38] In explaining the table above, the market order is rotationally kept and known by all in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. Basden (1966:151) notes that the Igbo calendar as seen in the table is divided into thirteen lunar months of twenty-eight days and seven weeks. The four days in the Igbo week are *Eke, Orie, Afo*, and *Nkwo* (*Izu nta* that is small market week). Two four-day periods make big week that is eight-days (*Izu ukwu*, big market week) (Uzukwu, 1988:94) and (Ebelebe, 2009:14) attests to this.

heavily considered with a number of factors namely, population, location, natural resources and a high level of services available would attract its status to be minor or major market as the case may be. Different agricultural goods and services were provided to all in need of such at any of the markets available.

Furthermore, Igbo community titles like "*Eze-Ji*" (King of Yam) or "*Ogbu Efi*" (Elephant or Beast killer) *Di Ji* (Yam husbandry) respectively are awarded to people of great farm productions that had sustained the Igbo population by their hard work (Ebelebe 2009:13). By so doing, the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance had been able to work in solidarity with all who live and survive in the Igbo land. It is in this regard that Cole (1982:7) notes that size of family matters for one to achieve like others, many wives and children was the way forward. A successful Igbo man or woman farmer would seek social recognition by taking a local title. A title was a guarantee of character, as well as of success.

The possession of wealth does not guarantee or earn any Igbo person in the *Ohacracy* governance a status of prestige in the community (Cole 1982:9-10). Wealth in the individual hand must serve the good of the *Oha* community for one to be recognised as having made a social impact in the life of the people. Also, how one made his or her wealth played an important role and is carefully considered before an individual could be accorded with the honour of any local or *Ohacracy* cultural titles. All who had acquired wealth illegally or through a corrupt means are not recognised with such social status of titles of chieftaincy. One must keep to the moral and ethical standard of acquiring wealth.

Moreover, the Igbo *Ohacracy* people's response to the inevitable changes in the modern economic era however, has been very positive and rapid too. The Igbo response in the modern setting, from their traditional base into the modernity has been motivated by complex factors but principally by economic considerations. The desire to participate in the economic activities which brought more monetary reward than the traditional agricultural activities can be noted. The recognition or title driven as the incursion of money into the economy has tremendously developed. The new occupation of modern epoch brought a desired change, which the Igbo people needed to transform itself and it has made the Igbo a formidable force of respect in today's Nigerian economic market.

While emphasising on the reason for such rapid success of the Igbo in a short encounter with the new economy, Olutayo (1999:163) and Okonjo (1976:39) further maintain that the Igbo have been able to achieve such a progress by generating and maintaining a communal civic spirit (in other words *Oha* centred way of living) in the Diaspora. The communal spirit, Olutayo (1999:163) insists, is the life-blood of the entrepreneurial ability of the Igbo people, and it manifests itself in the apprenticeship[39] network founded to achieve economic progress.

Credit must be given therefore to the Igbo *Ohacracy*/communal civic spirit, which has informed solidarity among the Igbo people. *Ohacracy* remains the major force and value that has propelled the Igbo society to such height of economic development that followed colonialism. The resilience of the Igbo culture to hold together shows a remarkable buoyancy of the Igbo people's practice in their *Ohacracy* governance. In essence, this successful modernisation complemented the communal fabric and the traditional means of food production. A community walking together in the midst of change and modernity; keeping in mind the *Oha* centred way of life and communal bonded spirit of solidarity. Not even modernity could break the *Oha* spirit among the Igbo until the ideology of individualism raised its ugly head and begun to destroy this vital value of life giving and life protecting practise of *Oha* mindedness among the Igbo.

Trade as noted, played a very prominent part in the modern Igbo people's economy. Its role was made prominent partly because of the effect of the Nigeria – Biafra civil war in the early 1960s among the Igbo people. The destruction and disruption of the agricultural activities among the Igbo people in this era of war in turn, promoted trade and travel as noted above. The effects thereof led to the strengthening of two important *Ohacracy* aspects of governance, namely apprenticeship and development unions.

Within the outcomes of apprenticeship and development unions, Igbo *Ohacracy* governance utilises as agents to counteract individualism that was destroying communal spirit. Trade and

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[39] The apprenticeship system was fully developed among the Igbo just after the Nigerian and Biafra civil war in the mid-1960s. A lot of Igbo men and women were displaced in their daily economic and social activities by this war. At the end of the war apprenticeship was introduced to help these displaced able and disable men and women to stand on their own again having learnt one trade or the other from fellow relatives or friends. The Igbo communities detest begging in any form; and thanks to apprenticeship (Uzukwu 1996:96). This system had worked so well that Igbo *Ohacracy* people (land) recovered so much from its loss and became vibrant again with numerous economic activities that eventually encouraged development.

manufacture had their strong anchor on the effects of the war since agriculture has been the primary life activity of the Igbo people was disrupted by 1967-1970 civil wars. Hence, the search for an alternative way of life became inevitable. Talented and hard-working individual Igbo people were able to promote trade through apprenticeship whereby young and adult male and female folks were taught by their knowledgeable close/distant relatives of new economic activities such as namely, trade, commerce and blacksmith. This new dimension of trade, also in turn promoted development unions[40] among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. This was as a result of many Igbo people who had travelled outside their original homes in search of new trade. By development unions the new city migrants kept together in unions to be able to protect their interests in the new city life (Uzukwu 1996:95-96).

The next sections will bring to light the inculturation, Africanization, communalism, slavery and colonial factors as they affect and contribute towards Catholic Church governance among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria.

4.4   Inculturation in Relation to the Catholic Church Governance among the Igbo

The mere mention of the concept or term 'inculturation' denotes a situation or environment in which there was a miss-order and therefore needs some sort of augmentation, rectification and or improvement. The situation in mind in this case had occurred in the era of Catholic Church governance when the Catholic had thought and proclaimed such teachings that *Extra ecclesiam nulla Sallus* that is "No Salvation outside the Church" (Dupuis and Neuner 2001:16). The Council of Florence held in 1442 had equally maintained this proclamation and hence, excluded other religions, traditions, cultures and in fact, and other nations. Catholicism was proclaimed to be the only religious practice that is genuine and legitimate for human salvation. It was in recalling this mistaken position that Uzukwu (1988:136) notes the position and views of Fulgentius saying that the "Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and proclaims that none of those who are outside the Catholic Church (not only pagans, but Jews also, heretics and schismatics) can have part in eternal life, but will go into eternal fire, 'which was prepared for the devil and his angels" unless they are gathered into that church before the end of life.

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[40] Development unions will be discussed in the fifth chapter when the work looks into the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance institutions that promoted solidarity among the people.

Indeed such a position clearly indicates the history of Salvation theology in the Catholic Church in which there was the exclusion of the "others." Such governance did not approve or exonerate the presence of God in other cultures hence claimed for itself as the only source or way to salvation. In rectifying this misconception of common salvation for all, the event of Vatican II played a vital role. It notes:

> …later Popes and Councils eventually agreed that there could be salvation outside the Church when certain conditions are fulfilled. The trend continued and came to be summed up in the encyclical letter of Paul VI, "*Ecclesiam Suam*" (1964) and *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions) as well as some other documents of Vatican II. Christ's saving grace is always active even beyond the Catholic Church, so affirms Vatican II documents: (De Ecclesia 8 and 16).

While capturing the new dawn of Vatican II and the openness of the Catholic Church to embress other cultures, Agbo (2015) maintains that it presents a case study after over two thousand years of Christianity. The dawn of Vatican II with its language of *aggionamento* brought a new concept of enhancing the worship in the liturgy within the context of the people's worldview. In order words "Inculturation"- a process of bringing the people's culture systematically into the church. In Nigeria, especially in the South-east, Agbo (2015) took an ethnographic style as he shows Sacred Music in the mire of conflicting and complementary influences of both Western and Traditional musical elements (in style, accompaniment, content, structure and texture, etc). He proposes some theoretical, pedagogical and compositional paradigms for inculturation, not only by hazarding fresh compositions suitable for the Catholic Church but laying out procedural outlines for further/similar works of inculturation.

This courage received from the Vatican II Council to adapt and support inculturation of certain practices in the Igbo Catholic Church governance and the African Churches in general is very authentic and must be given attention. The local clergy orders that were established by Western customs in and around Igbo land at the inception of Catholicism have remained settle in this imposed colonial structure. This study therefore argues that the Igbo *Ohacracy* order offers all the opportunity to participate in the governance structure of the people's daily lives. This is in contrast to the Western hierarchical style of the Catholic Church "priest-king" and "bishop-lord" over the Igbo people whose customs and practices do not fit in such ruler-ship

environment. The *Ad Gentes* (22) as noted above is an 'open door' inclusion of all peoples in the gospel of Christ and not 'shot door' against peoples, their heritage and identity.

In essence, the Igbo Catholic Church will continue to suffer syncretism both mentally and materially, which the local clergy order has always complained about until they rise up on their two feet to address full participation of the laity or local people in the governance of the Catholic Church based on the clear understanding and practice of Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. In this true and authentic presentation of the gospel message to the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, the "priests-kings" and the "bishops-lords" will begin to have a different pastoral role to play in the life of the people. It will involve the humility to the loosing of one's own fat milking cows which the clergy's position offers them presently among the Igbo. The Igbo will then own their Catholic Churches as it will fall into the *Ohacracy* order of full participation of all who live and ply their trade in the land.

Moreover, in its inception, the Vatican II (1963-1966) was already indicating the use of 'inculturation' under consideration. The Catholic Church in the modern world having realized that through the human culture God communicates values that have sustained human life. By so doing the Catholic Church indicates her openness to adaptations and utilization of different groups, other peoples and cultures in reaching God or through it God reaches the people (Sipuka 2000:237). The call of Vatican II Ecumenical Council was therefore an indication on the willingness of the Catholic Church that new navigational charts had to be drawn up because the currents had changed. The Church as a whole needed to set a new course (Cadorette 2009:193). The old centralized culture of Church governance is no longer viable and non-profiting to the Church for the new modern world and contemporary thinking is moving on faster and changing. Clarifying yet much better, Vatican II indicates that in the liturgy the Church does not wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather she respects and promotes the qualities and talents of the various races and nations. The Church even sometimes admits such liturgical acts, provided they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit (SC, 37; GS, 57-60).

It was therefore for the first time in the history of the Catholic Church governance that she officially notes her interest to reform to inclusive language and in appreciation of 'Otherness', the foreign cultures of other races and peoples were to be included and accepted as means of God's self-identification and revelation among peoples.

Amaladoss (2010:2) notes that indigenization as it relates to inculturation is a natural process. Stressing further in John Paul II's on *The mission of the Redeemer, 28*; this natural process should go the way of "dialogue which is encouraged in inter-cultural or interreligious process in which we realize that the Spirit of God is present and active in all the cultures and religions". Thus he concludes "Any gospel-culture encounter will have to take this pluralism seriously and not easily dismiss creative initiatives as syncretistic." It is in the affirmation of the 'Otherness' as noted above that inculturation took root in the Catholic Church and in its conceptual understanding. Therefore, Ukpong (2013:531) defines inculturation as:

> A dynamic on-going process of conscious, critical and mutual interaction between the Christian faith and the religion and secular aspects of the cultures; Such that the Christian reality becomes appropriated from within the perspectives and with the resources of these cultures to challenge and transform society and bring about a re-interpretation of faith; it seeks to open up new understandings of faith and lead to recreating culture and society.

In the same vein Waliggo (1991:506) holds inculturation as "the insertion of new values into one's heritage and world-view." By this idea the decentralised model of governance will be fully integrated into the Catholic model. This process he continues "applies to all dimensions of life and development." In his critical and social analysis in the urbanization of African cities, Shorter (2002:6) grappled with the way forward for African inculturation in which the multicultural situation and experiences have become very common. Despite the challenges the city situation poses to inculturation, Shorter notes that though this encounter of cultures remain, cultures retain their identity. He advises that each culture be given a chance of interaction and dialogue to find acceptable means of expression that enhances human life and mutual respect (Shorter 2002:7). In their clarification on inculturation process, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference –SACBC- (2002:1) states that inculturation remains a dynamic and on-going progression in the Church through which Christ's message takes root in the human culture. By this process SACBC maintains that the Local Church stands to gain values that are eminent in the cultures of a particular environment; and likewise the local culture are enhanced and transformed by the Gospel. Indeed, the Church's wisdom that has come through experience and tradition amassed through her long journeys in history is shared with all in this fashion of inculturation.

Inculturation in this sense brings unity of culture in the Church experience making each individual culture transparently acceptable and become self-witnessing via ones valuable cultural practices. Hence, the SACBC confirms that as people of Africa we want to feel at

home in the Church and the Church to be at home in Africa. When therefore, familiar elements, signs and symbols are used in this sense both clergy and lay people are at home since their language has been spoken through liturgy and worship. And by its very act inculturation aid the entire people to be part and parcel of Church governance and activities. People stop being 'onlookers' but 'active-participants' in their liturgy and worship; since liturgy at the stage involves the bringing together of the Church's liturgy and a given local culture (SACBC 2002:4).

Emphasizing further, the role and place of inculturation in the life of the local Church SACBC declares that inculturation is a dynamic relationship between the local Church and the culture of its own people or its host. It is all about the Gospel we have received and the culture we live in. By being human, Jesus identified himself with human culture (Shorter 2010:2). It brings the power of Gospel in the heart of culture and cultures. Hence SACBC (2001:2-3) identifies two main areas of influence of inculturation and states that it first teaches us how to relate the Christian faith to the African cultural heritage. Second, inclturation teaches us how to apply the Gospel to the contemporary African political and socio-economic situation.

Inculturation serve as a way of liberation from foreign domination of one's life and culture. Hence, it is about letting one's language speak (whether verbal or symbolic) in clear and significant ways. Kanu (2012:237) refers to Arrupe observing that inculturation serves as a principle that animates, directs, and unifies the cultures. It also transforms it, remaking it so as to bring about new creation. It should be able to restore the Igbo personality, dignity and self-confidence in the Igbo local Church. The proposal of *Ohacracy* tradition in the Igbo Church of South-eastern Nigeria will offer the Catholic Church the significance of the decentralised values and opportunity for full participation in the Church life (Crollius 1986:43; Bate 1995:20). Most effectively therefore, inculturation if fully adopted in the Igbo Catholic practices will open the door for new things of value and meaningful to happen in the local Igbo Church governance.

The Church hierarchy and centralization of authority and governance as noted above cannot in anyway neglect or ignore the need for authentic Christianity to come forth among the Igbo and elsewhere in Africa. The achievement of inculturation in the Igbo Church and elsewhere will mean the actual listening of the Chief with "large ears" who is ready to listen to many

mouths (cultures) speaking to express themselves in liturgy and worship the central lives of the Church governance.

Pope Francis articulates the "open-door" which the Catholic Church should and must reflect at all times indicates by inference the need for inculturation in his first apostolic exhortation "*The Joy of the Gospel*" (2013:39, no.46) and writes:

> A Church which "goes forth" is a Church whose doors are open. Going out to others in order to reach the fringes of humanity does not mean rushing out aimlessly into the world. Often it is better simply to slow down… to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way. At times we have to be like the father of the prodigal son, who always keeps his door open so that when the son returns, he can readily pass through it.

Inculturation in the sense of an "open door" policy remains vital way of the Church as mother remains open hearted for her children Francis noted. Hence, an open door must be the policy guiding the Church to encounter other cultures to discover the true revelation of the divine through these cultures. As Uzukwu (1996:62) notes some known and desired inculturation in the African Churches since the Vatican II Council includes the Ndzon-Melen Mass of Yaounde, the Zairian rite, the Eucharistic liturgies in East Africa and other pockets of practices in other parts of Africa. Both Roman pontiffs Paul VI and John Paul II had shown much interest in these experiments but had also limited inculturation to language and style of faith expression as it appeals to African socio-cultural practices and not the doctrines or defined teachings of the Church (1996:62). The local bishops of Africa in support of these acknowledgements of African style of life being accepted in the Church worship noted that the "Word must become flesh in Africa!" In conclusion, the Igbo *Ohacracy* order needs a contextual interpretation to be able to experience of Jesus, and of course in Africa. The next section will discuss the Africanization of Catholic Church governance in other to save, secure and maintain the cultural values and heritage that is substantially inherent in Igbo *Ohacracy* cultural communities.

One wonders why it is so impossible to contextualize (Igbonize) the Catholic Church practises after over 100 years of establishment. The arguments that God is not present in the Igbo or African cultures and therefore these cultures cannot qualify for Catholic practices is far remote from truth and cannot be true any longer. Such arguments have been discredited by African theologians like Gifford (2008:27) who says that "Inculturation requires the

acceptance of the fact that God has been at work in the history of all peoples and that their history is sacred. Culture is the sacred space of people. Hence any agent of inculturation has to discern the presence of God within these traditions and cultures." Hence, Igbo Catholic Church hierarchy must be bold and move on with concrete areas of inculturation so to renew the face of Igbo Church. This study has been very critical on this aspect.

Kurgat (2009) investigated the theology of inculturation and the African Church. He specifically, examined the demand and relevance of inculturation for cultural development, assess inculturation message to Africa, while determining the role of Small Christian Communities (SCC) and examine the impact of inculturation in African Church. As important and vital this study among the Luhya of Busia District in Kenya, the recommendations and value of SCC's remain vital in the inculturation aspect of this study. As alluded in chapter 1 of this study, SCC's practises in the Catholic Church comes very close to *Ohacracy* participatory governance values and therefore can be appreciated of its contributions towards the realisation of genuine inculturation in the Igbo Catholic communities. While emphasising that in 1973 the bishops of Eastern Africa adopted the SCC's as pastoral priority considering its value oriented towards inculturation of Church as family, Kurgat (2009:094) maintains that:

> The whole purpose of incultruation is to make evangelization the influence of the Good News more effective in human development. An integral human development necessarily includes cultural development and that cultural development is epitomized by inculturation. For effective implementation of inculturation, the task should be taken as a community project where the Christian community shall be fully involved both formally and informally.

This means that without inculturation, the Gospel message remains foreign to the African communities and the SCC's remain the context to see inculturaltion take root. Since Church life is based on the level of SCC's where everyday life and activities are witnessed, it remains a high priority for the African Church to become a family. SCC's therefore is the best way of safeguarding human values and of rooting the Church in the life and culture of the people. SCC's can be an important instrument of cultural development as they should be of inculturation itself (Kurgat 2009:094). The SCC's remains a Church context where African Catholics can experience interpersonal relationships and a sense of communal belongingness. Church authority and power as ways and means of governance in the Church can be fully shared with the lay for full participation in Church governance in this instance of the SCC's.

This recommendation as basic facts of a model of Church governance has not been welcomed in the Igbo Catholic Church hierarchy. Both bishops and clergy are said to be unwilling to embrace or commit to the full challenges SCC's have presented with regards to inculturation values to allow the laity participate in power sharing in the Church. The idea of SCC's as a means to inculturate the Church governance among the Igbo Catholics have not taken root since the Catholic Church hierarchy are unwilling to see the laity share in the authority and model of Catholic Church governance (Ebelebe 2009:191).

Other notable area of inculturation which is visible in the Igbo Catholic Church is the foremost indigenous leadership which has really taking over the local Catholic Church. Igbo sons and daughters form almost 100% of the Igbo Catholic Church leadership (Ihenacho 2004:74). This though has not transpired in localizing the Igbo Church as Ebelebe (2009:189) concludes that, the Catholic Church's practises and culture has remained highly Western.

In addition to the administrative structures of the Roman Catholic Church in Igbo land, it is vital to note here that the existence and well established women, men and youth organisations in local, regional and national levels show tremendous growth. At local levels of the Catholic Church among the Igbo, women's group are well organised towards Church projects and community development which has taken root via the Catholic Church initiatives. Both men and Youth Organisations have taken the same root as energised by Igbo *Ohacracy* order to engage themselves in Church maintenance, manual labour, providing moral guide to the young and other developmental projects in the Church programmes. While acknowledging this fact Ihenacho (2004:77) write thus:

> Parishes, dioceses and organizations such as the Catholic Women Organization, Knights, and the different pious organizations/sodalities are testifying to the powerful presence of Igbo Catholicism not only by their dynamic activities but also by their beautiful infrastructures, such as Church, rectories, chanceries, hostels, shrines, shops, etc. All over Igbo land, there is a healthy competition, which in my view draws from a deep sense of Catholicism about which dioceses, parishes and sodalities will provide the best liturgies, music, and infrastructures.

In chapter 6 this thesis presents the dialogue between the Catholic centralised governance and the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised order. Hence, the promotion of education and health care are two incredible institutions the Igbo Catholicism have achieved and is well expressed in

chapter 6. In fact, almost in every Igbo Catholic parish in the South-eastern Nigeria are hosting one primary/secondary school or the other and health care centres looking after Igbo communities and its environment. All these infrastructural amenities have come about through the self-tasked organisational fund raising projects by Igbo Catholics who dim it fitting to bring development through self-help projects which are deeply rooted in the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised form of governance culture. Happily, the Igbo Catholicism has come to embrace and internalise this good value of self-help projects among the communities.

By so doing, one can easily note the enthusiastic and healthy laity group responded positively towards the needs of the Catholic Church in Igbo communities. While emphasising on lay participation in organisation and governance in Igbo Catholicism, Ihenacho (2004:140) summarises the exceptional role of the laity in the African Church and in particular in Nigeria he writes:

> It is impossible to conceive of the Catholic Church in Africa or Nigeria, without thinking at once of the dedicated, selfless, competent work of the laity in the parishes – as catechists, lectors, choir members and directors, advisers in church and property, etc. Priests depend daily upon the cooperation, advice assistance of the laity in providing the basic parish services. If anything is lacking, it might be sufficient gratitude or appreciation for the tremendous input of the laity into existing parishes.

By so doing it is very clear that the Igbo Catholicism has inculturated the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance style where participation in governance is the task of all who live in the communities.

However, apart from the general inculturation on liturgy (local language used in liturgy and local music and the use of Parish and financial Councils), there is little done on proper authority decision making. The abuse of ecclesiological authorities is very present in most Igbo Catholic parishes where the clergy still decides what happens while the laity has remained onlookers. Notwithstanding the liturgical changes brought about after Vatican II and some of the achievement mentioned above, Ebelebe (2009:209) claims that little can be seen on the ground with regards to inculturation in the Igbo Catholicism. Few inculturation aspects the Catholic hierarchy among Igbo Catholic have allowed their adherents to take up the *Ozo* titles and the Christianization of *Igba-ndu* ritual in some dioceses in Igbo land as explained and developed in chapter 4 of this study which was forbidden in the past to have anything to do with Catholic expressions.

Despite all the efforts of individual priests, Catholic Church academics and groups in the Church who make initiatives towards inculturation in the Igbo Catholic Church, the resistance of the Catholic hierarchy in the promotion and protection of the Western (Vatican) cultural history and expressions is unbelievably shocking. Uzukwu (1985:3) would accuse the Igbo Catholic hierarchy of swallowing all Western traditions without asking any questions or being any critical. It is in agreement that Ebelebe (2009:190) express such shocking remarks thus:

> Besides the theological conservatism of most of the Igbo Catholic hierarchy, another reason for the slow pace of inculturation in the Church in Igboland is a fear by the same hierarchy and the clergy of some of the consequences of genuine inculturation, especially in the area of leadership and authority (*which is at the centre of this study*). No genuine attempt at inculturation in Igboland can fail to address the question of the exercises of authority than the kind of power and authority, which the bishop exercises in his diocese and the parish priest in his parish. …the near absolute power, which the bishop and the parish priest exercise in Igboland, is unknown in Igbo traditional culture, where consultation and consensus is the essence of leadership and authority.

Indeed, this study agrees that for any genuine inculturation to take place in the Igbo land, it must begin with the decentralisation of power and authority in the Igbo Catholic Church. It is in doing so that real change will take effect and the clergy will be called to accountability in the exercise of authority in the decentralised society of the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria. Serious and real work need to be done in this area of the life of the Catholic Church both in Igbo land and Africa in general. With regards to inculturation therefore this study concurs with Kurgat (2009:098) in recommending that the Church adopts an alternative adequate approach which can produce a favourable effect in encounter with the indigenous people concerning their culture to avoid conflict. The involvement of the local people in the Igbo Catholic Church governance is non-negotiable. The need for SCCs full operation in the Igbo Catholic Church has become a necessity. This involvement will help to develop leadership qualities of the laity as part of governing bodies in the Catholic Church.

In other words, the active participation of the people in their daily concern of the Church should not be let to the clergy to decide or determine while they remain infants or onlookers in their own Church. The re-examination of some of the Igbo cultural practises so to inculcate them in the life of Catholic Church is a project that inculturation invites both the clergy and laity to attain to. Of course, to reshape her theology, liturgy, forms of ministry and Church growth which the ecclesiology of the Vatican II empowers the local Churches should

encourage the Good News according to the experiences and needs of the people of God in their communities. The liberation message of Christ must come alive and not foreign to the Igbo people and Africans in general. Inculturation is the way forward to the future of Catholicism among the Igbo Catholics in South-eastern Nigeria.

4.5 *Ohacracy* (Communalism) in Contrast to Individualism as a Model of Governance in the Igbo Catholicism

The perception and experience that all humans begins, animals and living subjects are socially interconnected, interrelated, interwoven and interlinked in their lives' social-environment, cannot be ignored or done away with, as though it does not matter. Life's interdependency, inter-relationship, collectivism and mutual coexistence form the basis for Igbo life pattern as expressed in *Ohacracy* as; an aspect of Igbo-communalism (Egwutuorah 2013:403). Wherever life is found it is overtly lived in relatedness, in communion, and in relationship with nature, in the entire animate and inanimate environment. At any point in time and space one objects to this pattern of natural law, life is henceforth isolated to its individual loneliness, un-relatedness and life-less giving. Hence, life for the Igbo becomes endangered with elimination and eventual self-destruction and annihilation. In this respect Uzukwu (1996:45) observers that in other words, the interconnections which create the human person and human communities impose moral obligations on the relationship between the individual and the community, and between communities.

The fundamental question for this study on Igbo *Oha*-centeredness governance remains the focal difference between the Igbo community (*Oha*) centred tradition, and the Western individualistic centred tradition under interrogation. While grappling over this major and central difference of the two traditions, Uzukwu (1996:43) clarifies the difference between the two as he notes the point of departure, the African social definition of person shows a human person as subsistent in relationship with others. The person is basically seen as in "being-with," and "belonging-to." In contrary with the Western philosophy, the human person as individual is stressed. The human person in this sense remains a "being-for-itself." The individual in the Western idea as opposed to the African communalism remains as the focus and the centre of realization.

Uzukwu in conclusion therefore states that:

> …Western systems wish to guard against the dissolution of the person in relationship. The "I" is already constituted before ever it chooses to be related. The autonomy and the incommunicability of the "I" are fundamental. …relationship is not constitutive of the being of humans despite the fact that it is fundamental to human existence (1996:43).

Individualism in the modern age movement has risen to 'absolutism.' Emphasizing on the dangerous level this has reached, Uzukwu (1996:44) affirms Bellah and his group who sum up the difficulty of individualism in America stating, "American cultural traditions define personality, achievement, and the purpose of human life in ways that leave the individual suspended in glorious, but terrifying, isolation." The solution is not rejection of individualism but finding a language to reconcile effectively the claims of individuality and community.

For the Africans, and in particular the Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria, the community remains the centre through which the individual becomes or realizes ones being. Hence, such affirmation as "a human person is human because of others." It is to this fact that Muo and Oghojafor (2012:159) reiterate Ifechukwu and agree that the conciliatory approach of the *Umunna* philosophy in which social mutual concern or the principle of co-prosperity is the core value. "It emphasizes communal feelings and the idea that I am because you are; what happens to one happens to all. Our joys and sorrows are shared and therefore in resolving disputes, we must seek the middle way."

Affirming the communalism of the Igbo, Enegho (2011:522) writes: "…before the coming of Western civilization, Africans practised communalism whereby the community was more important than the individual. People were not interested in getting wealth through fraudulent or dubious means". According to Egwutuorah (2013:406) the decentralised system of governance and social fragmentation, was well practised on a large scale over fifteen million people by early 19th century (Ubah 1987:167). The Igbo *Ohacracy* system achieved a high degree of peace and order, unity and solidarity in their traditional society. Centred on communalism, social relationship is marked by the intimate feeling of belongingness which all members share thereby eliminating individualism.

Social conflicts and wars that besieged the Igbo land at the contact with individualism of the West at the times of slavery, colonialism and the Christianization, was as a result of the difference between the social values that could not co-exist. Hence, the understanding of individualism as persons, groups, communities, societies and nations rising against each other

owes to peoples selfish and egocentric domination and hunt to rule, combat and exterminate the other. This sort of "Western individualism" describes and defines the historical model and experience of Church governance among the Igbo. Of course the humane and community elements of the Igbo culture were highly interrupted and lost too. The next section will explain the event and the accommodating nature of the Igbo *Ohacracy* system of the Western individualistic dominant system.

4.6   Africanization in the Igbo Catholicism

The African renaissance is a 19th century theory on socio-political, education, agriculture, religion, history and general cultural perspective. This includes the entire economic struggle for total transformation and liberation of the African continent from its foreign Western domination and determination of policies and philosophies (Gutto 2006:306-307). Thus, the entire 'nationalism movements' of late 20th century era in the African continent of the independent state movements, the struggles and revolutionary fights or resistant against slavery and colonialism in 1526 in the Congo (Uzukwu 1996:24) [and in the recent times neo-colonialism] can all qualify as African renaissance or rebirth movements. African Renaissance brings to the open the deep desire for the re-founding of Africa at all levels of life engagement with the West in matters of religion, governance policies, economy, culture and otherwise. As a revolutionary theory and in relation to this study, African renaissance looks at how the Igbo could achieve its dreams of self-actualization and realization in past and present ways of foreign domination and subjugation. Hence, its place in the study remains a priceless position (locus) that deserves its emphasis and attention.

Hence, the need for interpretation of particular symbols as experienced in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance order is inevitable since these should contribute immensely towards the participatory model of governance in the Igbo Catholic Church. It is interesting to note therefore that the Catholic Church's promotion of 'Africanaisation' or better still inculturation since Vatican II council has helped the Igbo *Ohacracy* Church to feel at home with its own belief and practice like the veneration of ancestors and the values they stood for has brought a whole new meaning in comparison with the Catholic acceptance of the saints. More so, the use of vernacular language other than the mystic Latin Masses brought worship home for the Igbo Catholic Church; thanks to the initiatives of Vatican II to involve lay masses in liturgies.

The Igbo *Ohacracy* institutional order therefore uses symbols to establish, govern and communicate certain meanings and understanding of relationships that should exist among citizens of the *Ohacracy* order or communities. As extensively discussed and described in chapter 5, the institutions remain key agents and instruments of organization, operation and governance by which individuals and groups participate in the day to day running or governance of the *Ohacracy* order. These institutions indeed provide the ground and point of common participatory model of governance in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. More so, these institutions remain well-established structured patterns of behaviour or relationships that are acceptable as a fundamental part of Igbo cultural tradition and *Ohacracy* system of governance. A clear instance here would be marriage, as would be noted in the institution of family below in chapter 5.

In the most recent times, South Africa being almost the last state to be liberated from European minority rule/domination thereby gaining her independence in 1994, has been in the fore front in the renewal call from its former head of state Thabo Mbeki, for the total African rebirth in all aspects of life and culture. Yet, while trying to concur to the situation presented above on the first usage or attempt of African renaissance or rebirth theory, Vambe (2010:257) correcting the impression created among South Africans who thought that the notion of African renaissance had emanated from the Mbeki era reemphasizes Mamdani and writes asking number of questions: When did the African Renaissance begin – in 1994 or earlier? Is the African Renaissance to be a turnkey for South African export to the rest of Africa? Alternatively, could it be that the African Renaissance does not have a single parentage, a single genealogy that its waters come from springs before joining a larger flow? Could it be that this genealogy is as continental as its claim? Having set the record straight, it is therefore clarified that African rebirth is a movement that began back in the mid-20th century at the first struggles of Africans to liberate and unfetter from Western chains of cultural, political and economic dominations. In thinking further, Vambe (2010:256) citing Mbeki on the clear vision of African rebirth argues thus:

> Our vision of an African Renaissance must have as one of its central aims the provision of a better life for the masses of the people whom we say must enjoy and exercise the right to determine their future. That renaissance must therefore address the critical question of sustainable development which impacts positively on the standard of living and the quality of life of the masses of our people.

In this case, African Renaissance has a strong and deep connection with education and it is in this regard Gutto (2006:306) contends that education in Africa needs a fundamental paradigm change which entails, among other things, focusing on confronting, with a view to correcting and departing from, hegemonic knowledge. A knowledge system that is predicated on racist paradigms that has deliberately and otherwise distorted, and continues to distort, the reality of who Africans really are. Hence, a need to redefine our education and knowledge base system must be renewed, questioned and refounded.

In conclusion, Gutto (2006) keenly noted four (4) periods in human historic and developmental epochs which Africa's role and place is hardly acknowledged and denied anyway; but needs to be corrected and changed. Gutto (2006:306) therefore writes:

> Africa's leadership as the cradle of humankind or the Naissance (dawn) of Humanity, Africa's leadership in all fields of knowledge and human achievements at the beginning of modern civilisation up to about the fourteenth (14th) century AD. The fifteenth (15th) century AD to the present which marks the only period in human development when Africa and Africans have been dominated and marginalised by mainly European civilisation and its global projections. Hence, the emerging era of the renaissance of Africa and other marginalised peoples.

As noted above the African Renaissance brings to light the hidden, marginalized and suppressed African-ness to come alive and be rightfully situated in the human history. As theology of inculturation already reveal concerning Church governance, so does African Renaissance reveal in the socio-political and cultural settings in contemporary Africa to receive a paradigm shift in all its dealings and practices. Africa as people and place therefore need an unapologetic reborn in mind and in action. This reborn will include both in philosophy and theology. And finally, this reborn will also include politics and culture. A reborn in science and technology! Africans cannot perpetually remain infants begging to be allowed or permitted to be Africans.

In essence, African Renaissance will offer the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria the opportunity, through the Igbo *Ohacracy* tradition to be truly Igbo people in the Igbo Church; demonstrating their true-self in their culture of full participation in Church governance and not ruled by foreign clothing, images, symbols, and practices that do not communicate the divine and Supreme Being of the Igbo culture. It is therefore wrong and indeed immoral to

replace images and symbols[41] of divine meaning and valuable communications to the black Igbo and impose the white European non-sensetical and non-communicable images and symbols in the Igbo church and governance. The decentralization that the Igbo *Ohacracy* proposes is therefore to be based on the rebirth of the Igbo symbolic images to come alive in the Catholic Church governance. It must be painfully noted though that these 'imposed images' of the Western Church culture has watered dawn the entire Supreme Being images held in high positions among the Igbo *Ohacracy*. And the task of African Renaissance theory is to restore these images for the Igbo to become truly Catholic and truly Igbo in worship and governance.

While this study insists on African Renaissance that thinks of a true African life which is realized in unity, communalism and visionary purposefully driven, various African cultural thought systems hold indigenous Africans together just like the Igbo *Ohacracy* system. This is in agreement with Matunhu (2011:71) who argues that:

> Therefore, development and poverty reduction strategies for Africa must be informed and embroiled in the African values like '*Ubuntu*' in South Africa, '*Humwe*' in Zimbabwe, '*Harambee*' in Kenya and '*Ujamahaa*' in Tanzania (or even the *Umunna* concept among the Igbo)[42]. The model –African Renaissance- rejects the mainstream growth (modernity) and dependency paradigms because they exacerbate poverty and fail to appeal to the African value system. …

Concluding on this matter, Matunhu (2010) recommends that African Renaissance must be such that it reclaims the African identity and African values. The African Renaissance unlike its predecessors (modernity and dependency theories), "advocates for local solutions, pluralism, community-based solutions and reliance on local resources. Therefore the critical issue here is 'transformation' for the future depends on achieving the transformation of institutions, technology, values and behaviour consistent with ecological and social realities in Africa" (Matunhu 2010:71).

4.7   Catholicism on Slavery and Colonialism: An Igbo *Ohacracy* Experience

The Igbo *Ohacracy* surely lost the control of its own society owed to the disruption and intervention of external forces and foreign imposed powers. By so doing Western culture and practices were fully enshrined in the Igbo culture and life. As Arowolo (2010:1) correctly

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[41] Symbolism will be fully discussed in Chapter 4.

[42] The words in the brackets are mine and of course the *Umunna* concept will be discussed in chapter of 5.

observes that, colonialism, slave trade and missionary are the platform upon which the Western civilization and culture became established among the Igbo and elsewhere in Africa. Both colonialism and slavery therefore became the vehicle of implantation of western cultural imperialism among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria; and most importantly, religion or missionary enterprise flourished. In what he described as 'greed and violence' (Cadorette 2009) narrates a very horrific picture and image of how Catholic governance co-operated with colonialism under the pretence of bringing the Good News to any none European society or nations. Cadorette (2009:183) notes that the European powers had carved up large chunks of Africa and Asia creating the comparable of geopolitical vacuum cleaners that extracted natural resources with ruthless efficiency. Colonialism and its imperial ways were often justified in the name of "civilizing" and "Christianizing" unenlightened non-Europeans. The colonial armies provided protection for the missionaries in their claimed spreading of the Gospel.

With such claims of having saved the Igbo from its own man made evils, the British would say the Igbo fell from their grace when they refused to leave their destiny in their experienced hands while justifying slavery and colonialism. The question that remains is: How can anyone justify one evil with another cruelty against human dignity and freedom? It is true of the evil that existed in the pre-colonial periods of the Igbo life (like in any other traditional society) but still it does not justify slavery and imperialism that have left horrific and bitter taste in the mouth of the Igbo and other Africans in general to this day. In refuting this lie on the Igbo as portrayed above Searle (2007:50) cites Achebe's writings who observes: "…I would be quite satisfied if my novels…did no more than teach my readers that their past…was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them."

However, a lot of negativity and violence had been written about these two ugly experiences for the Igbo as Uzukwu (1996) notes elsewhere recommending that a 'positive and creative memory' should be read around colonialism and slavery. This is so because the two exploitative experiences can always generate negative and violent emotions that do not contribute meaningfully and valuably towards the future and growth of any society. Yet the memories and historic fact of western slavery and colonialism of the Igbo remains valuable to the generations yet unborn so that the mistakes of the past should not be repeated or ignored. To this fact, Uzukwu (1996:20) concludes that we do not remember in order to reproduce (revenge) the hates, the violence, and the corruption which characterized our past. Rather, should serve the order not to repeat such abominations. It should transform such latent forces

of domination. Memory should seek the empowerment of the weak, as it aims to the transformation of the universe.

To elaborate further, the positive and creative memory should not be taken for granted or misplaced since it is able to relapse to negativity or violence between two opposing parties. This is clear in today's world where the West have become insensitive or numb towards the African continent (and the Igbo in particular), on issues around the economy, socio-political, educational and or religious policies, where they still interfere and dominate in decisions for their selfish and self-centred gratifications. With such power intoxication around any of the above mentioned aspects of life, may of course trigger the danger for perpetual enslavement and colonization of the Igbo and the entire African continent in general. In other words, the creativity in and around the history and reconciliation of the West and the Igbo on slavery and colonialism, must be the type of respect and acknowledgement of each other's independent of the other. Though economic and socio-political collaboration and co-operation with the Western world still goes on with the Igbo *Ohacracy* order; should not be aimed at keeping the umbilical cord of slavery and colonialism still flowing in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Church governance. Hence, the urge to hurry towards the theology of inculturation and the call for rebirth or African renaissance has become ever louder than before.

The Catholic Church's direct or indirect involvement on slavery and colonialism is very vivid in the European history and in particular the absolute monarchical Portuguese regime of the 15th century. The monarchy was said to have received enormous support from the sacred power of the church. As Uzukwu (1996) notes, Pope Nicholas V in 1454 issued a bull *Romanus Pontifex*, by which he granted the king of Portugal the control of trade along the west coast of Africa in which, '…the slaves who would be brought back from the Guinea coast would be baptized and won for Christ' (1996:21). Such was the nature of early Roman Catholic contact with the Igbo and Africans around the coast of Guinea for the next 300 years later when Popes Urban VIII (1639) and Gregory XVI (1839) condemned slavery in its entirety.

Having survived the modern period in history, Daniel Camboni in 1870 implored the Catholic Church for total eradication of slavery in the Vatican 1st Council. He pleaded thus with the council Fathers: "…to lift the curse on the children of Ham, a curse through which the Almighty had been punishing the sons and daughters of Africa with a cruelty unknown in the

history of the human race" (Uzukwu 1996:22 and Bruder 2008:37-49). Regrettably, both mission and colonialism coincide and was happening when in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 Africa was partitioned to the benefit of the colonizers (Searle 2007:50).

It was such brutality and violence the Igbo suffered that with fear, distrust and trembling knees that they accepted Catholicism that became firmly established in the native Igbo environment when the missionaries suddenly appeared in 1857, forcing yet the new religious faith onto the local people. Catholicism (Christianity) as noted by Arowolo (2010:10) became the most single factor in the process of Westernization or rather, colonialism in Africa and the Igbo in particular. Hence, Western education, religion and of course language remain the biggest entry points of colonialism that suppressed the Igbo *Ohacracy* indigenous model of common participation in day to day activities in the Igbo communities.

Part of this association was intended 'to civilize the Africans through western education' through mission schools run by the missionaries by which new culture was introduced and imposed on the Igbo and Africans in general. The Igbo world changed since a new world of the West was being forced onto the Igbo. Finally, Uzukwu (1996:30) recommends strongly that this close bond between the Christian religious governance (namely Catholicism) and the political powers in the subjugation of Africa must not be forgotten in the effort for the restoration of the continent. In the stance of this study both the inculturation theology and African rebirth as noted above play an important role to redefine the Igbo identity to itself and its cosmology in order to realize the fundamental nature of the Igbo *Ohacracy* determination.

Chapter Summary

This chapter four has introduced the Igbo *Ohacracy* philosophy of governance by which Igbo historical experiences is presented. Indeed to understand the Igbo *Ohacracy* practises of intense individual and group participation in governance, one should consider its historical origins as explained in this chapter. This chapter by utilizing the Igbo *Ohacracy* cultural heritage, economic influences, religious belief systems etc., has introduced a very clear objective process of dialogue, listening and consensus in decision making in the social order. The next chapter five will continue to discuss participation in governance among the Igbo communities by presenting the *Ohacracy* institutions and symbols of governance.

CHAPTER FIVE

INSTITUTIONS AND SYMBOLS: TOWARDS A LAY PARTICIPATORY MODEL OF GOVERNANCE AMONG THE IGBO OF SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

5.1   Introduction

Chapter five explains the Igbo institutions that form the basis of individual and group participation in the *Ohacracy* decentralised model of governance. While the chapter focuses on symbols and institutions of the Igbo *Ohacracy*, the chapter mainly aims at illustrating and demonstrating the symbolic meanings and roles of the institutions that exist among the Igbo people in view of achieving meaningful governance. With this in mind, the chapter discusses the structures within the Igbo *Ohacracy* order while focusing on the family as a basic institution among others. This chapter also aims at explaining how the laity could participates and contribute meaningfully in the Church structure and governance in reference to Vatican II within the Igbo indigenous governance and Catholic Church model of governance. The chapter therefore explained the Igbo *Ohacracy* symbols and institutions with an aim of illustrating and demonstrating the symbolic elements and roles of the institutions that exist among the Igbo people in aiding and supporting the laity to participate and contribute meaningfully in the Catholic Church structures of governance with reference to Vatican II (AA, 2-4 and 8). By so doing the objective of this chapter is to provide critical reasons how the laity should be allowed to contribute and participate meaningfully in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church. This would be made possible by the applications of institutions and symbols that exist in the Igbo *Ohacracy* model of governance.

This chapter therefore turns to the vital definition of the Igbo *Ohacracy* system since it will guide this chapter to its completion. As Muo and Oghojafor (2012:154) state:

> …Philosophy and practice of decision-making and consensus building among the Ndigbo (the Igbos) of Nigeria. *OHAZURUME*[43], which literarily means 'it is the communal will'; is a, philosophy and practice that ensures that decisions are easily accepted because of its collective properties. Because the issue is decided collectively by the '*oha*' (the people) no individual can upturn it.

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[43]'*Oha-zurume*', '*Oha-kwereme*' or '*Oha-cracy*' are all two faces of the same coin; the Igbo language expression of the term '*Oha*;* it comes in different surfaces of the qualifications of '*Oha*' as supreme over any individual or group of individuals.

> *OHAZURUME* draws from the overall '*ohaka*' (the community is supreme) philosophy and is predicated on the conditions that the matter is tabled openly for discussion, that EVERYBODY is allowed to contribute and that the preponderance of public opinion is upheld as the communal judgement.

Therefore, with this definition in mind, the roles and meanings of both 'symbols' and 'institutions' should be understood to serve the purpose of life giving structures in the general and common participatory system of Igbo *Ohacracy* model of governance. This chapter therefore discusses two major symbolic elements of *Oji* and *Ofo*; their vital place and role in the development of the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance tradition. Major institutions of the *Dibia* (institution of local priests), the *Ozo* (institution of local title holders or chiefs), the Unions (institution of development organizations) and the *Igba-Ndu* ritual (religious institution of settlement and reconciliation rites) are discussed among others.

5.2   Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, it is important to define the following two terms, namely "symbolism" and "institution" as applied in this study. The definition of these two terms as understood in any given Igbo *Ohacracy* society go hand in hand and should be considered as complementing each other. The Igbo *Ohacracy* symbolic items are found and used in established institutions among social communities. In layman's understanding, symbols are established customs, laws, or relationships in an institutional society or community, which is the symbolic ground of experience. By definition symbols are images or objects that present the hidden reality than the image they stand for. In its religious application, symbols are representations which make one participate in the hidden reality which they present. According to Dulles (1992:131), symbols are revelatory in nature; and they express and mediate meaning and consciousness to the user.

A good example of the Igbo *Ohacracy* institutional symbol as will be discussed remains the *Oji* (Kola nut), of which case will be explained below. This therefore means institutions give meaning to symbols; without which symbols remain ordinary objects holding and signifying no particular meaning to the observer or human eyes.

Edger and Rhonda (2000:142), applies Williams definition for institution and observes that institutions are definite means of set of interrelated norms, beliefs, and values centred on

important and recurrent social needs and activities. Family and kinship, social stratification, economic systems and religion are some practical ways to demonstrate institutions.

Through shared experience and social interaction, communities, classes, ethnic groupings, or whole societies can come to be characterized by similarities of values and beliefs as Edger and Rhonda (2000:146) concludes. By institutions a society comes to be known and recognised for its beliefs and customs. For example, the family systems as already noted among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order of South-eastern Nigeria in chapter 4. Symbolism is a vital tool or element in defining the Igbo *Ohacracy* order and many other cultures in the African context. While identifying the vital role and place of symbolism in the human culture Ingold (1994:366) states:

> …without symbolism there could be no culture. A symbol is an artefact: a 'thing' that exists out there somewhere in space and time. As a 'thing', a symbol has material reality and is experienced through the senses. It is a 'thing' that represents: that is culturally involved in such a way that it can be used in a multiplicity of contexts to convey meaning, not just about itself, but about cultural processes and relationships.

Etymologically speaking, the word *symbol* came from the Greek *σύμβολον* (*sýmbolon*) from the root words *συν-* (*syn-*), meaning "together", and *βολή* (*bolē*), "a throw", having the approximate meaning of "to throw together", literally a "co-incidence", also "sign, ticket, or contract" (Harper 2001).

Proverbs in verbal words form part of symbolism. They therefore form a degree of symbolism in acknowledging that which is verbally communicated and is capable to formulate a mental picture while using a physical item/object in the Igbo *Ohacracy* participatory governance rationality. While commenting and defining proverbial symbolism, Adeyemi (2014:186) writes that proverbs are symbols of communication packed into short sentences or even anecdotes and stories. It is sometimes carved on wood, stone or other materials, or even in songs. Proverbs do also come from and refer to all activities of societies whether natural or unnatural phenomena. It also acts as agent of knowledge, wisdom, philosophy, ethics and morals.

Adeyemi (2014:186) in this case reemphasized that the undeniable nature of proverbs in the traditional African communities, is a kind that poses a re-examination of the pedagogical values. Proverbs also socializes the young into the norms and values of the society and re-positioning them for the challenges for their global world. More so because, *a tree that has no*

root will soon bow to the force of the wind. Among its functions in the *Ohacracy* participatory governance, proverbial symbolism serve as vehicle with which socio-cultural and philosophical thoughts underlying social values, issues, ethnic and religion are transmitted across generations (Adeyemi 2014:188). Achebe (1965:6) argues: "Proverbs are the oil with which words are eaten"; a proverbial symbolism therefore not only makes a point, it fixes knowledge in the human mind. Hence, the unquestionable knowledge that proverbial symbolism presents in the *Ohacracy* governance institutions can only be overemphasized and remains a value aided agent of governance standards.

In a rather philosophical hermeneutics, Madu (1992:xxxii) refers to what philosophers called "archaic and oriental symbolism" which was previously regarded as important only as a datum in the development of human consciousness. Symbols were then regarded as "primitive and lacking the cogency of reasoning." In a later meaning or hermeneutics (interpretation) Madu cites Paul Ricoeur and concludes that "religious symbolism is regarded as an adequate representative of a dimension of human consciousness and existence. What is primary[44] is the act of interpretation aimed at a complete appreciation of the symbolic" (Madu (1992:52).

This chapter therefore brings to the fore the society's role as a group to foster development in various Igbo *Ohacracy* aspects of life. Each Igbo *Ohacracy* community is designed by tradition, culture and institutional events as a self-governing group who are able to effect group development with little or no support of the present Nigerian political establishments. To this fact Egboh (1987:1-2) explains that the Igbo communities, with or without financial assistance from government, had succeeded in building education for present and future generations. Projects like scholarships, road constructions and bridges, developing markets and motor parks, hospitals and health clinics have been provided in the communities. These facilities have made the rural areas more attractive to live in, thereby encouraging the growth of cottage industries.

The next section of this chapter proceeds to consider two major *Ohacracy* symbolic elements among numerous others; namely the "*Oji*" and "*Ofo*"; and the Igbo *Ohacracy* institutions of

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[44] According to Madu (1992:68) primary symbol relates to Myth, Faith and interpretations. According to him, what expresses belief, what carries the dynamism of belief is not the concept but the symbol. Symbol here does not mean an epistemic sign, but a mythical reality that is precisely in the symbolizing. A symbol is not a symbol of another (thing), but of itself, in the sense of the subjective object. A symbol is the symbol of that which is precisely (symbolized) in the symbol, and which, thus, does not exist without its symbol. A symbol is nothing but the symbol of that which appears in and as the symbol.

participatory governance as they help and shape the activities of human and socio-cultural order in the *Ohacracy* communities also aids the Catholic Church to find meaning in its evangelical adventure among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people.

5.3 Igbo Symbols of *Ohacracy* Participatory Governance

This section discusses two major Igbo *Ohacracy* symbols of *Oji* "Kola-nut King" and the *Ofo* as a way of demonstrating the value and meanings of symbols. These will help to enhance the daily life and contribution of the individual and group members of the community.

5.3.1 The *Oji* "Kola-Nut King": Igbo First Symbol of Participatory Governance

The Kola nut known as *Oji*[45] is an economic tree locally grown among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities and other parts of Nigeria to meet the local demand and needs. Among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, it is said that the sharing of meals and drinks is considered less important than first, sharing the kola nut as a sign of welcoming and peace gathering (Uchem 2001:60). The sharing of kola has developed a symbolic value of cultural solidarity of true peace and co-existence among Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. The presentation of kola in a community meeting calls for ritual prayers in which the community expresses a willingness to co-operate with all in the land for its growth and peaceful *Ohacracy* governance. Since growth and development can meaningfully happen or take place in a conducive environment, the sharing of kola-nut among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people creates such perfect trust and peaceful ground for community development. Such is the vital social and ritual role *Oji* plays in the Igbo governance. It is about this value that Uchendu (1965:74) argues that the kola nut is the ultimate symbol of Igbo generosity. It is the first welcoming symbol. In fact, it is referred to

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[45] Kola tree is botanically known as *cola-acuminata* and *cola-nitida* depending on the species one is dealing with, as a tropical fruit nut tree grown mostly in West and Central Africa. The nut contains caffeine, can be chewed and is harvested when matured. *Oji* Igbo (Cola *acuminata*) is preferred than *Oji* Awusa (Hausa) or *gworo* (Cola nitida). *Oji* Igbo has more than two cotyledons or seed leaves which are the material that is chewed. *Oji* Awusa (Hausa) has only two cotyledons. In Igbo traditional rituals and ceremonies, only the Igbo kola [Cola *acuminata*] (Duru 2005:202) is accepted and that of *gworo* or *Oji* Awusa (Hausa) is not because the Igbo understand it to be a dumb kola (*Oji ogbo*) since it sometimes comes without lobes but just one whole which is believed to be bad sign and the whole nut may be thrown away (Duru 2005:209). That is why the Igbo do not use it in official duties or celebrations. Kola nut, though grows on special trees in Igbo land has over the years accumulated some legends as regards its origin. And entering into communion (covenant) with either the gods or humans is an important symbolic value of kola nut (Uzukwu 1997:53). [*Eze S.N.I.U., "Position of Kola nut in the Cultural life of the Igbos", http://www.igbonet.com* accessed 12 August 2016].

as "the King."[46] To be presented with a kola nut is a sign that one is welcomed. Kola is always shared with joy and prayer.

As a fruit, *Oji* is in pods, containing two to ten or more nuts. It is covered in a soft protective white skin with verity of colours ranging from creamy white to profound pink depending on the species one is dealing with. *Oji*, the kola nut, remains therefore the "king" of all symbols in the Igbo *Ohacracy* institutional participatory governance; and its vital place and role is highly acknowledged and respected by all Igbo *Ohacracy* social strata of the citizenry. It is vital for this study to demonstrate the important role with a life story as told by Duru (2005:201), when he narrates: In a wedding reception a tropical storm was threatening. But when the chairman of the occasion advised that the guests be served to avoid the storm, the elders present refuted the suggestion with dismay implying that he was disregarding the Igbo culture by trying to avoid the Kola-nut rituals of celebration (summarised version).

Few questions that may arise from this episode as narrated would lead us into far reaching meaning and value of the kola nut as highly significant in symbolism among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order and will include these:

   I. What sort of role does kola nut play in the lives of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people?

  II. What level of satisfaction (if any) is derived from a nut that is highly sought after in the midst of huge storm expectations by a gathering of hungry people?

III. What is the significance of kola nut among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people and the rite behind it?

Indeed, the value and world view of the Igbo *Ohacracy* that is illustrated in the festive expression and sharing of kola nut shows its high level of appreciation as we consider further its vital place and role among the Igbo *Ohacracy* participatory governance. As Igbo saying goes: *Ndu bu Isi* – Life first – hence, the entire symbolic meaning of *Oji* is the principle of reaffirming human life and all that sustains it. According to Onwu (2002:20) who emphasizes the need and place of *Oji* in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, states:

> Kola nut presentation, ritual, breaking and sharing is significant in Igbo land.
> The ritual invocation will include Chukwu, ancestors, the clan deities, the

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[46] As cited by Igwebuike (2010:23) while quoting Eze Ugbala relates thus: "a legend which speaks of the visit of the elders (forebears of the Igbo people) to the home of the gods where the gods asked the founding fathers to choose a fruit from all the fruits of the orchard. The founding fathers of (Igbo ethnic group) chose *Oji* as the King of all the fruits and because it came from the gods, it (kola nut) is used in communicating with them.

spirit forces especially the market days. Finally the invocation would normally end with an affirmation of life: *Ndi ebe anyi, anyi ga adi, anyi goro ka anyi diri o bughi ka any nwuo*; *Onye wetara Oji wetara ndu*! (Our people we shall live we have prayed for life not for death; He who brings kola brings life).

The social life cohesion therefore remains the central role of *Oji* by which the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance receives its order and true organisation. *Oji* symbolically presents, directives, propels and motivates individuals and groups towards a meaningful dialogue and focused deliberations that occur at the presentation of the kola nut among the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance.[47]

Citing Olson, Duru (2005:205) observes that the significance of *Oji* among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities has survived the insurgence of Christianity in both in the 19th and 20th centuries in Igbo land. This has led to its adaptation or inculturation of *Oji* rituals into Christian social ceremonies. It is credited as one of the Igbo practices that have survived foreign domination of Igbo *Ohacracy* local practices; and to a large extent had aided the preservation of Igbo identity and heritage in this regard.

In fact, it is in such intensive role *Oji* plays among the Igbo *Ohacracy* that it has been likened or compared to the Eucharistic meal among Catholics and Christians in general. It is therefore to *Oji's* significance that Duru (2005:205) will conclude emphasizing on the social and spiritual role of the element symbolism and she concludes the kola nut is always received and consumed in sacred communion. *Oji* enjoys the respect of all social strata of the Igbo society. Its presentation signifies a social and spiritual ritual. Every important gathering attracts the presentation of kola nut as an item on the agenda. Communion, Duru (2005) indicates is not too strong a term; indeed, prayers consistently complement the function of the kola nut, signifying its spiritual position.

This 'communion' notion as stressed by Uchem (2001:60) is not only between relatives or friends, but of course between the living and the ancestors whose protection on the family is thereby invoked. People in enmity with each other do not share the kola nut together until

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[47] Not only does the kola-nut leaves extracts, in the form of carbonated water and sweeteners, worked out in his laboratory in Atlanta in 1886, John Pemberton made kola famous to the Western world Pendergrast (2000:11). By its final product as Coca cola drink all over the world today, the kola symbolism is still fully realized in its ability to serve as common drink, quenching thirst and satisfying the hungry as it first does to the Igbo and other traditional societies in West Africa.

they are reconciled and thus it serves as an instrument of peace and reconciliation offering just as the Eucharist would do with the Christians. *Oji* therefore remains the 'King' symbol that directs the Igbo people's venture to development, growth and expansion. As *Oji* is relevant in every Igbo people's social activities, its role and value cannot be over emphasised. Other areas of *Oji* use include marriage introductions between two families, all religious rituals, all social gatherings and in all individual visitations to friends and even conflicting parties in search of reconciliation.

However, it must be observed in this section of the study that the use of *Oji* is one of those rituals that women have been discriminated upon. As part of food and social ritual women are excluded to break or pray over the Kola-nut *Iwa-Oji*[48] while there is a man present. Yet, in cases where a gathering comprised of only women, the most senior woman is authorized to break the Kola after invoking blessings (see Amadiume 2015:113). According to Duru (2005:212) cultural notion 'impurity' seems to disqualify women to be part of this vital food ritual which in Igbo *Ohacracy* symbol has great significance.

While holding that common illustration across many cultures, Duru (2005:213) concurs with Moore (1988) on the 'Kaulong women' in the New Britain who are considered to be dangerous during 'menstruation' and 'childbirth' owing to the loss of blood during these periods in their lives. Duru (2005) concludes that on the spiritual plane women are measured as the future of mankind. She notes though with Igbo traditionalists that it will be reckless to involve women in dealing with ancestor spirits and deities, some of which are not known for their benevolence. Indeed, to see problem with 'women' in this regard is irrational. Women's monthly and birth blood issues cannot disqualify them to play a natural function like their male counterparts because of their gender. Hence, the female gender issue should not separate women from enjoying the communities' functions and rights. Instead, all whether men or women should be seen equal in role play and functions as their abilities and gifts can allow.

The notion of women being 'impure' during menstruation should not be the basis for their exclusion for participating in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance with regards to the *Oji* function.

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[48] In Igboland the kola nut is foremost an item that initiates, promotes, and sustains social *Ohacracy* interaction. At any social occasion, whether a visit of friends, marriage, child dedication, burial, or even some business transactions, the kola nut is present. It has become so etched in the social conscience of the people that any refreshment offered a guest as an act of welcome is called *Oji* (kola nut). *Oji* both embodies and acts as a unifying force among the Igbo (Nzeako 1979:3 and Duru 2005:205)

Uchem (2001:62) contests this position and raises a strong objection around this aged long Igbo *Ohacracy* tradition that dehumanizes women and presenting them to be "less-important" and unequal to their male counterparts. Be it as it may, one will agree to this objection. This study argues that women deserve to be treated with equal value and worth as men. Women in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities deserves the right of full participation in all rituals that gives them full sense of belonging and not be seen as less human beings in the *Ohacracy* participatory governance.

5.3.2   The *Ofo*: Igbo Symbol of Truth and Leadership

The second most important symbolism this study utilises as important for the Igbo *Ohacracy* institutions of governance is the *Ofo*.[49] *Ofo* is a symbolic element of authority among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. In its understanding among the Igbo people, *Ofo* is defined as a special consecrated piece of stick and a central/sacred symbol of unity, justice, law, authority and truth in the Igbo religion. It is primarily a 'Staff of Office' which symbolises justice, law, authority and truth in the Igbo religion (Njaka 1974:25). In other words the *Ofo* symbol acts to promote, guide, protect and build the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. As noted in the previous chapter, each family, village community and town among the Igbo people, has an established authority otherwise known as an *Ofo* holder. This holder or bearer of *Ofo* remains a leader of a specific grouping or community that leads with a group of elder-leaders towards the desired development in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities.

Most importantly, on its institutional establishment, in the order of Igbo *Ohacracy* belief system, *Ofo* is thought to have come from *Chukwu* (God), who intends it to be used by leaders of different categories in Igbo land, in order to promote justice and fair play in their areas of authority. Igbo scholars such as Ejizu (1986:20-23) recorded a belief (Myth) that: "It is believed that in the heavenly compound of *Chukwu* there is an *Ofo* tree similar to the *Ofo* tree

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[49] The Igbo term *Ofo* is the proper name for two related objects. First, it refers to a particular plant species which grows in the Igbo land. And second in a derived sense, it identifies the twig or branch let from the wood of that tree. Both the plant and its branches are equally referred to as *Ofo*. The tree is a local feral (uncultivated) plant. Its nearest classification would be the oil bean tree. When fully grown, *Ofo* plant could tower to some sixty (60) feet high, and bulk to some three (3) feet in diameter in its main trunk. It is pertinent to note that, Dalziel J. McEwen (1872-1948, a Scottish botanist) was reported to have identified the *Ofo* tree, botanically, as *Detarium Senegalense* (*Detarium elastica*). And this has been the name widely used for *Ofo*, the tree and its twigs (branch), by subsequent writers like, Green, Ilogu, Njaka, Uzukwu and others; (see Ejizu 1986:22). To show the importance of *Ofo* among the Igbo people, families name their children like *Ofokanshi* (*Ofo* as truth is stronger than poison), *Ofoleta* (*Ofo* as truth looks after one) *Ofonaeche* (*Ofo* as truth protects), *Ogujiofor* (He who has *Ofo* as truth has it all), *Ihejiofor* (*Ofo* holds the truth like the light) *O ji Ofo ga-ala* (He who holds *Ofo* as truth, overcomes all obstacles), etc.

on earth. Through this tree the Supreme Being transmits blessing to creatures who occupy the earth. The holder of earthly *Ofo* is believed to receive spiritual communications from the Creator and with an obligation to be just as the Creator." The function or role of *Ofo* in Igbo socio-religious and political leadership can only be over emphasized.

The common participatory governance is realised in the group of leaders who met often to deliberate, dialogue and listen to each other before a decision is reached upon. No one *Ofo* holder is allowed by Igbo tradition to make a unilateral decision without the involvement of the group through which wisdom and common sense prevails. By so doing the *Ofo* element encourages common participation of dialogue within the scope that the Vatican II seeks to advance. The *Ofo* gives the leader a natural right to oppose any move that do not encourage and advance security, truth, unity and communality and development in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities.

In matters of religious development among the Igbo people, *Ofo* remains the most important symbol (Okafor 1992:31). Since the elder-holder of *Ofo* is considered to be 'righteous' or at least a good person, through his function he reveals the wills of the Great Spirit (God), the ancestors and truth in community matters of arbitration. He is highly expected by the nature of this task to seek truth and commune common good and unity in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. Based on this practice Ebelebe (2009:20) concludes that this was why he (the *Ofo* carrier) was so influential. The Igbo *Ohacracy* order did not respect and honour crooked men or wealthy scoundrels. The Igbo concept of power and authority is vested in communion of hands that seek the common good. For the *Ofo*, being a sacred symbol of truth, justice and integrity, could not be effective in the hands of a man who could not be associated with these qualities.

While identifying and stressing on the *Ofo's* moral place among the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance, Ebelebe (2009:11) writes:

> …the *Ofo*, a symbol of truth and justice, is the most prominent of such symbols and an important instrument of Igbo morality. It is usually held by the oldest male of an extended family (*okpara*)[50], lineage, or village. That makes

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[50] The *Ofo* in relation to women, while citing Meek in his study on the role of *Ofo* among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, Agbasiere (2000:47) would note that Meek deals extensively with the topic of *Ofo* and gives several definitions of the term, including 'a sacred symbol of office' and 'the most important symbol of the ancestors'. But Meek describes the *Ofo* and its usages exclusively from the male point of view, implying that women do not

such a person a ritual and moral agent. This symbol links the holder to the ancestors, and he invokes them to anchor his authority… Besides, the holders of the *Ofo* and the oracles, other guardians of public morality among the Igbo and the village elders, *Ndi-ichie*[51], and the age-grades (in those parts of Igbo land where they obtained)

Ofo, as a high valued symbol in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, plays a very vital role in Igbo law enactment. This is well and clearly noted by Okafor (1992) as he looks at the use of *Ofo* in the Igbo law ratifications. As Okafor (1992:61) notes that the Igbo *Ohacracy* law covers the customs, tradition, etiquette, religion and morality laws. Citing Mbonu Ojike Okafor (1992) contends that these laws are grouped under the descriptive term "*Omenala*" as one of the many *Ohacracy* institutions of governance that are considered herein. Clarifying further Okafor (1992:61) writes that to ratify a law in the Igbo traditional context is to declare that the law is in order with the "constitution of the land." With the custom, religion and morality of the people, *Omenala* is well represented. To ratify a law therefore, an *Ofo* is used to sanction that the law so ratified is founded on justice, equity and truth.

In essence, according to the practise there is the ratification rite which usually follows immediately after the *Oha*. When the general assembly has approved the law, the following formula is invoked and pronounced: This *iwu* (law) is in line with our custom and must be obeyed and respected. Those who refuse to obey the law, "may *Ofo* kill them." Ritually, each time the *Ofo* is struck on the ground usually four times, the assembly assent "*iseee*" meaning, "let it be so" (Okafor 1992:61). By this ritual act the *Ofo* effects in the assembly a 'holy-fear' binding them to honour and respect each other in their common relationship.

The ratification as carried out in the presence of the 'assembly' with the use of *Ofo* by the linage eldest male is defined as the "enactment of law" in the *Ohacracy* governance (Njoku 2013:261). Njoku (2013:259) insists on the viability of this age long Igbo *Ohacracy* governance system, contending that the typical Igbo social set-up of the people's affairs (whether executive, judiciary or legislature), revolve round the *Oha*, the people themselves.

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wield ancestral authority in society. But one important area to note is the attention to the fact that a 'senior *Ada* (woman)' of each quarter at Onitsha holds or carries an *Ofo* and takes this to bear out the point of reference.
[51] The *Ozo* (*Ndi-ichie*) and the age-grade will be discussed in the later part of this chapter as they are among the *Ohacracy* institutions of governance.

The influence of *Ofo* brings with it a quality demanded of Igbo leaders and emphasizes their transparent orientation. The leader (never rules but direct the course of events) should be accessible to all, in a similar manner that *Ofo* represents. Any leader who holds *Ofo* is required to vindicate his innocence regularly through the *iju-ogu*[52] religious rite and, the affirmation of innocence (Uchendu 1965:17). Hence, since the *Ofo* holder inherits an ancestral political and religious office, it remains central in ensuring the common participatory of the entire community as it plays a central, uniting and peaceful role for all who live in the land. As a symbol of justice and authority in the Igbo order whether rich or poor, young or old and even strangers, all receive equal protection and security under its role and function. By so doing, the *Ofo* symbol eliminates exclusion and discrimination thereby decentralising justice to all in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance practise.

The following important and inclusive qualities and characters are expected of an *Ofo* carrier for the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. These include, as Jell-Bahlsen (1980:210-214) enumerates:

i. I He must be a responsible person of respect through his impeccable or unquestionable character in the Igbo *Ohacracy* community.

II. He must be the first male born son in the family or his extended family must enjoy that position in any given Igbo *Ohacracy* community. In cases where a first-born has any natural impediment (for instance deaf and dumb or blindness), another fitting male is chosen to fulfil this office.

III. He must be a natural citizen of the Igbo *Ohacracy* community

IV. He must be one who has sworn an oath of office to protect the solidarity and development among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people or community and holds their unity in utmost sincerity.

By his role of leadership, the *Ofo* symbolism holder plays the central role of motivating the entire community to pursue justice in a peaceful manner in every act of social engagement. Whether in community efforts to protect culture or in its observance of traditions that have developed in the course of time, the *Ofo* holder plays the sealing role of community living towards a common harmony. As noted above, the reservation of the *Ofo* to the male gender

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[52] The *iju-ogu* rite is a religious ritual by which an *Ofo* holder proclaims or confesses before the public his innocence over a judgement or settlement of a conflict. By it he calls on the ancestors and God to be his witness of telling the truth by holding the authority and truth symbolism the *Ofo*, and all are expected to accept his confessions and proceedings therewith. Likewise, an innocent person would do the same by calling on the *Ofo* to set him or her free from a wrong verdict against one over a conflict or a case.

remains a challenge in the Igbo common participatory in governance by all who live in the *Ohacracy* system. It is therefore gender biased to exclude women to hold the *Ofo* as men have this right alone. It follows that this remains problematic in reference to the Catholic Church whose majority of adherents among the Igbo (Africa) remains women. The following section explains some key significance of both symbols of *Oji* and *Ofo* as discussed above.

5.3.3 The Significance of the *Oji* and *Ofo* Symbols in Igbo *Ohacracy* Participatory Governance

The most significant role kola nut has among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order and by which it promotes the common participation in governance is in its ability in affirmation of life. All human cultural values must gear towards the enhancement and well-being of every human person. Any cultural practice that does not affirm or effect wellness of humans and nature stands to be interrogated by all who witness it. Therefore, as Onwu (2002:21) emphasised, *Oji* not only affirms life, it also propagates continuity and sustainability of the entire life process as a continuum. This continuity is prominent in the constant prayer that accompanies every kola nut ritual and presentation that says: "Whoever presents kola presents life." In this sense kola not only promotes life now, but at the same time sees life in its futuristic nature; while emphasising sustainability in which all Igbo lives participate and are active. The *Oji* can be compared with the Catholic Church understanding with the Eucharist as a shared meal of unity and future life of the Christian community. If indeed this understanding can be presented to the Igbo Catholic communities, it will make sense and meaning of what the Eucharist stands for in the Catholic contexts, thereby using the Igbo symbol to explain the Catholic symbols (Waliggo1991:506-507).

Another significant role *Oji* plays in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order is its capability to establish social interaction among Igbo communities. As a symbol of goodwill it establishes open communion in the communities where all are able to intermingle with each other without any suspicion or hesitation. In marriage ceremonies or other social gatherings, various quantities of the kola nut (from one piece to a calabash full) are presented according to custom and food culture. Such interaction *Oji* has effected, sustains the Igbo *Ohacracy* identities and enhances the capacity to participate in group interaction with other cultures and identities, as each group will have to act to accommodate the kola nut 'norms' of the other. The notion presented here

equally makes sense with the Catholic understanding in comparison of the Eucharist as food culture among Catholic adherents in the Igbo communities.

The kola nut as an Igbo symbol of participatory governance plays a vital role in keeping the Igbo communities together in their effort to establish common good. It serves the purpose of peace and unity among the people. In the presentation of a kola nut before any group meeting, sincerity of purpose is testified, justified and established. All who are present in such community development ventures are reassured of a clear purpose of progress. Hence, without the presentation of kola nut by the host (be it individual family, group of persons or the community as a whole) a meeting's agenda may not be introduced to the participants for clarity of purpose. Such is the significance of *Oji* by which individuals and groups participate in the life sustaining activities among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of south-eastern Nigeria. With regards to the Catholic Church context, the lay participation in the Eucharistic need to share life and activities of Christian values will sustain meaningful practice and understanding with the Igbo community emphasis around the *Oji* as life giving and sustaining symbolism.

Among other significant roles of *Oji* is in its symbolic and meaningful use in the settlement of conflict between two parties. A case of such incidence was told about conflict between two brothers, Chika and Igwedi was settled by their eldest brother (after dialogue and deliberation has taken place). Eleam, who presented a piece of kola nut and having divided it into four parts and gave one half to each, ate one as witness and threw a piece on the ground as libation to the ancestors signifying settlement of the case. By so doing *Oji* signifies new life mended and offered to the warring parties to embrace life and not conflict or death. This decentralised way of conflict resolution is not so much in the centralised Roman Catholic sense where one may be required to go to the priest to confess this sin. But the involvement of others in the Igbo system gives it more participatory meaning and value which this study has projected.

These therefore, show how the *Oji* in its symbolism among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, can enhance individuals and groups in their participatory governance. As *Oji* plays such vital role in the food or ritual culture of the Igbo *Ohacracy* as noted already, therefore finds comparison with the Eucharistic ritual meal among the Catholic communities. With the two models of centralization and decentralised system an amicable corporation can be noted. The centralised system of the Roman Catholic Church can identify with all the key values within the gathering people for dialogue, respect for others or goodwill, drinking or eating as signs of

settlement of conflict and dancing as signs of joy expressed in moments of deep sense of conflict averted by the sign and effect that *Oji* evokes. The participation of Igbo *Ohacracy* people's assembly is very evident. By so doing *Oji* as one of its symbols in a context of a decentralised governing approach could be suggested and used in matters of inculturation within the Igbo Catholic Church's understanding of the Eucharist to address and redress its nature of the centralised system of governance.

The *Ofo* on the other hand is significant in its role as conferrer of authority and leadership. *Ofo* in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance is used to consecrate chiefs and titleholders, laws are ratified and consecrated with the *Ofo* and none of these is valid without *Ofo* being used. Ezeanya (1967:3) describes *Ofo* as the Igbo traditional symbol of law and order it occupies a place of honour in the religious life of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. By these activities, the *Ofo* holder plays an important role in politics, religion and judiciary. Symbolising ancestral office, the *Ofo* bearer holds ritual authority to challenge any individual or group of people who have not co-operated with the common effort to achieve growth and development among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. In its importance the entire people are led to know and respect law and order which has its effect in protecting human life and property.

Moreover, in the centralised Roman Catholic system, while it belongs to the bishop or priest to interpret the law; "canon law," and bring its meaning to the faithful to observe. The decentralised system of the Igbo *Ohacracy* works the other way round where the *Ofo* is used to enact the law so that all are equal and understands the tradition and rules equally. No particular person is given to interpret the law but the assembly of the Igbo *Ohacracy* system.

Finally, *Ofo* also serve the purpose of conflict resolution and reconciliation when used in ritual exercise of conflict resolutions in establishment of peace between conflict parties or communities just as *Oji* would do too. It presents and represents the spiritual realms among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. Oji therefore leads the people to participate in the keeping of the ancestral establishment of peace, coexistence, unity and coherence in the land.

5.4   Igbo Institutions of *Ohacracy* Participatory Governance

Institutions as discussed in this chapter among the Igbo *Ohacracy* model of governance remain the 'engine' that propels the whole vehicle of the Igbo system. These institutions

demonstrate the energy, power and authority by which the Igbo *Ohacracy* society becomes alive and active. By institutions all Igbo individuals and groups get involved and participate actively in the life sustaining activities of the community. Yet, these institutions remain interwoven, interdependent, and interrelated with each other and holistic in their nature of functions. None of the institutions and the symbols explained stands independent of each other. Rather, they depend on each other to operate and be relevant in the context.

5.4.1 The Family as Focus for Igbo *Ohacracy* Governance

Generally, the family is the basic foundation of life activity in a given tradition or system. In the Igbo Nigerian context, Okafor (1992) gives us a working definition and understanding of the Igbo traditional family as regards the *Ohacracy* governance order. Okafor (1992:1) notes that the family is a social institution consisting of all persons who are descended through the same line from a common ancestor. These recognise and pay allegiance to one of their member as head and successor the founding ancestor.

While putting it into political order or organization, Ifemesia (2002:66) in defining the Igbo *Ohacracy* nuclear family (*ezi n'uno/ulo*[53]), points out:

> …normally consisted of a father, his wife or wives, his unmarried sons, his married sons and their wives and children, and his unmarried daughters; to these were added his servants and slaves, if he had any, to make up his entire household. …The father was the moral, spiritual and political head of the family. He was expected to be benevolent and tolerant, understanding and impartial, in managing its affairs. As the children grew older, he naturally consulted with them more and more concerning the domestic and external affairs of the unit.

This study adopts this particular definition and understanding of family within the *Ohacracy* governance among the Igbo people as mentioned in the above quotes. Within this understanding therefore, the meaning of family is taken to extend beyond father, mother and children. Rather, the meaning of family as adopted and discussed in this study extends therefore to the *Umunna*[54] (as in extended families), *Umuada* (as in married daughters) the ward, the kindred, the village and the village-group or town at large as they all represent and

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[53] The expression or term '*ezi n'ulo*' simply means the 'in' and 'outside' the house or home. Analogically, this describes the nuclear sense of family which indeed extends outside the particular and immediate environment but may also mean those people or individuals outside the family thus referred to.

[54] *Umunna* is the immediate extension of the Igbo understanding of the family. As we shall indicate later in this study, the *Umunna* are extended family cousins who live closely together or far apart but still maintain and remain in the family root.

trace different levels of family roots or schools among the Igbo *Ohacrcacy* order of South-eastern Nigeria (Afigbo, 2005:189).

A family remains the first informal school for the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance as in every given society through which culture, tradition, religion, education, and other aspects of life economy for the wellbeing of all in the Igbo order is developed, experienced and transmitted from one generation to the next. Ebelebe (2009:17) clarifies this better observing: "the family is the basic unit of the Igbo society as is the case in all other societies; but the Igbo family embraces both the nuclear and the extended families." As it will be discussed further in this section, the family as institution defines every individual's role and duty by which development is sought and achieved in any given Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. The development of different aspects of the Igbo way of life remains the focus of *Ohacracy* order in the Igbo family (see Okafor 1992:2-4). Agreeing with this assertion, Afigbo (2005:189) points out that individual's experiences with regards to family definition come from different levels and degrees of life's endeavours.

The significance of the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance practice is therefore highly commended, and though the Igbo people are oriented towards living in solidarity with everybody else, individual uniqueness is respected. No individual person gets drowned by the community need, desire or decision. Rather each person remains the author of the community adventure for growth. Each individual is granted the right and opportunity of self-expression. Okafor, (1992:39) affirming the unique nature of Igbo *Ohacracy* practice that yet respects individuality or eccentricity of the person states that each Igbo family is the originator of its own conduct and maker of its own history. It chooses its own alignments and alliances for effective existence and action. A family therefore co-operates with its own lineage in unity and mutual assistance.

However, it is important to note that though the Igbo *Ohacracy* promotes the community or common agenda, the individuality of the person is highly respected and is not to be interfered with in the expense of pursuing the communal being. This of course, differs from 'individualism' or 'self-seeking centeredness' that does not put the interest of the community at the centre of individual's endeavours. Yet, the shared life and the preservation of the Igbo identity and heritage remain the focus for all community members in the *Ohacrcacy* governance. Meanwhile the Igbo in recent times have been accused of self-seeking and

individualism almost forgetting where their root and the values of *Ohacracy* order that they were brought up with as established by the ancestors and traditions. This reality worries any concerned Igbo *Ohacracy* citizen; and thus the need and focus for such a study in our contemporary age. This must seek to remind the Igbo of their call to return to the truth of their well-known and esteemed tradition, the *Ohacracy* governance.

The aim of living together in the *Ohacracy* family solidarity with the entire community is to help and support individual families grow towards their full realization, potentials and develop in all aspects of Igbo ways of life, as this can equally be said of other societies. Though this may sound very idealistic in today's world of 'individualism and division,' the Igbo value of *Ohacracy* order challenges every Igbo citizen to refocus and redirect their personal need and leisure to enrich the common good of all who live in the Igbo communities. Hence, the next section concentrates on enumerating the individual gender roles and tasks as assigned by *Ohacracy* tradition to realize this vision of common good for all who live in the Igbo society. The study considers in details the social functions of the four known age grading groups, namely the fathers (male), the mothers (female), the youth groups. By their group roles they participate and demonstrate their contributions towards the common good on which the Igbo *Ohacracy* stands.

5.4.1.1 The Place of Men (Fathers) in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Governance

The Igbo ethnographic gender perceptions and understanding under consideration gives this study the opportunity to discuss meaningful contribution of both men and women in the Igbo *Ohacracy* community. This task is very challenging given the complex nature of the Igbo society in relation to gender roles that both men and women are socialised into by tradition and culture within the *Ohacracy* governance among the Igbo. Amadiume (2015: xii) argues pointing out the different approaches to such complexities within the Igbo stating:

> …patriarchy and matriarchy would seem to be juxtaposed, suggesting two dichotomous systems, one for women and the other for men; a dual system. Conceptually and institutionally, these are useful categories for dissecting social beliefs and practices in detail. …it is necessary to analyse how the whole system works, its flexibility and dynamism *to truly situate this session of the study in Ohacracy governance*[55]. …this, then, is the usefulness or role of socio-cultural gender constructions; in this case, a flexible gender system and gender-bending, allowing for the interchanging of roles, statuses and power by men and women.

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[55] The emphasis is mine.

From this assertion, this study observes that the Igbo *Ohacracy* order has provisions to carter for both genders in the community. Although decision and authority is dominated by the men, the matriarchy system in practice responds to any domination tendencies thereby decentralising decision making in the system. By so doing the *Ohacracy* order provides a high level of equality among genders in the system unlike the Roman Catholic system that empowers and is centred on men for governance. In fact, though the Igbo society may be patriarchal in nature, it is in practice, very much matriarchal. This means that both patriarchy and matriarchy are found in the Igbo *Ohacracy* system (Amadiume 2015:106-110; 113) and communities where they are practised. This is clear in its promotion of the women course without reservations (Agbasiere 2000:xxiv). The centralised order of the Roman Catholic Church is therefore challenged by the decentralised system of the Igbo, to be open towards equal participation of both genders and enhance the role of women in this regard.

With this observation, fathers are an important dynamic ('age group') that is highly responsible and is tasked with the building of the Igbo *Ohacracy* family to develop to its full maturity and especially the male children who are considered to be the future and development actors of the Igbo (Achebe 1965:47). This grouping is necessary since in some Igbo traditions (communities), a second level of fatherhood, the woman-fatherhood is evident. The women who fall under this category do not enjoy the 'seating-together' in discussing issues with their male equals in family cultural ownership unless in matriarchy communities where she then does. Rather, they seat in the company of their female counterparts (who are of course wives), to relate fully and contribute meaningfully in the Igbo *Ohacracy* community discussions and rulings.[56]

> The woman-fatherhood could come in such experience of childlessness in first marriage. The Igbo social *Ohacracy* governance permits such a woman after first husband's death without a child or a male child, to marry another woman whose children then are legally accepted as full heirs of the late husband and are entitled to all *Ohacracy* order rights, benefits and duties Amadiume, (2015:31; 42). The society accepts the children to be legitimately belonging to this family and thus share in the inheritance belonging to all members of such families without any discrimination or denial Onwurah, (1984:29).

Hence, each adult male is expected to play this important role by which the Igbo *Ohacracy* people are assured of progression and sustenance. The raising and sustenance of any Igbo

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[56] More references will be made when discussing the mother's and the *Umuada* sections of socio-cultural roles in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order of this chapter.

Ohacracy family is an enormous task and responsibility to the adult male age grouping as noted already (Duru 1980:122). This is so because among the Igbo, the family is the highest social institution and is considered sacred. Due to the strongly sacred nature of the *Ohacracy* family, its protection and security is tasked to the most respected ranked personality among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, the father. This clear role of the father is noted by Achebe (1965:47) as he lustrates the tasks and duties of a family man like splitting wood and provision of food for the family as Okonkwo in his *obi*[57] in *Thing fall apart* with his family. The father in this regard would include the social and political title holders like traditional chiefs, the council of elders, the *Ozo*[58], male and or female[59] individual home owners.

However, as heads of monogamous or polygamous families in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, the father's age group is tasked with specific social and cultural responsibilities for the growth and harmony of the Igbo people. Some of these include:

I. The fathers are the custodians of unity, solidarity and maintain peaceful coexistence

II. They support and protect members from outside intrusion and represent members whenever they are involved in disputes with others in the community.

III. The fathers help in working towards the maintenance of a good reputation of fellow community members (see Duru 1980:122) and (Afigbo 2005:209).

IV. They encourage all to cooperate in the efforts of community growth and development.

V. Responsible in supporting their families, with the priority of establishing strong economic foundation for younger siblings (Ebelebe 2009:181).

VI. They also provide security both material and physical when members are threatened.

VII. They are the leadership group and authority in the home and community in general.

VIII. They see to the education of members of their families or community (Okafor 1992:30).

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[57] An *Obi* is a small hut located near the entrance of a compound where the male owner of a family entertains his visitors and where worship and sacrificial rituals take place (Duru 1980: 207).

[58] The *Ozo* is an Igbo honorary title given to certain men of honour who have achieved a high level of respect and development of the Igbo people either by their hard work or intellectual abilities. Further discussion on this will be made when discussing the Igbo *Ohacracy* institutions of governance in this chapter.

[59] In Igbo matrilineal traditions (communities) women of great honour and respect have enjoyed positions of leadership and therefore are accorded titles of honour and Igbo names of respect chiefs (Agbasiere 2000:xxiv, Plate 1; 40-41). Another dimension of woman-fatherhood could come in such experience of childlessness in first marriage. The Igbo social culture permits such a woman after first husband's death without a child or a male child, to marry another woman whose children then are legally accepted as full heirs of the late husband and are entitled to all cultural rights and duties. The society accepts the children to be legally and legitimately belonging to this family and thus share in the inheritance belonging to all members of such families without any discrimination or denial of any kind (Onwurah 1984:29).

5.4.1.2 The Place of Women (Mothers) in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Governance

As Afigbo (2005:514) rightly notes, the beginning of a clear study of the Igbo women emerged from the 1929[60] women's war when the colonial government failed short of the Igbo women's favour on economic standard of operation. As the English colonial rule suddenly imposed direct taxation on every household and local industry production mainly ran and operated by Igbo women (Afigbo 1972:2). This women protest brought to the open the place and role of Igbo women who came at the forefront to stamp out the centralisation of economy other than the decentralised system that the Igbo society was known for.

The place and role of the woman among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people is very crucial and highly valued. Agbasiere (2000:8) identifies the place of woman in the *Ohacracy* order indicating that: "…woman is seen as a 'gift' to society, an ethical being who confers some status on the man, one who is an upholder of morality." By so observing, the presence of women identifies the identity and responsibility of a man. For a man to engage into marriage with a woman among the Igbo means a family is established and responsibility conferred. Womanhood completes the man and assures the continuity of the social order.

Some Igbo proverbs, personal names and daily semantics illustrate these roles played by women: *Nwanyi maramma k'eji aga mba* that is, (the beautiful woman leads the entire community to another community); or *Agwa bu mma nwanyi* (good manners constitute the woman's beauty); *Ada Eze* (the Kings princess) *Nneka* (mother is supreme); *Agunwanyi* (the lioness); *Eze Nwanyi* (the woman King); *Nnenwobi* (mother owns the family homestead); *Adaku* (first daughter signifies wealth); *Nnenwubi* (mother owns the farm) and the host of others (see Onwurah, 1984:40 and Ifemesia, 2002:96).

Most of these expressions indicate or can be interpreted that, a well behaved/good woman is the beauty pride, prestige, honour, respect of her community. This means that though in some instances, the Igbo semantics could be misinterpreted or misappropriated in relation to women. It must be noted here that though the Igbo *Ohacracy* order indicate by positive names towards the woman; but in reality does not always hold meaning. The exploitation of the

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[60] This was the first women's protest in the colonial Africa. The Igbo *Ohacracy* system provided the women equality with men in the Igbo cultural practice by which they expressed themselves inasmuch as the need arrives. The clash of the central system of governance with the decentralised system of the Igbo *Ohacracy* model was very much in the open and thanks to the free expression of the women of 1929.

womanhood in issues relating to bride prize indicates most of the times a 'trading' bargain of the womanhood. Such names like *Adaku* (meaning first daughter signifies wealth) represent such abuses in the *Ohacracy* order.

The Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised order goes further in acknowledging and reorganizing the person of the woman. For instance the *Ofo* in the *Ohacracy* governance which serves as the symbol of leadership and truth is entrusted to the Opkara (first male borne); the woman is entrusted with the *Ogu*. The *Ogu* is a feminine word of mouth that is pronounced at the point of judgement and final trial of any case that the *Ofo* is used to finalize. By this action, the Igbo woman shares with the male counterparts in the symbolic protection of justice, leadership and truth in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. It is to this fact that Ukpokolo (2010:179) clarifies as he notes:

> He is thus, the living representative of the ancestors and the holder of the *Ofo*…of the unit that he leads. While men hold the *Ofo* the women are assumed to hold the *Ogu* which is supposed to be the feminine symbol of justice. …the issue is that while *Ofo* is assumed to be masculine and can only be in the possession of the man, *Ogu* is assumed to be feminine.

The following summaries are more ways women function and contribute towards the *Ohacracy* governance tradition among the Igbo:

I. The woman is the provider in the absence of the man; devoting more time and sustaining the family and the household; hence being identified with such activities as agriculture, local industries, trade, craft, salt production, pottery and textile industries (weaving) (see Afigbo, 2005:224 and Ifemesia, 2002:62).

II. She is also revered as the continuous social trainer for self and for the community. Her duty of training is focused upon leadership, industry and above all, for her organizational ability which keeps the community together.

III. The woman has a political power expression, which could be seen as a 'consultative voice', extensive consultation is regularly carried out over important matters that affect the larger Igbo *Ohacracy* governance population (see Agbasiere 2000:37 and Afigbo, 2005:266).

IV. The women council of elders in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order try cases concerning community and play a general role as advisers. Such issues like the relocation of a market place (Aderinto and Falola 2010:86).

V. They serve as the 'watchdogs' and political pressure group of public morality. They acclaim openly distinguished community leader but ridicule in song and mimic an incompetent or brutal leader or person to sanction and enforce discipline and restore order (Duru 1980:127-131; Allen, 1972:168). As political pressure groups they engage in public demonstrations organised for or against a particular decision or behaviour of persons and families that are not compatible with the Igbo O*menala*[61], the famous 1929 Igbo women's protest or Women's Riot (Afigbo 2005:266) is a clear example.

In recent times Igbo women have assumed another level of social role towards Igbo development. Hence the newly acquired roles resulting from the 'career women' who not only work hard as house wives but are also the ladies of the home in combination with their city modern day careers. In the midst of all this, the Igbo *Ohacracy* people regard the 'motherhood' of the woman as authentic in the context of the modern development of culture and tradition since she is seen as a gift to the Igbo *Ohacracy* order as one who confers some status on all and the upholder of morality (Agbasiere 2000:4-8). In the light of the role of women within the Igbo *Ohacracy* as describe above that this study critically proposes a participatory approach of governance that calls the centralised Roman Catholic system to loosen up and allow the women to contribute their gifts and talents to the entire community of God's people. It is by so doing that the church will be able to demonstrate an alternative thinking to the society whose dealing with women continues to be oppressive. The section that follows discusses the *umuada* (women's group) event among the Igbo *Ohacracy*.

5.4.1.3 The *Umuada* Phenomenon in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Governance

The *Umuada* gives us an amplified and extended avenue to the role and active participation of the women in the *Ohacracy* governance order among the Igbo. Women from time immemorial have always been alive and active in the *Ohacracy* order through their two most important political machineries namely Association of Daughters (*Umuada*) and the Association of Wives (*Ndiyom*)[62] as earlier pointed out (see Ezeigbo 1990:150).

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[61] *Omenala* is a set of rules and regulations that guide the Igbo daily life. Its modern day equivalence is a constitution of a group or state. Literally it means what happens on the land and encompasses native law and custom that have been transmitted from generation to generation within Igbo society prescribing the ethics on which societal norms are based. A violation of these customary laws is dire consequences of a group-enforced or supernatural nature. One of the offences identifiable and highly punishable is incest.

[62] *Umuada* 'married daughters' and *Ndiyom* 'wives' are terms used in describing these two vital associations among the Igbo communities in the Southern or Owerri Igbo; comprising with two (2) major towns of Owerri

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Unfortunately the colonial eras (as a highly centralised system) brought much pain untold setbacks and delayed the growth in and around matters concerning women. Ojiakor (2010:83) notes:

> Colonialism in South Eastern Nigeria altered the status of women and reduced their power through the imposition to western conception of state, society, family, women and gender roles. Women were stripped of important socio-political roles not only for reasons of economic functionality but because of European and gender prejudices. Thus the imposition of colonial administration destroyed pre-colonial Igbo political institutions that made women relevant in decision making. This alien culture adversely affected Igbo women's roles politically during the colonial era and by extension during the post-colonial era.

The patriarchal colonial system as we have already noted deposed the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized system that had women at the central role and active participation in governance. The Western centralized colonial system enthroned the male chauvinist society that was forced on the Igbo people. Concurring with this observation Allen (1972:165) notes that the British colonial officers and missionaries[63] generally failed to see the political roles and powers of Igbo women. The actions of officers of the centralised system declined and in some cases destroyed women's bases of strength in the decentralised system of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. Since they did not have much interest over women's roles, their effort to promote women's participation was very minimal.

While women fought back this suppression and subjugation, Uzukwu (1996:139) rightly observes that on the issue of individual rights and privileges, Africa has had its share of the oppression of women. In modern times the oppression and subjugation of women may have increased with colonialism and the practice of mainline Christianity (Catholicism). The two systems privileged men in employment opportunities and leadership roles while women have almost become onlookers.

Despite such patriarchal acts of marginalization women were able to hold on and pilot their way in the *Ohacracy* order (although already corrupted by structures of centralisation) through the association of women to remain decentralised. It is in this light that the Igbo society would be described as *Ohacracy* since it is both conscious of the individual and the

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and Okigwe among others in the old political division of present Imo state in which this study is based. These terms may differ in other areas of Igbo communities.

[63] These two culprits (colonial masters and the missionaries) are two faces of the same coin. The two worked hand in hand to promote the centralization of power around men and the neglect of the women folk.

community levels of existence; thus, showing the Igbo knowledge for community consciousness (Afigbo 1972:65).

In essence, such association of *Umuada* confirms the strength that came from common relatedness of the women in the traditional society. While forming their own strong organisations and controlled their own affairs and possessed political influence on the basis of their collective strength (Ezeigbo 1990:150). It was through such organisations that women retained power in the patriarch settings that was patterned to marginalise them. It is striking to note that Igbo men did not have the same kind of network of associations and gender solidarity which enabled the women to mobilise across boundaries into a united body.

This *Umuada* group of women are the most revered among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. They are given disciplinary and unquestionable authority by the Igbo culture or tradition to protect the peace and serenity that all desire from their maiden homes, among the Igbo. Although they are married out of their original communities, they enjoy double citizenship. Ukpokolo (2010:185) notes that the Igbo tradition has vested in the *Umuada* enormous power to correct, discipline and deliver verdicts where necessary through their association. Hence, the *Umuada* offers the Igbo *Ohacracy* the checks and balances in relation to governance in the social order.

Yet, in certain cases where verdicts or disciplinary actions imposed by *Umuada* is flouted or disregarded by obdurate or unruly individuals/groups, *Umuada* had found a way to police their judgement by staging a "sit on"[64] on individuals of this nature. In the acknowledgement and realization of this vital position and tool, women in the Igbo *Ohacracy* enjoy, what Allen, (1972:165) indicates as the full women's participation in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance and the effectiveness of their institutions stating:

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[64] The "Sit On" is a tool used by women in the Igbo *Ohacracy* context to enforce their participation in governance. For instance Allen (1972:170) noted husbands and elders were asked to control certain behaviours otherwise they will be followed with a "sit on." If their requests were ignored, women would handle the matter by launching a boycott or a strike to force the men to police themselves or they might decide to "sit on" the individual offender. This tool was the women's weapons against any abuse or intolerant behaviour against the female gender or any man in the land. This involves gathering at a man or woman's house, sometimes late at night, dancing, singing scurrilous songs which detailed the women's grievances against the man and often called his manhood to question. Banging on his hut with the pestles and perhaps demolishing it; a man might be sanctioned in this way for mistreating his wife, for violating the women's market rules or destroying the farm plantation of the women. This sanction will only cease when the individual involved repented and promise to mend his way of life.

As individuals, they participated in village meetings with men. But their real political power was based on the solidarity of women, as expressed in their own political power was based on the solidarity of women, as expressed in their own political institutions – their "meetings" (*mikiri* or *mitiri*)[65], their market networks, their kinship groups, and their right to use strikes, boycotts and force to effect their decisions.

Indeed such is the stand of *Umuada* in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. *Umuada* remains one of the Igbo *Ohacracy* institutions that colonial system of a centralised model could not totally destroy. The Igbo traditional values till this day have kept the light burning in this aspect of Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised governance thereby allowing women to contribute their gifts and talents to the society.

Umuada by their singular act of conflict settlement in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance became part of the leadership with men who combined wealth, generosity and the ability or intelligence to speak or articulate well. The word of mouth in this sense therefore became wisdom that brought respect to individual men and women who were able to fulfil the task of articulation and good memory that has come with experience and age. Age alone among the Igbo means nothing except if it is combined with the values here mentioned (Allen 1972:168). In acknowledgement of this special skill and intelligence in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, and while noting clearly the similarity with the Jewish tribe and the difference between them, Bruder (2008:144) cites Robert Collis (*Nigeria in Conflict*) concluding that there is no doubt that the Ibo (Igbo) men are the hardest workers in Nigeria, and their women among the most charming and the most intelligent. They have shown themselves to have IQ's as high as any race or group anywhere in the world. The Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised system acknowledges the intelligence of the Igbo woman and provides them the space for their participation in governance.

However, the challenges surrounding Igbo *Ohacracy* governance in relation to concerns and rights of women in the contemporary era cannot be neglected and therefore worth's mentioning in the study of this nature. In his deep and remarkable poem "The Widow's Tears" (*Nwaanyi mkpe*, a widow), Obododimma Oha (2007:17) notes with pain, uncertainties

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[65] '*Mitiri*' or '*Mikiri*' is a loose translation of the English equivalent 'meeting' being mispronounced in Igbo language usage of the term *Ogbako* or *nzuko* meaning the meetings or gatherings of the community for issues on discussion. English language lacks the in-depth meaning of the Igbo equivalence *Ogbako*. It is important to distinguish between *Ogbako-/nzuko* and *Ogbako-Oriri*. In the Igbo semantics while the former means gathering for issues on discussion, the later means gathering for entertainment or refreshments. Though there might be refreshments in the former usage of gathering, which is not the focus, but the issues at hand.

and frustrations of an Igbo *Ohacracy* widow whose tears knows no bounds and indeed says it all in terms of feminist struggle as she writes:

She weeps the loss, weeps the waiting trouble

Of contested farmlands and shrinking hellos

In-laws becoming outlaws, shifting landmarks

Fears of tied hands and buried futures of her growing children

She Weeps…

It is lamentable to note such anguish and distress women in *Ije di*[66] (marriage journey) go through at any stage of widowhood. One begins to wonder why the *Oha* governance does not protect women from men who are greedy and whose interest is to swallow the widows alive. The thought of a woman losing her husband is therefore night mire in some Igbo communities where all are said to have equal chances of protection and security, yet the widow is hardly protected. As Agu and Chimakonam (2013:59) notes on the concerns of feminists among Igbo women while stressing Uchem (2001:20-22) states: "…In Afghanistan and Somalia it is the right to education; but in Igboland…, it is the freedom or right to be absolved from all forms of religious, economic, political, social and cultural discriminatory and humiliating practices."

The following roles can still be identified with the *Umuada* towards the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. These include the following as Egboh (1987:103-107) notes:

  I. They settle quarrels concerning political, economic and ritual matters, which are beyond their male relatives and prove impossible.

 II. More so, the *Umuada* have the power to ostracize any proven incorrigible (incurable) male or female families and individual behaviour noted in the lineage relative.

III. The *Umuada* of any unit of Igbo community functions as the final arbiter in all conflict situations within the respective lineage. Their verdicts are always final and cannot be appealed to any other level of adjudication (see Agbasiere 2000:40-42).

Moreover, having highlighted what the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance offers in matters related to women's organisation and contribution to keep the decentralised system, it is vital to conclude this section by refereeing to the deficiency of the centralized Catholic Church governance to

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[66] *Ije di* is Igbo expression that means 'the journey of marriage'. In Igbo tradition, marriage is often metaphorised as a trip or journey. It is assumed that the woman who is marrying is travelling not only to another physical space, but also making a life journey that may be full of trials and also rewarding experience. It is a journey of uncertainties, joys and happiness, woes and pain. Yet, the woman must necessarily venture the journey (Oha 2007:17).

listen and hear Igbo women's voices calling to be part of her governance structure which has alienated women's voices and full participation for centuries. Women in the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized system are therefore part of the family membership that belongs and exercise their full participation in the governance of the *Ohacracy* communities. The centralized Catholic Church system needs to engage in dialogue and be more inclusive to women's participation in the life of the Church. Any failure to do this will only cost the Church so direly by losing the gifts and women's insight as noted above.

5.4.1.4 The Place of Youth in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Governance

The youth in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order are unmarried and below forty years of age and belong to the association of young *Ohacracy* people, militant social and cultural group and plays an influential solidarity role among the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. Young adult male group affiliate themselves to this age group organization in which they play a social, cultural and political roles in contributing to the common good of the Igbo people. Every young Igbo male adult looks forward to the age group with anticipation. Questions arise regarding the young Igbo female adults and their roles in the *Ohacracy* governance arena under consideration. To this question I note that the Igbo culture did not discriminate against young adult girls. Of course Igbo girls participate in the daily affairs of the Igbo family/community tasks of manual and farm works, education, sports entertainment (dance group), market squire and river cleanings, but there is no particular socio-cultural function and role assigned to young female adults (see Agbasiere 2000:45-46 and Anyanwu, 2010:39). While insisting and expanding on the youth participation in Igbo *Ohacrcy* governance, Okafor (1992:9) writes that the executive function of the village is trusted in the youth. By their age-group organisation, this serves the means by which the youth are allocated public duties and guarding public morality through the censorship of members' behaviour. They youth are seen to be the police of every village community.

The young adult Igbo girls do join their male counterparts as events arise, (for example mass youth protests against individuals who may have broken the laws of the land) but they are unconsciously (constantly) reminded of the natural marriage movement/event. Young adult girls leave their natural families to join their husbands' clan; whereby they enjoy full right of participation and double citizenship as described above under the *Umuada* phenomenon.

This condition may be explained by the natural expectation of every Igbo girl who would get married to another community. As I noted above, every young Igbo adult girl looks forward to get married out of her community and by the reality of such a marriage, community loses their young girls' presence and service to other communities. Hence, the wisdom not to assign the young Igbo adult girls any particular socio-political (governance) role or task has come from the marriage movement that takes them out of their birth-families and communities. However, the *Umuada* phenomenon addresses and clarifies further on the young Igbo adult girl's role which is said to be postponed or reserved until marriage. It is reasonable to understand the wisdom of this design since marriage brings stability in the life of the married young woman.

It should be clarified that the Igbo *Ohacracy* system and policy of common good provides and has placed such tasks and responsibility on all young adult males. Even so, I must point out that, not all Igbo adult males grow to this maturity and expectations towards the growth of the Igbo *Ohacracy* nation. Some fall away from the expectations due to the pressure and the high demand of the Igbo *Oha* solidarity on its young adults. However, Basden (1966:196-198) and other writers point out these developmental roles which are geared towards achieving the common good for all. They identify these as follows:

I. These young adult males are the militant and law enforcement group who are regularly called upon to defend their father land against indiscipline (see Achebe 1965:171).

II. They are responsible for rural road and market maintenances

III. Through the age grade, every member is tasked to build unity and positive relationships among its family affiliates

IV. These form the major work/labour force for *Ohacracy* community projects like the building of community centres and schools, farms and other community development ventures (see Anyanwu 2010:39).

V. The harvesting of major crops and food plants remain their major responsibility

VI. The Igbo agriculture or farming is seasonal; hence during the dry season in which the Igbo *Ohacracy* people are relaxed with less work to do, the youth male age grade is tasked with entertainment of their communities and the people at large with wrestling contexts and masquerade dancing (see Achebe 1965:168).

VII. They work hard to be able to take care of the younger siblings in the family and beyond (extended families)

VIII. These are also the major trading group who are able to travel far and wide to market their products and other articles in their possession (Agbasiere 2000:45).

Finally, as Basden (1966:196) rightly notes, all these duties and responsibilities are expected of every young Igbo man who must respond to the social and political needs of his living *Ohacracy* community. He therefore argues:

> …Every young Igbo man upon reaching this manhood state, automatically enters upon the privileges and duties of citizenship, and bears his share in all that appertains to the well-being of the villages. He is called upon to contribute to the public festivals and sacrificial obligations, and to pay his quota towards any expenses incurred by the community. As required, he must render personal service in war and peace…

It is in so living that the Igbo *Ohacracy* solidarity is achieved, developed and maintained as people and individuals play their roles in enriching the community's vision for all. As I have already pointed out, this principle and expectation is embedded in the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized governance system, yet encounter challenges in areas where all behaviours do not lead to growth and development. Issues of corruption, ill-treatment of others, injustice and inequality between men and women etc... are all concerns that still exist.

The youth in essence are the future generation of the Igbo *Ohacracy* and are fully involved and engaged in the governance of the society. Hence, as they are groomed into becoming future elders, the Igbo decentralised system fully involve the young people to grow with responsibility and commitment to the security of the entire community as noted above. In the same manner, the Vatican II event has encouraged the full involvement and active participation of the Youth in centralised Roman Catholic Church governance. By so doing, the Catholic Youths are to be entrusted with responsibilities, duties and leadership positions that will engage them to be part of Catholic Church governance. The old saying that 'the young people should wait for their time of leadership to arrive,' should be done away with in order for young people to contribute and participate in this common governance of the Roman Catholic Church as in their Igbo *Ohacracy* counterparts. The Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* is therefore called upon in the event of Vatican II to utilise the young people so that they can truly become tomorrow's leaders.

This chapter now proceeds to look at the nature of the extended family in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance.

5.5 The Extended 'Families' in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Governance

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the study will now briefly present the three major family extensions namely the extended *Umunna* family, the village assembly and the town (village-groups) which are all seen as family extensions (or wings) of different levels and determinations of *Ohacracy* governance.

5.5.1 The *Umunna* as Family in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Governance

The extended family as this is known gives us another level at which the Igbo people experience and express their *Ohacracy* family solidarity. This expression of solidarity creates or calls for a strong and wider bond of co-operation in times of difficulty or conflict among community members and reveals the need for further interdependence and collective responsibility. By definition, the extended family is referred to as a patriarchal (or matriarchal) where applicable, that a group is tasked by their birth or natural role in the *Ohacracy* governance to defend and promote the right of their members in the community (Amadiume 2015:90). In his description of extended family, Mozia (1982:203) observes that the extended family is a collection of several primary (blood related) families that pool their strength and encourage each member's co-operation for the growth and development of other family members. It is important to note that the practice of *Ubuntu*[67] among the Igbo is alive in the extended family. The extended family has a responsibility to support each member of the family towards the full realisation of his or her potential. For instance in cases of the death of parents of a family member, the other families are expected to take care of the children of the deceased.

As this study has noted above, the order of *Ohacracy* solidarity begins at the level of the family and the extended family, all members of the Igbo community are charged to respond promptly to the needs of this bigger family and the Igbo community as a whole. No one individual thinks for oneself alone; rather a common effort is made to help others to come along the road to a collective common good. With such a high spirit of collective concern for the development of both the individual and the group, the Igbo were able to unite efforts that led to rapid educational, roads, market and other infrastructural developments. It is to this

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[67] *Ubuntu* is a Xhosa (South African) term of expression for personhood relatedness to others. In practice, it is a term that shows how close or distant relatives or non-related members of a society ought to share family ties and feelings when need be or arises. The concept *ubuntu* more perfectly understood as expressed in the Xhosa saying "*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*" which implies that a person is only a person through his/her interaction, relatedness with other people. Refer also to the "Igbo world view" above.

effect that the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised school infrastructure when communities tasked themselves and established schools and invited mission teaches to take over. The centralised system only waited for officers to do it at their own time and pace, but the Igbo *Ohacracy* system moved very quick and fast towards community schools that became a competition among Igbo communities.

In this effort, Uchendu (1965:34) notes the pattern of development "Getting Up"[68] that took place in Igbo land; he writes that in the days before the Igbo contact with Europeans the prestige and influence of a town was measured by the strength of its able-bodied warriors. Any town with high level of diplomacy in dealing with its neighbours and its access to long-distance trade routes are qualities to reckon with. Not forgetting the power of its oracles, the importance of its marketplace, and the degree of its craft specialists all count for recognition and respect of her neighbours for commonly achieving such status of influence.

It is important to mention that the extended family remains the basic Igbo political development system that has its root in solidarity. The family is basically also the political unit in the Igbo system of decentralized government (Afigbo 2005:4). As noted above, the *Umunna* are a lineage made up of a number of territorially kin-based units (Uchendu, 1965:40). The *Umunna* are children of the same father but may not be of the same mother. Traditionally, they live in one compound (yard) depending on their size and there lies a unit of political authority.

Houses are headed by men or women who are economically independent, but may not make any political decisions without first consulting the head of the homestead known as *Okpara* or *Ada*, the first male or female born respectively. The political office among the Igbo *Ohacracy* community is not by election or appointment but by birth right in the lineage. But in a situation where this is not possible, the next elderly person on the line of extended family would be appointed to fulfil this task of leadership. The political leader's obligation is to seek peace, justice, harmony and equality for all he/she represents in the village affairs.

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[68] "Getting up" is an expression used by Uchendu (1965: 34) to note the unity attitude that existed around traditional and modern Igbo communities for self-help development projects. In this instance, a well to do or rich member of a family, extended families, village and town units, unites effort to help and support members of any of the mentioned family categories to benefit and develop directly through his wealth. By so doing no one individual is rich but the family or community where one comes from.

The level or extent at which Igbo *Ohacracy* governance extend is sometimes very complex. In the context of the extended (*Umunna*) family, solidarity prevails among all the members of the extended family. Affluence or poverty, honour or shame, gain or loss, would reflect on the entire image of the extended family. However, in recent times, due to urbanisation and western education, and other influences like individualism and personal greed, *Ohacracy* among the Igbo people has been fast eroded. Having accepted western civilization, together with the education and technological advancement that came with it, *Ohacracy* solidarity among the Igbo communities is highly challenged. It is this reality of individualism that reduces the value of *Ohacracy* solidarity to an extent that Ejiofor (1981:39-40) states:

> …Western civilization was intertwined with capitalism, which considers the individual man the ultimate aim of abundance and welfare. If capitalist economy brought in private ownership with the competition that furthers progress, it also brought with it the egocentrism, which absolved one from one's duties as a brother's keeper. The philosophy of distribution gradually gave way to that of accumulation and concentration in the hands of a few, and one's social worth came to be boosted by one's ability to accumulate even more.

This Western reality which informs "selfishness and individualism" has torn apart close relations among the Igbo people. Individual families seem to focus on their own welfare and do not think much of their relations anymore. This modern Western experience of individualism, which sometimes sees the society as a threat to the interests of the individual and which may define society as a collection of individuals, is alien to the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance and to African traditional communities. Emphasising on the challenges that individualism poses to the Igbo (African) *Ohacracy* solidarity, Uzukwu (1996:42-44) observes that while the African social definition of person displays the human person as subsistent association or relatedness (in other words, the person as fundamentally "being-with," "living-with," belonging-to" "related-to"); Western philosophy lays emphasis on the absolute originality and concentration of the human person, a "being-for-itself."

The alarming state of individualism in African countries has reached a frightening, scandalous and scary level that demands a quick and radical response in our contemporary societies. Based on this reality, Uzukwu (1996:106) points out that it is indeed a worrying situation and calls for adequate attention by all. Less privileged and poor Africans, citing the research conducted in present day Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Cameroon, on the effects of individualism among Africans noted the increase in practice of 'witchcraft' among the less

privileged people who felt left out in economic gains and development of the states. These less privileged African population have developed negative feelings and sense of hate towards the few rich and highly privileged and favoured in the hash economic conditions. Jealousy against wealthy members of society finds expression in sortilege (divination) by the poor and those who think they are not benefiting from the wealth of the nation.

This scary situation is slowly eating up the Igbo community in which people have resorted to the membership of organisations known as "Secret Societies" and are involved in diabolic activities. Members are promised riches and wealth in a short time and without working hard for it. The killing of family members and relatives are part of the ritual by which a member becomes rich. While articulating this scandalous disease which has eaten deep into the fabric of Igbo *Ohacracy* governance tradition Uzukwu (1996:106-107) notes:

> …Witchcraft functions as a metaphor for balancing relationships in societies in which the relational notion of person, as displayed in community, dominates. This relational notion is being threatened by the radical individualism of the modern world… The jealousy, which finds its expression through witchcraft, is in the final analysis, the expression of anger at the individualistic hoarding of goods, goods that should be utilized creatively for the common welfare (good)…

Of course the centralised system promoted aimless and endless individual competitions and accumulation of wealth without the consideration of the weak or the 'others'. Hence, it can be seen that individualism has devalued the decentralised community life where neighbours know and care for each other; pulling and supporting each other in participatory system is the way for the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. The Igbo therefore have proverbs to demonstrate a high level of unity that must exist among members of the *Umunna* family; such as: "*Anyuko mamiri onu, obguo ofufu*" – best translated, 'when one urinates together, it foams' and; "*Ihe Ohazuru mee, nwere amamihe*" – what the assembly has agreed, is wisdom at its best. By so thinking and doing, the Igbo demonstrate that *Ohacracy* solidarity is the best form and means of governance and development (see Ukpokolo 2009:17-18 and Echeruo 1971:63-66). The chapter will now turn to the village set up in which the elders provide able leadership towards *Ohacracy* governance among the Igbo people.

5.5.2 The Village Assembly as Family: Basics for *Ohacracy* Governance

> …the colonial system did not displace the consensus based governance structures where they were entrenched in the pre-colonial era and specifically

in Igbo-land, the enthronement of warrant chiefs[69] did not displace the village councils that pre-dated the Whiteman (Muo and Oghojafor 2012:155).

Such is the basic reality around the village context of Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. The village remains the most single *Ohacracy* governance effect that has revolutionised the Igbo communities of the south-eastern Nigeria. Its effectiveness and highly organised nature has made it the envy of the contemporary system that cannot bit it in all ramifications. In articulating Onwumechili (2000) and Nwaezeigwe (2007) on the Igbo *Ohacracy* village governance, Muo and Oghojafor (2012:158) argue that the Igbo society in its traditional setting is an egalitarian and highly competitive socio-cultural society. Meanwhile, it is founded on the basis or framework of gerontocracy and movement of social title systems and the traditional governance was fully participatory.

In line and keeping with this principle of common good, the Igbo village communities are able to give courage and strength (life-forces) to its members in their formal and informal meetings held as a group in an atmosphere of *Ohacracy* cordiality at marriages, births, and occasional windfalls of achievements (Agbasiere 2000:89-91). The village in this relation is another level of family unit[70] composed of groups of individual and extended families who co-operate with each other for the purpose of well-being, security and protection from harm and support in time of need and difficulties. The village community therefore in all its ramifications provides the Igbo *Ohacracy* solidarity with its second level of organised and recognised government after the *Umunna* family level, and hence, the most primary among the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria (see Okafor 1992:4-5 and Uchendu 1965:41-43).

Most importantly, we must emphasize that the village is not an autonomous social unit within the traditional Igbo system. A village is an integral part of town. The village in the Igbo context depends on the decisions made at town level, which is an autonomous entity in the Nigerian political usage. Hence, at least five villages and more therefore make up an autonomous town. It was in agreement to this that Okeke (2010:12) explains that at the local

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[69] The British introduced warrant chiefs because they wrongly assumed that all Africans were ruled by Kings of Chiefs. The traditional Igbo government was rather democratic with no individual enjoying more formal political authority than any other. While the warrant chief system was successful in the North characterized by a traditional feudal system, and partially successful in the west; it was impractical in Igboland. The way warrant officers were chosen in total neglect of the traditional norms and later their abuse of power and corruption, made them very unpopular (Isichei 1976:143; Duru 2005:217).

[70] In the Igbo meaning and usage of the term "village" all individual families in one village community are understood as members of one family since they all originated from one stock of blood ancestral relations.

level, "natural communities" (villages or village groups of pre-colonial origin) are established into "autonomous communities." Because of the numerous makeup of traditional Igbo society, autonomous communities in Igbo land are plentiful.

To bring this section to a close, the role of the village in Igbo *Ohacracy* system is focused on the common good of all who live in the land and co-operate with its improvement and survival. It is vital to note other specific areas by which the Igbo village contributes immensely towards the realization of *Ohacracy* order and development of the Igbo communities. Meanwhile, this chapter proposes that the Catholic Church's centralised system among the Igbo communities, to consider strongly the "Basic Christian Communities" or the "Small Christian Communities" since they come closer to the decentralised system of the village governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. This basic understanding and practise of the Church as family has not taken root in the Igbo Catholic communities.[71] By so doing, most Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic adherents will find a means of participating in their faith activities.

Of course, the Igbo village unions undertake many joint projects to create a people led and centred development. The *Ohacracy* governance solidarity is possible by the means and practice of the traditional values and their roles in the recent years in the Igbo polity. These include the following among others:

   I. The construction (expansion as population grows) or improvement of market-places and its surroundings.

  II. The creation or mounting of scholarship schemes in recent years since the dawn of modernity.

 III. Road construction and maintenance (see Egboh 1987:64-76; 83-91).

 IV. Organising social entertainment like Masquerade *egwugwu* and age-grade wrestling tournaments by which immense influence of age-grades, women and deities to ensure social *Ohacracy* order (see Ezeliora 2009:46; Achebe 1965:110-112 and Egboh 1987:131-135).

  V. The establishment of a revolving loan/fund for the businessmen and women of the village.

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[71] Refer to the 'Presbyter Ministry' in governance in chapter 3 to note the hindrance for SCC or BCC to take effect.

VI. The settlement of disputes among members.

VII. The review of the activities and involvement of their members living abroad and the Diaspora; if need be to check crime and bad behaviour. They organise vigilance over the behaviour of her citizens.

VIII. Finally, they also make sure that the village community is fully represented in the higher town unions' political organisation (Ejiofor 1981:50).

The village therefore represents the primary decentralised system whereby every individual family is given opportunity of representation and participation in the governance of the community affairs. By this practice no particular individual (centralised) has authority over the entire community. This is key in seeking a participatory model of governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. Instead the group of families meet as assembly to dialogue over issues affecting the entire community and is able to make decisions based on informed ideas. This is unlike the centralised system of the Roman Catholic Church where the priest (clergy) reigns supreme. Even in the closest comparison of the so called "parish council" formed in local Catholic parishes, the priest remains a single authority determining proceedings and has "veto" power over issues being deliberated upon. The lay participants only have consultative role to play (see Arrieta 2000:39).

The following section of this chapter discusses the last stage of family among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order the town which is a conglomeration of all the village groups in a particular political division known as autonomous community in the Nigerian political sense of the word.

5.5.3 The Town Family (Village-Groups) in the *Ohacracy* Governance

The town is the last level of family system in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance and it represents the secondary level of political participations after the primary village level in the Igbo system. The village government organises regular meetings as events and issues required, whereas Ejiofor (1981:52) notes that, the town in the Igbo people's context is a political unit composed of a group of villages whose ancestors claimed common descent and kinship. In its Igbo meaning this is *Ndi-ala or Ndi-Obodo*[72] which means people of the same land or place.

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[72]This is the understanding of Igbo village-groups in which their autonomy and self-determination manifest in their decisions and plans and the state is not expected to interfere. In other words, the Town Union relates to the mentality of the people and most of the time the present day state that the governments need to liaise with the Unions to be able to reach the people.

Every village is represented the town level of Igbo *Ohacracy* governance. As noted at the village level, at the Town Unions levels, the issues concerning individual villages are properly deliberated. All are given equal chances to contribute openly without restrictions until agreeable positions are reached. The village-group government is ruled by the principle of representation. The decisions that the town makes are not binding on any village that is not represented. The village-group's power and authority rests only on the agreement (consensus) of the village members. As Uchendu (1965:44) rightly points out, every village member has equal right and voice. The representatives are not a permanent body of legislators but are selected at each session for their ability to present the viewpoint of their village. They have a "delegate" and not a "representative" status. As delegates, they cannot commit their village to any matter not previously discussed and agreed upon by the people; but as representatives they possess the ability to commit on behalf of their village.

In current developments, the 'village' has been called "Progressive Union" or "Improvement Union", which depicts the intensity of Igbo *Ohacracy* governance (Egboh 1987:8-11). As will be emphasised in the next chapter when discussing the progressive union as one of the Igbo *Ohacracy* institutions, it should be noted here that Igbo community progressive unions exist under a strict rule or role of working towards the common good of all who live in the community. The search and hunger for better life for Igbo communities remains at the centre of every community's progressive union. Ejiofor (1981:54) notes that these unions became famous after World War II as modernizing institutions. While it retains the heritage of culture and tradition, the Village Union takes the community into modernity. This means that ideas acquired through urban life are harmonized with the rich traditions of the Igbo people to bring about ordered continuity and change and adjust to the new setting. As the wellbeing for all members became the central concern of the improvement unions, building schools, hospitals, colleges, good internal road, and water supply formed part of their tasks and responsibilities.

One of the most important development projects, that are so eminent among the Igbo Town Unions, is community centres or town halls in which activities for example launching community projects, hosting community Day-Celebrations, marriage ceremonies etc... (Egboh 1987:47) are regularly organised and important meetings and community guests are hosted. The recent community centres/halls around Igbo communities replace the former market squares or the compound of a rich famous chief, which were regularly used as meeting venues

among the Igbo. The community centres serve a great deal among Igbo communities and towns.

As a centre for deliberation and decision-making, the Igbo solidarity finds a great anchor around the ability of a given town or community to find a comfortable place or venue for community activities. The centre has a symbolic meaning of unity and solidarity in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance and all who live in the land as a place of searching for and school of wisdom, where solutions to difficulties are sorted out and differences are settled. *Ilo* (community centre), as known in the Igbo language, is the village green where assemblies for sports, discussions and dialogues take place (Achebe 1965:38; 198). In the community centre, cases and conflicts are tried; verdicts and solutions are reached by the wisdom of all that deliberate openly and sincerely guided by the knowledge of the elder-leader's council. The following activities are at the heart of a community centre (the Igbo village square) according to Afigbo (1981:176) these have contributed in the social development of the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. These include:

i. Development project planning centre for all in the community.
ii. Deliberation, issues meeting centre for the community.
iii. A community centre for cultural school and traditional education.
iv. A youth development centre for growth in the Igbo tradition.
v. Community fund raising and launch centre.
vi. A community praying centre in matters of religious rites and worship.
vii. All age-grade activities and training centre.
viii. A court centre for peace and reconciliation (Duru, 1980:146).

The Igbo *Ohacracy* town level of political order has only emerged in the mid-20th century arrangement when numerous villages have come into existence thereby creating super sizes structures for easy representations and participations of the people. The equivalence of this structure in the Roman Catholic Church will be the 'Diocesan' level of governance where the bishop is enthroned to administer a particular Church as addressed. With the Catholic structures on this level, governance is fully centralised around the "lord" bishop in charge with little or no dialogue whatsoever, decisions are made without the consent of the lay masses. While on the contrary, the decentralised system of the Igbo *Ohacracy* provides yet adequate representations and participation on the town level for the village groups when issues are discussed and deliberated upon. The difficulty to the Igbo *Ohacracy* system is when

authority and decision making are centred on one individual other than the group where dialogue and more listening are expected to take place.

This study in this chapter has discussed the structures in Igbo *Ohacracy* order while centring the family as a basic institution that propels every individual or group towards the Igbo *Ohacracy* common good. Attention has been given to the Igbo *Ohacracy* symbols by which the Igbo social meanings and values are communicated through symbolic means of *Oji* and *Ofo*. Effort has been made too by modern features that had supported and clarified the gender roles in the *Ohacracy* governance solidarity in relation to Igbo civilization.

However, in the contemporary world centred on modernity, materialism, individualism and technology, more efforts should be made by Igbo *Ohacracy* leaders and individuals to protect the *Ohacracy* values centred on the family and institutions to project Igbo survival. Therefore, values of dialogue, sharing, consideration for others, listening and community centred values that define the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised systems and practises must receive attention. In the following section of this chapter continues to discuss other institutions in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order by which individuals and groups participate actively in the governance system.

5.6   The Institutions of the Community *Dibia* and the Chiefs

The Igbo *Ohacracy* has a number of fraternities presented as institutions and are worth mentioning in this study. These are *dibia* fraternity (medicine men and women) referred to as "Oracles" (Uchendu 1965) and as "secret societies" (see Ottenberg 1958 and Okafor 1992:5). The *dibia* fraternity was used or served as social control mechanism in the Igbo *Ohacracy* participatory governance (Ebbe and Onyeozili 2012:31). The title 'Chief' known as *Ozo* can be given to either a man or woman fraternity as honorary titles received for influential and meaningful contributions made in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities (Ukpokolo 2009:7). These two institutions are now discussed in the following two sections of this chapter of this study.

5.6.1   The *Dibia* Fraternity

The *dibia* is a term used in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order to describe a man and woman who by the very nature of their function belong to an association or fraternity of local medicine healers. Through their association, the *dibia* meet the health demands of the people in the Igbo

community. Not only do they meet to protect their interests and share new knowledge of local medical cures of certain illnesses in solidarity with all members, but they also meet to discuss their difficulties and regulations in practising their profession in any Igbo community of modern era. As Okafor (1992:32) observes, the term *dibia* is loosely and widely used among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people to describe various functionaries like a diviner, herbalist or a medicine man or woman but are all grouped under the *dibia* fraternity as an institution. A *dibia* in the strict sense of the word refers to a particular 'Calling' of an individual to perform some lifesaving mission to the community. Therefore, a *diabia's* profession should not be geared towards a moneymaking venture for self-enrichment but a mission that is a "Calling" in this sense. Agbasiere (2000:40-47) affirms the participation of women in this association who also enjoy equal ranks with men members as they take part in the decision making abilities.

As priests, the Igbo *Ohacracy dibia* fraternity conduct most of religious rituals by offering the required sacrifices for continued peace and solidarity of the Igbo people. The *dibia* also attend to all who may require socio-cultural medical cure of one condition or the other. As psychologists of the social order, this same group functions as therapists to individuals or groups of persons who may be in need of mental or spiritual stability during a malfunctioning instance in Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. Therefore, Jell-Bahlsen (1980:157) notes that active *dibias* are outstanding individuals who are highly respected and sometimes feared due to their extraordinary abilities. Those *dibias* who are able to handle issues and cases of ill health presented to them command respect and recognition. *Dibias* get consulted in all main events of life such as childbirth-difficulties, family misfortunes, ill health and search for cure of diseases and other life-crises.

To check crime and wrong doing, the *dibia* fraternity is tasked to enforce the punishment which is attracted by an individual not keeping to the rules governing behaviour in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. If anybody violates sacred rules like killing sacred animals or cutting dawn sacred trees, the provision of fowl, sheep, goat, Kola-nut and ram or cow as item for sacrifice to cleanse the land becomes the prize to pay in form of punishment on the offender and is demanded by the local priest, the *dibia*. Most severely though punishment of excommunication can be imposed if need be in cases of *nso-ala* (meaning crimes which 'Mother-Earth' the land abhors) like murder (Achebe 1965:28; 113, Ebbe and Onyeozili 2012:34).

By the fulfilment of these rituals the services of the *dibia* or medicine men or women are procured. It is therefore important to draw attention to some key examples of rituals. As Agbasiere (2000:131) rightly notes the rite of purification of the breast-milk for instance is done for a first time new mother at her home. This rite consists in washing the new mother's breasts with herbal medicines a combination of prepared herbs and roots. This process is continually repeated until the 'white milk' as different from colostrums forms in the mother's breast is attained. The newly born is fed on water while the purification lasts. One other important rite in the period of childbirth is that of child-naming ritual (Ifemesia 2002:56). This ritual symbolizes the appreciation of the gift of the new born baby and a solemn prayer is made for the good health and overall protection of the newly born and mother. As the father of the child pronounces the name of the newly born child, identity, dignity and joy fills the heart of all in the ceremony since the future generation is assured.

Therefore, in the Igbo *Ohacracy* socio-cultural development, an individual who saves lives by providing such services as explained herewith is mainly paid by the charity of the people. He or she does not charge in the form of money for the services but accepts the offer from people in the form of live animals or a portion of meat, vegetables, cassava roots, yams and coco yam tubers etc. for appreciation and a kind of payment for work or services provided. While affirming this value of *dibia* fraternity institutional development among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, Ifemesia (2002:109) expressed disappointment while evaluating the recent developments in the Christian Church and the ministers who use their gifts or ministry as money making ventures. Uzukwu points out:

> …Priests in Nigeria who parade gifts to fascinate the laypeople or to make money are comparable to the *Ofeke-dibia* (foolish, fraud, false and ignorant medicine-men-woman)[73] of the Igbo tradition. They constitute a danger to the community because they could practice sorcery or poisoning to make money. …*Ogwu* (Igbo) - meaning medication, herbs – are considered beneficial social services when positively rendered; …they are never primarily considered as a source of wealth or of the provision of one's livelihood (Uzukwu 1996:126).

This understanding of the *dibia* fraternity among the Igbo *Ohacracy* highlights the clear role that 'medicine' men and women play in the Igbo society. As noted, the decentralised system of the Igbo *Ohacracy* offers health and healing to the sick or suffering. This is done for no gain but to recover and nurse sick life to health again or give solace to the worried and

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[73] Words in brackets are mine

troubled. For the *dibia*, the recovery of every life remains the focus for medicine. Medicine is accessible to all in need whether rich or poor. Payment could just remain a gift as Uzukwu (1996) notes. Medical care in the Igbo system is decentralised for all to access thereby encouraging full participation in accessing health care. In the centralised system, of both the Roman Catholic Church and the colonial era, medication is accessible only to the ones who could afford. The Catholic Church by the activities of the missionaries gave medication to those whom they know will pay back by embracing the faith. In recent years, Catholic priest and other Christian with the gift of healing use their gifts on the sick while expecting monetary favours from their clients.

The following section now turns to look into the second fraternity in this subdivision, the *Ozo* or chiefs among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order.

5.6.2 The *Ozo* (Chiefs) Fraternity

The *Ozo*, in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, is a title equivalent to the term chief. But these men and women who are given this title are not by any means a ruling class among the Igbo as may be found in other African traditions. First, it is vital to note different levels and developments that have summed the chieftaincy titles among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. This section will briefly explain three (3) main epochs and categories of chieftaincy among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. Each of these eras have affected and redefined the decentralised Igbo system of governance thereby establishing centralised model. These are as follows: The pre-colonial perspective, the colonial perspective and the post-colonial or contemporary perspective.

The *Ozo* chieftaincy title among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people has come to be defined and understood by these three main developmental stages. The leadership relationship in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order is a type that is not defined by "Chiefdom" or "Kingdom" system of governance. Teffo (2012:41) defines this model of leadership as a general African system of governance. Stressing further, Teffo (2012) argues that looking at a traditional socio-cultural setting and leadership, one can appreciate the notion that 'bonding' is the central focus of traditional political decision making in African rural communities. This system allows a common and general community involvement and participation. Teffo (2012:42) calls this system a *communieocracy*.

Meanwhile, the Igbo *Ohacracy* system as will be further expressed is also known as *Ohazurume* (*Ohacracy*) philosophy. This indeed encourages and practices a decision making and consensus building among the Igbo communities. Hence, Muo and Oghojafor (2012:154-157) emphasised thus:

> ...*Ohazurume*... literally (sic) means 'it is the communal will'; ... that ensures that decisions are easily accepted because of its collective properties. ...Because the issue is decided collectively by the '*oha*' (the people), no individual can upturn it. ...decentralized (consensus-based) systems in which law making, social control and allocation of resources are managed by entities like village groups, '*umunna*', age-grades...; As a decision-making process, consensus decision-making aims to be: agreement seeking... collaborative...cooperative... and egalitarian...

Hence, while the former governance system (the kingship or chiefdom) is a centralized form of governance whereby decision and authority are centred around one individual; the later system, *Ohacracy* is a decentralised system whereby decision-making and authority are centred around the assembly or the people (Nweke 2012:209). By so doing and having stated this, the 'chiefs' in the Igbo practice of *Ohacracy* remains 'honorary title' and not an authority vested like in the centralised system. It is significant to note that as defined above, the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised system encourages full participation of all members of the community in decision making and authority. No one individual has power and authority over others as in the centralised system. Instead, cooperation, collaboration, dialogue, and egalitarian means is sort to arrive at any decision and by so doing every individual or group find space to express their free will and opinion over issues or cases.

Having made these clarifications the chapter briefly discusses the three epoch developments of chieftaincy practice among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order.

5.6.2.1 The Pre-Colonial Perspectives of Igbo Chieftaincy Institution

Anthropologists' and historians accounts on the Igbo *Ohacracy* chieftaincy institution was such that it is described as 'stateless', 'acephalous', and or 'segmentary' in nature (see Ukpokolo 2010:177). The following scholars yet affirm this fact that these consist of autonomous villages and village groups or towns; (Green 1947:57; Uchendu 1965:15; Isichei 1976:21 and Ifemesia 1978:17). For this reason, Afigbo (2005:100) states:

> This view can be attributed to the influence of the system built up by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard in their epoch-making book, "*African Political Systems*". In that work they distinguished between two main African political systems –

Group A or state types and Group B or stateless types. They put the Igbo into *Group B* pigeon-hole. As a result people have come to look upon the Igbo as having one type of political system.

The village-groups and or towns in this regard were ruled by 'diffused' authority without formalized, permanent, or hereditary leadership positions. Explaining further on the operation of the village system of government, Uchendu (1965:41; 46) agrees that the "prototypical Igbo traditional local political organisation was an exercise in direct democracy at the village-group level, with a representative assembly." This concurs with Ubah (1987:171) who notes that before a decision was taken on any issue members were given the chance to express their opinions freely whether for or against. No particular individuals or groups are allowed to impose their opinions on others. Consensus through dialogue and ultimate coordination of views remained the purposes intended. Nonetheless, where agreement could not be achieved it was easy to determine the wishes of most people and others would follow.

However, noting some different practices in certain Riverine Igbo communities Afigbo (1981:31) writes that there were exceptions to this general picture. Some Igbo communities, especially trading cities along the Niger like Onitsha, Oguta and the 'holy city' of *Nri* all had elaborated chieftaincy institutions in the pre-colonial times. Nweke (2012:210) agrees to this double political systems of centralised (in minority) and decentralised (in majority) in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order.

Though it is believed and remonstrated in several studies that the traditional Igbo *Ohacracy* pre-colonial order was a highly democratic principled society (Aguwa 1993:20), the inner structures of this epoch among the Igbo reveals much less egalitarian society. A clear example on this is the existence of 'slaves' (*ohu*) and the 'cult-slave' (*osu*) on one instance and leaders on the other (Agbasiere 2000:96).[74] In essence, all were not equal after all. In instances of 'leadership,' the Igbo *Ohacracy* order did not have central governance but certain individual persons were able to establish themselves in different powerful and influential institutions that made big impressions and influential in decision making. Most of these individuals were men; though women had their own assemblies through which they influence decision making policies in the Igbo *Ohacracy* society (Allen 1972:167, Ukpokolo 2010:179 and Amadiume 2015:166).

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[74] Further discussion on the *Ohu* (slaves) and *Osu* (cult-slaves) practices among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order will be made as the study looks at the *Osu* cast institution in this chapter.

Finally, the point being made here is that in the pre-colonial Igbo Ohacracy there was dominantly decentralised system of governance by which the people participated openly in governance. There were no individuals or groups who dominated decision making process. All adults influenced this process as they participated in dialogue and consultations facilitated by men and women of honorary chieftaincy titles. The next section discusses the colonial era which changed the practice of chieftaincy into an authoritative position rather than being people centred institution.

5.6.2.2 The Colonial Period of Chieftaincy among the Igbo *Ohacracy* Order

Basically, this era established 'centralised' system of governance which is at the heart of this study. The honorary chieftaincy became governing officers as the British colonial system introduced a new structured of governance that never existed among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order thereby changing the Igbo world understanding forever. This change ultimately alienated individuals and communities from participating actively in their communities. Local communities became onlookers in their own environment depending on the "orders" of the 'ruling' officers known as 'warrant chiefs.'

The history of how the British colonial system affected the Igbo chieftaincy is wrapped around the introduction of the 'Warrant Chiefs' as well documented in A. E. Afigbo's doctoral thesis of 1972 (Falola 2005:214-215). The British colonial government instituted 'Native Courts' in Igbo land and installed chiefs by warrant who controlled them between the years of 1890s-1917. This took place few years after Nigeria became a nation through the forced single amalgamation project by Lord Lugard in 1914 (Afigbo 1972:118). The three major and completely different tribes of people groups (the Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba) became one nation known today as Nigeria (Afigbo 1972:118). Afigbo (2007:3) stresses in '*Ohuzo*' and notes that frequently, Warrant Chiefs were installed arbitrarily. These chiefs were used as agents, instruments and tools to achieve indirect rule without much recourse or consideration of the local Igbo *Ohacracy* traditions. Of course, 'hierarchy and status' became the competition of the day. Individuals who were willing to cooperate with the foreign imposition without care and account for the details of per-colonial local political structures among the Igbo *Ohacracy* took the advantage for personal gain and interest. These individual warrant chiefs sold out their communities. It is to this development that Nweke (2012:210) observes:

> …the introduction of warrant chiefs, especially in the South-astern Nigeria
>   which included the now South/South or Niger Delta region by the British

> colonial administration is a further indication of the decentralized system. … if Africans were successful in governance in the past, colonialism was equally successful in breaking the traditions of governance through conquest and status. The indigenous political systems were restructured to serve the interest of the colonial state.

Though Igbo *Ohacracy* tradition forbids such ruler-ship of the Warrant Chiefs, it promoted the illegal practice of the British colonial powers over the Igbo. Individual power usurpers, appointees and illegitimate authorities became the order of the day; who used their new acquired positions for personal gains and interests, and hence were strongly corrupt and not meaningfully considered.

It is evidently clear that the introduction of the warrant chiefs system changed the decentralised Igbo *Ohacracy* system into pure centralised system. As noted above, the participation of individuals and communities were totally alienated in governance. It was the same system that operated in the Roman Catholic Church when these same warrant chiefs decided on behalf of the communities' of what positions or plots of land where the new Catholic Churches were to erect their churches. Power and authority were taken away from the people and invested on individual warrant chiefs who became the self-appointed link or spokes-person between the Catholic Church personnel and the communities. However, the event of the Vatican II had upturned this position by encouraging dialogue with cultures in recognition of different cultural practices that is of high values that could mend bridges between the Catholic Church and the Igbo *Ohacracy* system. The next section discusses the third and final area of the contemporary time and its implications on perspectives of chieftaincy among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order.

5.6.2.3 The Post-Colonial or Contemporary Era of Chieftaincy Practice

At this final juncture of chieftaincy development, the event of centralizing governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* took place. A. E. Afigbo (a renowned and prominent Igbo scholar and historian) chaired the 1976 committee of the then two East-Central States namely, Imo and Anambra States that made the present day recommendation to have the Igbo 'Traditional Rulers' established in its present nature and state in the Igbo *Ohacracy* South-eastern Nigeria (see Afigbo 2005:209-222). This arrangement was made as it was said for the South-east to "look like the rest parts of Nigeria" where centralised governance had worked but not among the Igbo *Ohacracy* society.

This period and era witnessed the third mutation of the chieftaincy practice among the Igbo. By this time the 'warrant chiefs' had fallen[75] off and transformed into 'Kings' in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. Thus the 'kings' came about in the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised system. In essence, the centralised system alienates further the participation of the Igbo *Ohacracy* individuals and communities in governance, thereby investing power and authority in the hands of one person and his so called cabinet chiefs that was never sanctioned by the people.

The contemporary era of chieftaincy as practiced among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order can be defined with local influences of regional and internal administrations which the Northern and Western regions achieved by the establishment of 'Houses of Chiefs' in the mid-1950s. The Eastern region followed suit later since to establish this 'House of Chiefs' would mean they will miss out of regional developments that followed (Ehirim '*Ohuzo*' 2007:4) afterwards. At the outbreak of the military coup d'etat on January 15 1966, the Eastern House of Chiefs was dissolved. During the subsequent civil war between Nigeria and Biafra in the years of 1970-75 the traditional chieftaincy holders did not play any visible role. At the end of the civil war, the local participation in development was understood purely in 'modern' terms and was believed to mean mobilization of local population through self-help by Town (development) Unions and other communal associations (Ehirim '*Ohuzo*' 2007:5).

In essence, the emergence of the Development Unions/Associations in the 1970s after the war, (which will be discussed in the next section) became instrumental towards rural governance. Employing rural development as a way to reclaim the true past of the Igbo *Ohacracy* system, the role of chieftaincy holders almost went out of extinction as they were known unlike in the recent past. Ubah (1987:181) concludes by acknowledging the new role of Development Unions arguing that "as the Igbo looked ahead, what remained of traditional leadership was no more than a relic of that aspect of their cultural heritage that was fast disappearing." This lament comes from Ubah's (1987:181) realisation that the Unions represented a new and dynamic authority structure "which detracted from and undermined traditional leadership."

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[75] The falling away of the warrant chief system was owed to the fact that the system was highly corrupt and could not stand the furry of the angry mod that regularly fall out with the corrupt officials who extorted money from the masses. The 1929 women's protest was a clear example (Amadiume 2015:42-49).

Finally, the three phases or perspectives of chieftaincy this section has discussed, shifting from honorary titles to kingship positions brought enormous changes that took a deep strain on the decentralised system of governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. It is clear that not only did this new development around chieftaincy caused a huge setback on individual and group participation in governance, but it also demotivates individual persons' aspiration of power who would rather work hard in the culture for recognition and acknowledgement. The personal pride and future anticipation of young people to achieve through agriculture and other economic activities in the Igbo land was defeated or crushed by this singular change of purpose around chieftaincy titles.

Nevertheless, this study is hopeful that as the lay people among the Igbo *Ohacracy* tradition continues to seek for the way forward, the Vatican II event that encouraged inculturation or the following of Christ through one's cultures still gives the Igbo *Ohacracy* a hope to renew itself from within. The Vatican II has therefore encouraged the need for accepting and embracing valuable cultural practices such as chieftaincy (see Cadorette 2009:197). Inculturation in this sense would mean therefore to be active participant in relation to personal experience with Christ as in the words of Okure and Thei (1990:95) that this is "…when Christ becomes incarnated in and with[76] the people thereby become part and parcel of their culture, religion and well-being…" This hope will amend the lost values around chieftaincy titles as it remains the motivation for hard work for the better and common good of all who live in the land.

The next section will describe the four major 'development unions' that have progressed common participation among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. Hopefully, this could influence further participation of the Igbo people within the Catholic Church context, influencing change towards a decentralised order of governance.

5.7 Institutions of Development in the Igbo Decentralised System

This discusses the three major institutions of development namely the development union the *Igba-Ndu* and the 'masquerade institutions' respectively. Each of these will be described as they find meaning in common participation in governance as encouraged by the advent of

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[76] Okure (1990:59) means to describe the kenotic enrichness of Inculturation as "a process by which Christ becomes "native to or incarnated in" particular culture(s). Without it, Christ remains an outsider or a foreigner to a culture, he does not become a citizen; and then the culture itself cannot be redeemed by him"

Vatican II in the Catholic Church. This then brings this chapter on Igbo *Ohacracy* institutions that seek to sustain the common participation to a conclusion.

5.7.1   Development Unions/Associations in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Order

As already noted in this chapter earlier on, every Igbo *Ohacracy* community before the colonial era was an autonomous decentralised unit and had pursued its own interest and independent policies in social, economic, religious and political matters in search of common good. Communal solidarity was always the focus and major successes depended on how a community was able to drive, imagine, manage or steer this wagon to its desired collective decision or conclusion, otherwise defined as *Ohacracy* order, (Ubah 1987:171). Through this already identified collective nature of Igbo *Ohacracy* governance, it is clear therefore that leadership in Igbo land was in many ways the same with elder-ship while at the same time collective. Ubah (1987:172) therefore argues:

> …A leader was inextricably involved in the political and other processes relating to the government of his society at one or more levels. What also emerges is that leadership was largely collective since all the important leaders within each monarchy or village-group were involved in practically all aspects of governance – legislation, dispensation of justice, maintenance of law and order, and foreign policy matters such as making of war and peace. Leaders with special knowledge of particular matters under discussion could guide their colleagues, but nobody was presumed to have the final word on any issue.

In essence, the community's determination is the entire focus of the *Ohacracy* Igbo communities. This leadership of Igbo *Ohacracy* communities was now transposed into migrant towns and cities and even countries where Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens migrated in search of new beginnings and greener pastures. While dwelling heavily on this inevitable readjustment and reminiscence of the village reality in a foreign land, Bersselaar (2005:52) argues in his "*Imagining Home: Migration and the Igbo Village in Colonial Nigeria*" about the Igbo *Ohacracy* order making some emphatic realization on how the Igbo villages were re-imagined through the complex relations between Igbo sons and daughters abroad. These communities of origin for most migrating Igbo citizens became imagined very broadly wherever city they find themselves in the Nigerian nation.

Dersselaar (2005:52) points out what he refers to as 'the Reproduction of Locality,' and envisioned locality in the modernity; as men and women of a certain culture Trans-locate or

Trans-experience their original-reality into the new context they found themselves. Dersselaar (2005) observes that this perspective that all communities are concerned with producing locality and making local subjects. Therefore, locality must be understood as primarily relational and contextual and as continually recreated. Thus, producing locality also means recreating either contexts of home and equally bringing city to home.

This was the dawn of the development/welfare unions/associations among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria. However, to do justice to the institution of the Igbo Development Unions/Associations, this brief historical background is necessary and unavoidable to help give a clearer and better understanding of this aspect. The second factor among others that gave birth to the development/improvement union/associations among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people was the impact of the Nigerian-Biafra civil war between 1966/1970. The Igbo surrounding was devastated by the war and the surviving *Ohacracy* population trooped out into the unknown world of towns and cities which most of the time were very hostile and unwelcoming environment.

Alongside these inevitable changes were three other major factors that affected immensely the Igbo *Ohacracy* ways of life; namely (i) Christianity [Catholicism] (new way of religious belief and following), (ii) Western Education (Western system of primary and secondary education that produced village graduates in search of new life) and (iii) Urbanization (small and big cities came into place and attracted a huge population). All these factors led to the traditional Igbo *Ohacracy* people to look elsewhere for identity and cultural survival from these unavoidable changes. The Igbo *Ohacracy* people who were known for their firm rootedness in village communities were now to leave and settle outside (abroad) their village groups (see Uchendu 1965:38 and Egboh 1987:9). Migration became part and parcel of Igbo *Ohacracy* life. Bersselaar, (2005:51) notes: "... observers of contemporary Africa persist in discussing 'town' and 'village' as opposites, whereby the town is regarded as modern and reflecting recent intervention, while the village is perceived as primordial and reflecting African tradition." The village by this has become the only authentic-space for real African life, while town represent all colonial interventions in the reality of African way of life.

However, the following changes and factors could be attributed to the historical formation of Igbo *Ohacracy* Development/Welfare Union's Institution as noted by Egboh (1987:10-12):

i. Having left their known home surrounding and settled in the new urban centres, the Igbo people were faced with enormous challenges of isolation away from home. Their general feeling was that this isolation, over the years, might lead to a complete submergence of their traditional values and ways of life.

ii. More so, as the Igbo people were scattered in different parts of the new urban centres where they sojourned, they lost their traditional village life style and found it difficult to secure the co-operation of their fellows (as was the case in village community) in the solution of common problems.

iii. There was also what was referred to as 'heterogeneous elements' as the urban centres harboured people from different villages and ethnic groups. These diverse elements sometimes revived in their new environments hostilities which had plagued them in the villages and ethnic areas from which they had come; with the result that each of the groups feared that its rivals might constitute a serious threat to its means of existence and livelihood in the urban areas.

To address all these concerns and difficulties, unity was to be maintained in the form of identity solidarity among these Igbo *Ohacracy* urban dwellers. This situation created among the Igbo citizens a strong desire and sense for a reunion with their kith and kin in the villages. It was based on this state of affairs that each Igbo *Ohacracy* group and tribe came to the conclusion to establish 'Associations' of their members in each of the urban areas where they were residing or have migrated to (see Isichei 1976:217 and Egboh 1987:11). Bersselaar (2005:53) in his conclusion points out that these ethnic unions and hometown associations rose rapidly among many West African groups during the colonial period. Having attracted attention from scholars, their different functions as organizations reflect changing interests over time. These unions have genuine diversity of interests as noticed and aimed by their leadership and members as well.

Uchendu (1965:37), while verifying the foundation and formation of the Family-Unions, (Village-Unions, Town-Unions and Development/Welfare Unions as known in different towns), notes that, in Nigerian cities where some Igbo people work or seek employment, the need to provide security has become vital. For the new arrivals, the need to instruct and keep them to the rural aims has become eminent. Hence, this new reality has led to the formation of various associations called Family Meetings or Improvement Unions in production of locality

in the cities. These associations meet once in a while to deliberate and map out strategies to achieve welfare for their home towns where city is also reproduced.

Hence, the Development Unions among the Igbo people came about as a result of Igbo's contact with the foreign world. Their relation therefore served as a means and instrument by which the Igbo people were to manage, re-adjust or cope with this event or advent of the western world and modernity. The birth of development union-institution was very much a contemporary age, a 20th century event and institution in which an Igbo living outside his/her natural location was able to keep contact with their identity, hopes and aspirations and desires back in their rural communities.

The Roman Catholic Igbo context will be highly welcoming with regards to the effects of the Igbo *Ohacracy* development unions for a common participation. With such self-motivated and self-supporting initiatives, the Vatican II should be very much alive in the Igbo Catholic context as the development unions try to promote self-reliance. The Roman Catholic Church in the Igbo context relied on foreign donations for over a century. To this day, the Igbo Catholic Church still expect material donations like motor vehicles, heavy machine equipment, hospital and health operating materials to come from the Western Catholic Churches yet such can be locally funded or sorted. The Western Catholic Churches have created what this study would call a "dependence theology of syndrome." By this understanding the Western Catholic Churches believes: 'We have riches; God has blessed us so that we can give you; you are poor and are in need to be helped. Therefore depend on us.' No local means and avenues were sort to create a self-dependent Catholic Church among the Igbo. Hence, the Igbo development unions' model can be an approach that would serve as agent of development in the Roman Catholic Churches among the Igbo people by which the common participation of the masses will be fully realised.

Indeed the mentality of dependency has delayed the growth of the Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* context. Both the laity and clergy long for these so called "free gifts or donations" in order to solve the needs of local Catholic Churches. However, the development unions in the common participatory governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people calls for self-reliance. It has been evident in recent years that a self-supporting Catholic Church has been initiated among the Igbo and elsewhere in Africa to do away with the dependency tendencies developed by Western Catholicism. This study strongly suggests that the

development union of the Igbo is the way forward to realise a self-reliant, self-supporting and self-worth Church in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic Church. As this study seeks to create and introduces the development union values as an agent of common participatory approach in the Igbo Catholic Churches, the lay people and the clergy will own their Churches and the development therein. Uzukwu (1996:88) notes the challenges of dependency as he calls the Igbo and African Catholic Churches to rise up the challenges of self-reliance and called to the end of what he calls "Dependency Syndrome" that has held back the Catholic Church's towards growth.

Of course, this dependency on the Western Catholic Church could be seen as a way of control and managing the Igbo Catholic communities who continually depend on the charity (hand-outs) from the centralised model of governance of the Western Churches. But, the question that remains is, until when will the Western Church control and manage the Igbo Catholic communities? The saying that, '*You can take the fish out of the water, but you cannot take water out of the fish*' stands out to teach the centralised Catholic Church a lesson to set the Igbo Catholic Churches free. Decentralised context remains the ground of growth for the Igbo Catholic communities. The Igbo *Ohacracy* cannot achieve the expected development with this mentality of dependency syndrome.

The next section discusses the *Igba-ndu* ritual (binding life together) which is the second most important development institutions among the Igbo *Ohacracy* model for a common participation.

5.7.2 *Igba-Ndu*: Binding Life together (Igbo Institutional Mechanism for Reconciliation)

Among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, solidarity or unity is a means of rural development and improvement which is highly valued as this study has shown so far. Yet, in the search or a midst of this great human value, the Igbo *Ohacracy* people have experienced conflicts, problems and misunderstandings in dealing with one another just like in any other African society. The Igbo in its life paradigm, *Igba-ndu* (re-binding, reinventing or re-founding-life together), ritual was designed as a socio-cultural and religious mechanism of resolving these conflicts which were bound to occur. Winning each other's trust again after conflicts,

misunderstandings and mishaps requires a mechanism in order to be able to live or dwell in peace again in the land.

Igba-ndu, as the institution of reconciliation is the central focus of this life mending ritual. This mechanism *Igba-ndu* among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people is a means of communal, individual or group deliberation, consultation and or dialogue seeking understanding and amendment over issues surrounding two conflicting parties as a socio-cultural and religious design or mechanism of the Igbo *Ohacracy* institution to manage conflict among its members. Through such agreements Igbo *Ohacracy* people anticipate that the conveyance of meaning engaged by individuals in *Ohacracy* is acknowledged as such. Njoku (2013:262) points out the role of *Igba-ndu* and writes:

> ...Again, *Oha* (or *Ohacracy*) is a clearing house for resolving conflicts and making alliances in order to realize the mission of each one; thus the *Oha* will recognize existing natural law rules, and discover further natural law principles that are operative in the inter-subjective world, and also generate new positive laws to facilitate social cohesion; after all, law is an instrument of social control of behaviour.

In its first dimension, *Igba-ndu* ritual among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people is an institution and remains an instrument of governance where all Igbo citizens are called to participate. It is used as a tool to establish a formal and fundamental agreement between parties to treat each other with respect and dignity. Emphasising on the value of this institution among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, Isichei (1976:65) notes that *Igba-ndu* is a 'type of blood covenant whereby parties involved agree to respect each other's dealings especially in commerce' and or in land ownership dispute but now resolved. Rural mutual understanding through several dialogue meetings between the two conflicting parties with an assigned group of elders is conducted and concludes with the *Igba-ndu* religious ritual. The ritual at times involves mixing and eating their human life-blood[77] as a symbol of shared life covenant and to respect each other's way and style of life. Stressing further, both Oduyoye (1986:111) and Afigbo (2005:474) observed that as a technique, *Igba-ndu* is universal practice among the Igbo people. By it the bonds of kinship were simulated and expanded.

It is within the same dynamics and thought that Njoku (2013:261) affirms the ritual of *Igba-ndu* among the Igbo *Ohacracy* blood covenant relationship noting that a covenant group is a

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[77] The eating or sharing in human blood covenant is no longer practised among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people owing to the fact that life style and disease reality has changed the course of event among all human societies. The evidence of blood disease transmission among humans has changed this practice.

ritually established "blood-related entity" whose being is consent for a common life. Furthermore, Njoku (2013:262) concludes by emphasizing on the legal point of view noting the covenant as basis for rationalizing Igbo *Ohacracy* philosophy of law:

> …this way of life being can be delineated in some talks about friendship in terms of contracted-blood-brotherhood, covenant meals and oath-taking, which epitomise aspects of people's life in Africa. A covenant can exist between individuals or between individuals and the earth or with God where a closer union is established … in a symbiotic embrace … The making of covenant involves a "third" - a witness or a guarantor, who is not part of the covenant relation.

Indeed, chapter 6 will discuss in details the implication and inculturation value this highly respectable institution of Igba-Ndu contributes in the Igbo decentralised governance of common participation. Meanwhile, in the section which follows, the chapter discusses the *Mmanwu*, the third most important institution of development among the Igbo *Ohacracy* outlining its unique role of common participation in Igbo governance.

5.7.3 *Mmanwu*: The Masquerade Institution among the Igbo *Ohacracy*

The *Mmanwu* institution introduces the 'mystic presence' by which the common participatory of the masses in the Igbo governance is interwoven with *Chukwu* (the Great Spirit) who is not visible to the ordinary eyes yet, can be seen and heard in the presence of the masquerade. The hidden identity of the masquerade portrays the Great Spirit whose physical presence is not seen but the activities are felt in the human environment. Hence, since the *Mmanwu* are seen and believed to have a spiritual origin and as spirit in the physical realm, they generate respect among the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance (see Nwankwo 2015:3).

The *Mmanwu* institution is a major Igbo *Ohacracy* order institutions that plays important role in achieving participatory governance among the Igbo people. *Mmanwu* literally means, 'Basking in the Sun or the beauty of the Sun' in Igbo linguistic expressions. In whichever senses this expression is used, they indicate the energetic and sporting Igbo Youth whose Igbo *Ohacracy* role is placed to entertain periodically the Igbo *Ohacracy* population in due season and time or to achieve any particular duty or task as assigned by tradition or custom (Afigbo 2005:563). The masquerade institution can also be referred to as a 'Secret'[78] society. The Igbo

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[78] *Mmanwu* or 'secret' society is likewise known for its restrictions for membership. There are two main categories: those which were secret largely because they were not open to women and children; and those which were much more secret because they were not even open to all adult males in the community until they reached a particular age or achieve a certain high level of social stature or status.

people in the course of time had developed a tradition of discipline as Achebe (1965:168) and Afigbo (2005:275) notes. This included dancing, celebration of harvests and competitive wrestling (socialization) are also part of their recreational community activities. Societies of this kind are mainly divided into age groups whereby every age group in the community is assigned to a particular role and duty to render as a social group. More importantly, it must be noted that by membership to these societies male citizens especially, were recognised as responsible for policing and working towards the growth and common good of the Igbo *Ohacracy* nation. It was in *Mmanwu's* definition through its functions and duties among Igbo *Ohacracy* communities that Ebelebe (2009:12) notes that any sensory display or manifestation of particular identity which is concealed, but which symbolizes and activates the presence of some other mystic being. In some communities *Mmanwu* functions as a tool and agents of law enforcement.

A man then was no longer the stripling who was mainly concerned with his private family and playmates, but someone who took part fully in communal labour or governance and other village activities (Ifemesia 2002:79). Furthermore, while explaining and stressing the functions of Masquerade in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities, Ebelebe (2009:12) notes that Masquerade serves as a symbol for the purpose through which the yearly renewal of the covenant with the ancestors (that is keeping the Igbo identity and common good) is effected with the living; while at the same time entertain and celebrate with the Igbo people. It also serves the good for Igbo *Ohacracy* social control by which law and order are maintained and policed.

The "Mask" nature of the *Mmanwu* is very valuable, unique, mystical and critical among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. By so masked, the masquerade represents the 'mystic and secret nature of divinities or the spirit world' which has its association with the ancestors (believably present in the masquerade), the living dead of the African religious mystic community experience. Ezeliora (2009:43-45) emphasizes further in what he termed "Proword" of Ezenwa-Ohaeto's mystic expressions of the masquerade noted a creative aesthetic that spells out his vision and style. The night masquerade is not only a source of entertainment, but is also viewed as mystic being that surfaces from 'the ant-hole' only at night – and is no ordinary spirit, who does not speak in mundane and common language. In other words, masquerade of the night does not speak in the language of humans but that of a sacred spirit.

It was based on this understanding that Ezeliora (2009:47) writes that masquerade participates in daily social order of the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance:

> … that when abominations become unbearable; when the truth must be told with great courage, the night masquerade appears... in order to set a senseless practice right; sometimes the night masquerade must confront the ruler in order to point out the nakedness of his utterance; … time of extreme anxiety the night masquerade appears to talk... when the night masquerade speaks, innuendoes collide with insinuations; metaphors battle imagery; parables stumble against proverbs; allusions hit satire, jump over irony, dribble around ridicule to knock against sarcasm while caustic humour often kicks direct statements into the ears of the people...

The Masquerade by this presents us with the mystic nature of Igbo *Ohacracy* common participation in social control. It embodies the invisible made visible and yet, feared and terrifies the onlookers or listener of the night words. For the deviances on the streets, the wayward in the family, the abnormalities in the public affairs and all wrong doers in the socio-political activities all listen with care to change; otherwise the public anger will fall on them in no distant future. It is in agreement with Soyinka that Ezeliora (2009:49) points out "...the mystical language of the Igbo masquerade capture the very spirit and form of its poetry. For, indeed, esotericism is the most defining feature of the language of the Igbo masquerade – a codified medium that is sometimes incomprehensible even to the initiate."

Jell-Bahlsen (2012:65) agrees that the vital and style of function of masquerade are important depositories of indigenous knowledge, aesthetics, ethics, codes of conduct and history. Masquerade represents the Igbo *Ohacracy* people's custom and identity through which truth is proclaimed without intimidation or fear of reprisal. It stands for the bedrock on which every other Igbo *Ohacracy* institutions hang and are secured since it commands the social order by nature. Hence, on the masquerade hang the town's traditions of law-making body and its enforcement agency.

However, once this 'mystery' was unmasked by the Christian (Catholic) religious practices (Achebe 1965:185) argues, "Over-zealous convert who wept louder than the bereaved," the Igbo *Ohacracy* religion and morality fell apart; and the centre could not hold any longer! While the crime of unmasking a masquerade is not taken lightly it attacks a heavy fine. The devastation that came with the unmasking among the Igbo *Ohacracy* morality as Achebe (1965:168) notes was:

> … One of the greatest crimes a man could commit was to unmask e*gwugwu* in the public "... And this is what Enoch did... Enoch had killed an ancestral spirit, and Umuofia was thrown into confusion... It seemed as if the very soul of the tribe wept for the great evil that was coming – its own death.

Such indeed is the state and meaning of Christian evangelism (Catholicism) dealt a devastating blow to the Igbo *Ohacracy* religion and morality that has plunged the Igbo tradition into the greatest ever confusion seen at any age of the Igbo existence (Jell-Bahlsen 2012:57). The consequences of the 'unmask' of the masquerade in the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture is the pitiable and self-abandonment life noticed all around Igbo communities and cultures in the contemporary era. Indeed, the iroko-tree has fallen; and the birds have flown away lacking shelter! Indeed, the Igbo *Ohacracy* was plucked out from its root and life does not hold the same meaning any longer. Things have fallen apart!

Meanwhile, the following roles and responsibilities that have enhanced life around Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model of governance can be noted as assigned by custom to the masquerade institution as it contributes towards the Igbo *Ohacracy* order of participatory governance. As noted by some Igbo scholars Ogbalu (1965:39-42) and Ifemesia (2002:78-81) among others who point out the following functions of masquerade in the Igbo *Ohacracy* society:

I. The maintenance of law and order which is one of the prominent functions of the masquerade institution. As a body, they serve as the police of the community.

II. Masquerade was revered for its juridical functions in many Igbo communities; whereas it provided entertainment, it was also often evoked as the most important symbol of justice among the Igbo (Ezeliora 2009:43).

III. In some communities *Mmanwu* is sought after to play or act as a dispute settlement agency. In disputes of parties over a piece of land or properties of this nature, *Mmanwu* group had been called upon to put an embargo on the use of the disputed land until settlement and ownership of the land had been established through peaceful means provided by Igbo tradition and culture. By so doing they provide or serve as peaceful instruments among the Igbo people (Jell-bahlsen 1980:152-155).

IV. This group serve the standing army of Igbo people, as youths and adults are usefully trained to defend the Igbo land.

V. They enforce the decisions of the people's (elder-leaders and other institutions) council and inspiring awe and respect for authority and decision in the people.

VI. The masquerade promotes moral and character-building envisioned for every Igbo in all generations.

VII. Finally, the Igbo masquerade societies and the concept of the spiritual presence of the ancestors helped to ensure that social continuity was preserved, hereditary rights respected, conduct regulated, the community entertained and the mystery maintained (Egboh 1987:131-136).

The theology of inculturation or indigenisation as promoted since the era of Vatican II aids this study to call for the revival and emphasises the need for masquerade institution in the Igbo Roman Catholic Church. Having noted the social values like mystic presence, maintenance of law and order, sports and entertainment and social control that the masquerade institution of common participation is known for; inculturation theology calls for the revival and renewal of such meaningful values among cultures. The masquerade as noted in this section seeks to articulate the African cultural thoughts within the *Ohacracy* participatory model of governance. It is in seeking to transform, augment and redress the damages done to the Igbo *Ohacracy* indigenous values and cultures by the centralised Catholic model of governance. The theology of inculturation as discussed in this study suggests reaching or following the Christian faith through the cultural values in the Igbo context. Hence, Vatican II council calls for internal reforms to better relations with the non-Catholic world (Cadorette 2009:201), and by so doing recommends or encourages dialogue, listening and embracement of change in the new world (AG 15:1 and CCC 854).

It is based on this recommendation Vatican II that this study maintains therefore that the encouragement of inculturation of masquerade institution among the Igbo Roman Catholic Church will facilitate growth and enlightenment among the people. As Vatican II has recommended, the Igbo Catholicism must open a dialogue session with the Igbo culture on masquerade to harness the values inherent in this institution. This will go a long way to re-establish and renew the Igbo *Ohacracy* identity that has been lost by the activities of the early Catholic missionaries who condemned the masquerade institution as evil and unchristian. Finally, when the *Mmanwu* is renewed as part of the Roman Catholic Church's inculturation project by letting *Mmanwu* resonate among its believers, *Mmanwu* has the power to unite and reconcile the Igbo people. By reintroducing this cultural edifice that has held the Igbo *Ohacracy* order for centuries, the Catholic Church will lose nothing but gain true faith of her followers. The place of *Mmanwu* among the Igbo *Ohacracy* cannot be underestimated.

Therefore, the need to revive *Mmanwu* institution among the Igbo *Ohacracy* is for the benefit and growth of the Catholic Church family in the Igbo society.

Before continuing further, it will be good to clear up the question on where the Igbo *Ohacracy* still take today in the world of democratic rule in Nigeria? On the other hand it is vital to identify the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities in the South-eastern Nigeria (and the diaspora) as the ground or context of practises and true occurrences as noted above in this chapter. This chapter 5 has presented real human situations and practises of the *Ohacracy* as real and visible governance model that has been in operation from time immemorial. Though in the colonial era the *Ohacracy* system was disrupted and repressed but not defeated as this thesis has shown. Yet, in the democratic dispensation of the Nigerian state, *Ohacracy* communities still hold their values very dearly. *Ohacracy* as well noted and described in the entire thesis, is a culture, a people and a value system of life practises that has established and given foundation to the Igbo *Ohacracy* peoples of the South-eastern Nigeria. The values and meanings, symbols and institutions of Igbo *Ohacracy* life embroidered in this thesis cannot be seen as a construct. Though the Igbo *Ohacracy* people have cooperated with the colonial era and the present day democratic dispensations in Nigeria, her philosophical meanings of life and cultural values have remained intact and alive. The cultural adaptations of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of the present day governance dispensations cannot be seen as though a people or culture that have died or disappeared. To the outsider therefore, the Igbo people and their culture cannot be seen as mere mind construct or an idea.

The next section discusses the last institution among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order in this chapter which is the *Osu* caste system.

5.7.4 The "*Osu*" Caste System among the Igbo *Ohacracy*

The *Osu* caste system among the Igbo *Ohacracy* is the last institution this chapter discusses. The *Osu* represents the dark moments and practice among the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria, a caste system that was and still a historical and contemporary reality of the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. By this, the Igbo *Ohacracy* society would be partly defined as a stratified society in which men and women were religiously and socially identified either as freeborn, *ohu* and or *osu* citizens (Bersselaar 2005:64). These three categories of people make up the Igbo *Ohacracy* historical and present day individual citizen's classifications. According to Ebbe and Onyeozili (2012:33) "... most pre-colonial Igboland had three classes of people –

the Free-borns (*Nwa-afo or Diala*), the Slaves (*Ohu*), and the Outcasts or ritual Slaves (*Osu*)." Because this study briefly gives attention to these classifications in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance order, it is indeed unjust and insensitive not to give attention at all since the *Osu* phenomenon in particular is still prominent in Igbo *Ohacracy* social discuss.

The *Ohu* is a bought-slave which of course was for highly economic reasons, was practised in the pre-colonial Igbo communities. In 1914 when the Nigerian nation was created by the forceful amalgamation of major tribes, the colonial government also abolished slavery among the Igbo (see Bersselaar 1997:300 and Ebbe and Onyeozili 2012:39). The application of this practise with regard to the *Ohu* has become less rigid with the advent of Christianity, Western education, social justice and equality of all peoples (Agbasiere 2000:96). The *Osu* incident still lingers and as the Refugee Documentation Centre -Ireland- (2012:1) notes, while re-emphasizing on the 2007, paragraph 15 on UN report on, Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) concludes that:

> …the 1958 *Osu* Abolition Law legally abolished work-and decent-based discrimination, the Committee remains concerned about persistent allegations that members of the *Osu* and other similar communities are still subjected to social exclusion, segregation and mistreatment, as well as discrimination in employment and marriage …

Many theories and historical foundations surround the *Osu* caste system among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. Ebbe and Onyeozili (2012:33 write about the *Osu* establishment in Igbo land. Arguing that the *Osu* came about as a concern of security and punishment of extreme and abominable crimes in the land. Noting further, that among the Igbo *Ohacracy*, people who committed abominations or another offense against the gods,[79] may be dedicated to the shrine of a god as aberrant of the Igbo social order. This means that such people became *Osu*, outcasts or untouchables. Ebbe and Onyeozili (2012:34) concludes that with some other Igbo communities, people fleeing from persecution may take asylum by pledging their servitude to oracles, thereby, voluntarily inheriting the ritual slave status (*Osu*) in exchange for "safety."

It was therefore by such ritual acts and for a people in search of security that these individuals and their families acquired the *Osu* status in the society. With this observation, study argues

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[79] Such offences like the murder of one's parents, brother, sister or kinsman; incest, a son having sexual coitus with one's sister or one of his father's wives when his father is still alive; killing or eating a domestic animal dedicated to the gods would lead to such punishment or exclusion of individual who were seen as deviants of the Igbo social order.

that individuals were therefore taken advantage of and forced to assume new status in the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture.

Moreover, the *Osu* system lasted a bit longer than thought, but eventually was providentially abolished officially by the then Autonomous Eastern Regional Government in 1956. Unfortunately, to this present day, this abolition did not change much of the attitude of many Igbo *Ohacracy* communities where *Osu* system was practised since however advanced an *Osu* might ascent in personal achievement, they could not marry a freeborn girls or associate freely and equally in most Igbo *Ohacracy* communities (Bersselaar 1997:301). Even among the Christian (Catholic) families it remains a visible challenge to accept freely the equality and free association with the identified *Osu* families. It is indeed most shocking in cases where young professional and career men and women who had cancelled planned marriages own to late discoveries that one party is identified as belonging to the *Osu* family.

It is the submission of this study therefore that this practise was most unfortunate among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order and the *Osu* event has rightly been called a 'dark moment' in the Igbo history. Though this had been abolished over 60 years ago (in 1956), this stigma still lingers in and around Igbo *Ohacracy* communities, practices and particularly around the Southern Igbo (Owerri-Igbo) where the *Osu* institution remains alive affecting social relations, especially marriage (Afigbo 2005:117). As it was a religious based practise, this study affirms Okafor's (1992:87) observation that it was an isolated social reality which found defence of protecting would-be-lost lives among the Igbo, owing to the conflicts of that era. The so called 'conflicts and shrines' that gave birth to the *Osu* factor have all disappeared by the new Christian religion, education awareness and human rights consciousness among the Igbo *Ohacracy* of contemporary era. The ignorance of the ancient practise had been blamed. Yet, the *Osu* and their posterity are still being identified as such among the Igbo today. Presently though, much efforts and progress for full integration into the social life with the so called "*Osu* caste" have been achieved. More public, open and consciousness dialogue and awareness of this ill treatment and concept of *Osu* against fellow Igbo citizens needs to be done regardless of any opposition from any quarters. Government through school programmes and the media should be rolled out, to totally eradicate this discriminatory practice against fellow human beings.

The *Osu* and the *Ohu* were known to be slavery institutions that existed among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. Among other regrettable occurrences of the denial of individual/group human rights, people buried alive for the so called abominable crimes or in honour of dead chiefs and to make annual expiation for the accumulated evil of the society. The *Osu* not only suffered discrimination, they also suffered exclusion from participating in the political, social and economic activities among the Igbo (see Afigbo 2005:264 and Okeke 2010:3). This 'caste system' degraded human beings and was therefore a breach of human rights as it will be interpreted today. It discriminated against a class of individuals who were segregated (e.g. restricted on issues of free association in the community and free marriage to the so called free-born girls of the community of their choice etc…) in their association with a particular religious belief and social practise (Bersselaar 2005:64). Even in situations where some individuals were willing to marry an *Osu*, but subsequent threats with being cut off from their families for the rest of their lives and owing to such pressures have abandoned their plans of marriage (Obinna 2012:115).

Free association of citizens is one of the great gifts of the Vatican II event. The *Osu* incident did not allow the free association of people based on the acquired social or religious status. The common participation of all in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance did not happen as this study envisions. Hence, it is in this connection that (CCC-1738) insists that freedom is applied in relationships between human beings. Every human person has the inalienable right to be accorded as free, equal and respected. Freedom therefore is required for the dignity of the human person. It is from this perspective that the Vatican II challenges the Igbo practice to re-establish and observe the freedom of association for all Igbo citizens so to guarantee the dignity of all Igbo *Ohacracy* people. By so doing, the common participatory of all in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance will truly be realised and achieved.

Second, it must be categorically stated in this study that the *Osu* cast system among the Igbo *Ohacarcy* people was a single most unjust, discriminatory and dehumanising act against the *Osu* being singled out and side-lined. In line with *Gaudium et Spes* (GS.29) of the Vatican II council this study emphasises that:

> …a basic equality between all men and it must be given ever greater recognition. … Forms of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design.

It is therefore evident that as long as this discriminatory and dehumanizing segregation against the so-called *Osu* individuals and families who are denied of their common participation and association in the order, the Igbo *Ohacracy* will be lacking completeness in human value. Hence, the call to abandon such inhumane practices and cultural discriminations have become even louder. Indeed the Vatican II encourages dialogue, just and equitable treatment among cultures (GS.30) to achieve human integrity and respect of all. Vatican II era has opened new doors and avenue for all cultures like the Igbo *Ohacracy* to renew it belief system in order for persons and groups to feel belonging to the same Igbo stock of origin and foundation. Hence, the common participatory of all the Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens in the Roman Catholic faith activities should be protected, secured and afforded to all in the same manner and urgency. By this inclusiveness that is in the central nature of decentralised governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy*, all will belong on equal measure and integrity.

Furthermore, both the Igbo *Ohacracy* and the Igbo Catholicism are challenged to work the harder to see to the elimination of this inhumane treatment of the *Osu* caste practise in the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria. A number of suggestions with once already recommended above can still be enumerated as Ihenacho (2004:104-119) opines:

i. Both Catholic and Igbo *Ohacracy* communities where this custom exists to initiate a serious open dialogue within their communities in order to examine the possibilities and the means of stamping it out. This dialogue will take the dimension of religio-cultural contexts

ii, Both the Catholic centralised and the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised models must respect each other as the dialogue begins. No one must accuse, deny and demonise the other of being wrong or evil to allow open dialogue and sincere approach. This dialogue must involve the Igbo traditional religion through which the *Osu* caste system had come to existence. Any disregard towards the Igbo traditional religion will fall back to denial of "power and authority" over the people. This practise of "denial" among Igbo Catholics has kept the *Osu* situation unchanged for decades.

iii. An "Action Group" to be inaugurated in both models of social grouping to be able to keep alive and active the dialogue that may start with the communities

iv. Some conditions like antagonism should be banished from the dialogue or discussions of the *Osu* case

v. The *Osu* should be given every support to acquire some social status like the Igbo *Ohacracy* titles to establish their social identities in their various Igbo communities

With all these suggestions and other initiatives that will follow, this thesis belief that the issues around the *Osu* caste system will be given adequate attention and liberation of Igbo brothers and sisters will be a thing of the past. The Igbo Catholicism and the *Ohacracy* models must cooperate to carry out this open dialogue to seek the reconciliation of the two groups in Igbo communities.

5.7.5   Other Institutions among the Igbo *Ohacracy* Participatory Governance

Institutions as noted from the start of this chapter are the engine that propels the entire Igbo *Ohacracy* project of common participation in governance. Other institutions that are worth mentioning here include the New-Yam festivals; through this feast celebration, the Igbo *Ohacracy* order introduces the period of new yam harvest. First, it introduces the time of abundance and food security amongst Igbo *Ohacracy* nation thereby assuring communities for their survival and continued sustenance. Second, this study notes the institution of Apprenticeship. This institution has come into existence only in the 21st century when it became prominent after the Nigerian-Biafra civil war in the early 1970s. Many able bodied individuals among Igbo *Ohacracy* people found themselves without work and unemployed after the brutal civil war.

Hence, 'apprenticeship' became the practise by the Igbo *Ohacracy* society used to re-engage its young minds displaced/disabled by the war into the social economy. Young men and women were to be re-introduced into the economic and social stream by serving a known and well to do business man or woman/master (E.g. hand crafts work, blacksmith, buying and sailing products, sowing and tailoring, textile (local fabric) production etc.), in order to set-up one's own business having served the master, he or she is set free after the elapse of an agreed period of time. The servant in question is morally and financially supported by the master who helps them to set-up their own business. This institution would have equally grew out of the famous 'Improvement and Development Unions' which are *Self-Help* in nature; a mark of Igbo identity (see Bersselaar 2005:69). This fact is observed when Bersselaar (2005:70) reports of a complaint by the name of Mr. Ibeziaku an Igbo barrister who practised in Onitsha in the 1940s stating that: "... Africans were intensely anxious to take part in the development of their country" and that "Government was endeavouring to do everything and not encouraging Africans to do things for themselves."

By the apprenticeship institution which accelerated the process of economic participation, the Igbo *Ohacracy* solidarity governance provided a new sense of belonging after the civil war. With their own self-help, the Igbo were able to participate again in the modern socio-economic activities in the nation and avoiding the dependency syndrome (Uzukwu 1996:88; 95). By so doing, the Igbo *Ohacracy* brought about a meaningful participatory within a decentralised model of governance. Of course, with self-help projects introduced by the Roman Catholic among the Igbo after the war, the centralised model played a significant role in calling the people to participatory governance again in the general economy.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the "birth and death" (burial) institutions are strong marks of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. In the former, the Igbo celebrated birth in the well-known 'naming ceremony' by which a newly born is named according to customs and regulations of the Igbo land. The later refers to the end of an elder's life by which the Igbo celebrated death. In this case, only the elder's death is celebrated, having lived, contributed and achieved in the Igbo *Ohacracy* development and in the common good of all who dwell in the land. Indeed the death of a young Igbo *Ohacracy* citizen is considered a curse and a waste of man power to the growth of the Igbo society. It is by all these institutions hereby discussed that the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized governance can be defined and respected for their unique way of life in its customs and traditions. The birth of a child or death of an elder always introduces a life born either of both worlds of the living and the dead. Any of these events that take place among the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised system, the common participatory system is well noted as any of the events will propel the masses to unite and galvanise around each other for support and courage.

Nevertheless, it is vital to note a typical concern for an outsider observer of the Igbo *Ohacracy* institutions and the questions raised about the need for a clear separation in functions of all these institutions. In other words, how do all these institutions function without clashing with one another at some stage since the Igbo *Ohacracy* operates in a decentralized order of governance? To the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, life is not cut into pieces or divided and separated from one issue to the other; rather issues of life augment and complement each other for the good of the society. A law therefore is given or enacted according to the dictates of the gods or ancestors and indicated by elders and the community in general. This is tradition; the moral code dictator. As Okafor (1992:67-68) rightly notes:

> …in some cases however, issues of public interest would be considered privately by an independent group such as age-group (grade) association, council of elder-leaders and titled-men (women); and then brought to the public for further deliberation.

The approval of the law binds all the members of that community. In any case, the will of the people expressed by the *Oha* (people) in which voting is made, sometimes remains final. At the end, the conscience or spiritual binder is exercised over the consent of the people. This is done by the use of *Ofo* by the chief priests of the clan. If any law passed in this process is broken by any members of the community, it is considered an offence against God, ancestors (the living dead), the Mother-Earth and indeed and the community as a whole. The law has its value in social control by which all human activities is regulated to encourage the Igbo decentralised system to be in solidarity with all who live in the land.

In essence, common good (development) as featured in this chapter entails the human stimuli of longing and desiring growth. Such growth in any human society can be compared with the plant growing in the dark in search of the sun. Any entrance of the Sun into the dark space of the plant attracts the natural response of the plant towards the light. Similarly, the Igbo people have responded naturally towards development or growth. The search for common good as we have disclosed above among the Igbo people, has demonstrated to be a natural response towards development. *Ohacracy* governance has become the strong agent by which the people have responded towards achieving the common good, common participation and development.

In a special reference to women, I have equally noted clearly the place and role of women in achieving economic and cultural stability among the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria as they play their role in *Ohacracy* governance solidarity. This is vital since it is usually claimed that women did not play vital roles in Igbo development. I must point out clearly in this study that women are not only consumers of culture, but they are also equal producers of it. It should be noted that before colonization, Igbo women were actively involved in all economic, religious, educational, political and other spheres of life.

Although women among some Nigerian groups for instance did not cultivate, Igbo women were active cultivators. Also, contrary to the common notion that Igbo women did not cultivate yam, Chuku (2005:56) shows that Igbo women in some parts of *Ndi-Olugbo*

(farmers) zone (under Owerri local area as part of this study's investigation) grew yam. Moreover, in pre-colonial times, women had their own land, separate from their husbands (Basden 1966:264-265; 300). They determined how and when to use the proceeds accrued from their farming and processing activities.

The threats of individualism, materialism and even the centralised model of governance noted in the Roman Catholic structures remain challenging to the common participatory impacts of the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance and community growth. Individual and group responsibility towards the community as noted in this chapter is at the centre of Igbo Ohacracy growth which the centralized system is called to readjust. The major focus for Igbo *Ohacracy* order is the search for common good of all who live in the community which is achieved through common and equal participation in governance. On the contrary, militating against the common good of the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model of governance are the modern day challenges of materialism, individualism and modernity respectively.

The history of the Igbo people remains vital to the meaning and value of this study. As Isichie (1976:39) notes, much of the knowledge of the Igbo people's past comes from the oral traditions preserved in Igbo communities in the forms of stories, folklore, sage sayings, and proverbs and in some *Ohacracy* cultural celebrations like marriage ceremonies, new yam festivals and funeral ceremonies etc. This information is true of most traditional cultures with regard to preserving information through oral tradition.

Therefore, one should not have the sense that this study is resisting "change" within the Igbo tradition. Change, is rather a fundamental condition for human growth or development; but the crucial point for this study (exposed in this chapter) is that human cultures and traditions need to protect various values like the Igbo *Ohacracy* solidarity in order that individuals and groups are fully aware of their cultural heritage and value to protect them. This serves the purpose of identity and historical value provision. Every human tradition must be afforded this protection no matter the wave of change anyone or era may seek. Human beings deserve some tradition to fall back on when modernity or secularism cannot or can no longer offer any reliable comfort and continuity.

In the light of the "large ear" and "inculturation" theories that have been applied in this study, it follows therefore that the centralised Roman Catholic governance is called upon to afford

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the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model the opportunity to protect, document, preserve and revive these values as here mentioned. This is applicable either by deep listening in the forms of dialogue and consultation of the faithful in matters of governance in the Igbo Catholic Church; or by inculturating and incorporating certain values like communitarianism, the *Igba-ndu* (binding life together) value system, the *Ofo* and the *Oji* symbolic value as have been expressed in both chapters of 5 and 6. In this light therefore, the next chapter this study creates a dialogue between the centralised and the decentralised models of governance as this study has narrated in the last five chapters. By such, this study suggests common ways where both models of centralised and decentralised governance find cooperation and common good to both the Roman Catholic Church and the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of south-eastern Nigeria.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the basic family structures within the Igbo *Ohacracy* order including the symbols and the various institutions that have meaningful impact in the common participatory decentralised governance model among the Igbo. Through the institutions discussed above, the Igbo *Ohacracy* people have sought development in social, economic, political and educational encounter with individuals and groups alike. With the discussion made, the chapter demonstrates how the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture, provides various bonds that held the Igbo people and propeled them towards growth and common good. The one great that came across the institutional establishment of the Igbo *Ohacracy* order is the "interpersonal," "inter-relational," or the "interrelatedness" expressed at diverse levels of the *Ohaness*/communal lives. This remains the key asset in our world today, riddle with individualism and selfishness. Yet, the Igbo *Ohacracy* unity has hanged on from generation to generation. This value must be cherished and valued indeed. As proven by the very title of the chapter "participatory governance," it is amazing to note the high level of involvement, engagement and the hands-on spirit that exist in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order through its well and advanced established symbols and institutions. This flows from this common spirit relatedness that most Igbo citizens still cherish in their cultural heritage as an important value.

The dynamics and enduring nature of the bond that exists among these institutions is such that it relied on the promotion and sustenance of the Igbo cultural heritage that abides between the present and past members of the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. As a tradition, this link of the living and the ancestors gives meaning to the future which is the hope for Igbo *Ohacracy* survival. By so doing, the Igbo *Ohacracy* in their cultural solidarity emphasises the

importance of the past, (the ancestors) which gives meaning, security and sanctity to the future growth of the Igbo *Ohacracy* communiy. However, it must be noted that despite of the immense value of Igbo *Ohacracy* order in today's Igbo communities, there is no doubt that the continuous changing socio-economic and political landscape among the people are challenging and threatening its continued existence.

At the face of the world's secularism, materialism and individualism, it is an understatement to say that the Igbo *Ohacracy* order is facing dangerous and enormous challenges of extinction. Common good and purpose are hardly the concerns of most Igbo *Ohacracy* people anymore. Individualism has become the order of the day. The poor are abandoned to their own fate. The 'community' or 'assembly' which means *Ohacracy* have less or no meaning at all to individuals anymore while concerns it's less privileged is fast becoming a thing of the past.

As though the Igbo *Ohacracy* society faced inevitable changes and challenges of socio-political, cultural and economic unavoidable and necessary alterations most of which have benefited the Igbo *Ohacracy* nation, they have also taken their toll on the traditional values as the study had already noted. Post colonialism for instance brought 'Kingship' (Central state affairs) into the Igbo *Ohacracy* society in search and desire to "look-like-others" (the 'kingship' tribes of the Yoruba and Hausas in Nigeria); thereby destroying the Decentralised values of Institutional System of governance or order among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people as noted in this chapter. Hobbs (2001:453-459) rightly notes that the 'stateless' society of the Igbo was ideal in keeping any particular individual or groups from dominating the village community and being prone to corruption.

There is no doubt that Igbo *Ohacracy* people's contact with the outside world has positively enriched and affected its socio-political, economic, cultural and general world view. It is in this light that the Roman Catholic Church at the dawn of the Vatican II can (and should) equally contributed immensely towards the realization of the common participatory model of governance. The new era the Vatican II charts through inculturation and indigenisation discussed in this chapter has energised and renewed the values of Igbo *Ohacracy* governance.

CHAPTER SIX

DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE CENTRALISED MODEL OF CATHOLIC CHURCH GOVERNANCE AND THE IGBO *OHACRACY* DECENTRALISED MODEL OF GOVERNANCE

6.1   Introduction

This Chapter discusses the possibilities for a dialogue between the centralized model of governance by the Roman Catholic Church and the decentralized model of indigenous governance among the Igbo of the South-eastern Nigeria. First, based on all the presentation made in the previous chapters, this sixth chapter will address issues that have been raised, analysed, and introduced earlier. Second, the evaluation of the previous chapters will guide this chapter six to indicate in various ways and circumstances where both the decentralised and centralised systems have enriched and or needs enhancement. In applying the theology of inculturation, the objective of this chapter is to explain how a full participation of both men and women in the Igbo *Ohacracy* would look like within the context of the Roman Catholic Church model of centralized governance in Igbo land and Nigeria in general.

The chapter will also respond to the fourth sub-question which seeks to address how the theology of inculturation could contribute meaningfully within the model of church as "family." While it addresses how the laity participate and contribute meaningfully as provided in the Church structures and governance with reference to Vatican II proposals, it will draw conclusions with decentralised 'palaver' value to highlight the lay participation in Church governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. Other key aspects that will be discussed in this chapter includes large ear concept that is key to understanding *Ohacracy* model of governance and inculturation that has enabled this study to link between the Christian faith and the Igbo symbols and institutions will be clarified. This chapter therefore highlights the merits and demerits of these two models, citing their relationship (comparison) while stating their relevance in today's Roman Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities.

As this study draws to its logical conclusion, this chapter will evaluate major arguments that have arisen and encouraged dialogue, consensus decision making while examining relationship between both centralised and the decentralised forms of participatory governance.

Among the themes that have been randomly selected emerged in the course of this study and are now discussed in this chapter, including gender and women participation in authority and leadership, inculturation, laity, authority, religion (faith) and culture.

This chapter concluded by exploring a reconciliatory ground between these two opposing models of governance in order to establish a balance for co-existence of both the Roman Catholic Church centralised model and the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model of governance as the 'large ear' listening theory will be highly utilised.

6.2 Dialogue with Catholicism: Educational and Medical Care as Tools for the Common Good

The term "dialogue" plays an important role in the Roman Catholic Church as endorsed since the advent of Vatican II. By his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), Pope Paul VI defined as the Magna Charta of dialogue, in which he described the four different levels by which the Roman Catholic had to initiate dialogue. Buono (2002:151) points to the Pontiff referring to this as the four concentrical circles; arguing that "the Church must enter into dialogue, first of all within its very interior, then with other churches and Christian communities, with other religious traditions; with non-believers and with the whole world."

The documents of the Vatican II namely *Gaudium et Spes* (1965:57); Lumen *Gentium* 1964:16 and *Nostra Aetate* (1965:2) supported the dialogue and theology in this new Spirit of Church towards other religions, churches and denominations. The assertions of *Nostra Aetate* brought this new language into reality stating:

> The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these non-Christian religions (and religious traditions). She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men" (NA.2).

Moreover, this provides this study a ground for equal dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church centralised system and the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised system of governance. The two systems should be able to learn from each other, as well as encourage mutually in various ways on a basis of common respect.

Having established this, in Chapter 2 this study pointed out that the advent of Christianity among the Igbo *Ohacracy* is dated around AD 1857 when the missionaries first arrived in Onitsha in the port of River Niger, and then spread into the mainland, (see Ezeugwu 2010:53; Baur 1994:147). Indeed, given the vital and crucial role played by the Christian religion, this study cannot be complete without referring to the impact and influence that Christianity had on the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture and its survival (as already done in chapter 5). This Chapter therefore discuss separately both positive and negative effects of Catholicism among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria. As such, this chapter builds a dialogue between the centralized Catholic system of governance from the West and the decentralized model of governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people with respect to meaningful participation of the laity.

The predominant debate among the Igbo and other conventional or conservative writers and scholars regarding the advent of Christianity (particularly Catholicism) among the Igbo and elsewhere in Africa, was rather disruptive and destructive to indigenous patterns of life. This is what happened to the Igbo *Ohacracy* development. Achebe's (1965) "*Things Fall Apart*" for example, was mainly directed against this disruption and destruction of Igbo *Ohacracy* culture and development (growth) by Christianity via western colonialism. See also Adichie, (2006) in "*The Half of Yellow Sun.*" Important to note is that some has disagreed and out rightly rejected such thinking. In line with such is the Bishop Crowther (1885) who said, "…true religion can admit of no compromise with the world…" (Okwu 2010:83). Ekechi (1993:293) affirms the dominant position that "African nationalists in this case viewed missionary Christianity as a movement to "denationalize" the African." Concurring with other scholars Ekechi (1993:294) argues that, "… in practical terms, acceptance of missionary prescriptions for becoming a Christian implied rejection of one's cultural heritage" (See also Anyandele 1970:285 and Mann 1985:54-76).

It is from such reality and fact that Cadorette (2009) writes pointing out that Catholicism and Western civilization were one and the same. Owing to the co-operation between the two to conquer and Christianize by all means. He therefore argues:

> … the greed of colonial authorities combined with the myopia of church officials led to unparalleled violence as Europeans thrust themselves on Africans, Asians, and Latin America. … Catholicism was the motor behind the *Reconquista*, and it became the ostensive reason for the *Conquista* that Spain unleashed in its newly acquired territories. … The church was powerful, state-

subsidized institution that provided cover for the crown by agreeing to a lie that legitimated Spanish aggression. What was happening was a civilizing and Christianizing mission… (Cadorette 2009:140).

Yet, to the Igbo progressives like Ezeugwu (2010:62) and Mozia (1987:21) and many others; observe that the event of Christianity was a total liberation, reformative, progressive and growth from what they called "imperfect and manipulative" solidarity and development. Whichever way one looks at it, it is obvious that Christianity brought both positive and negative influences. It is based on both these perspectives that this study discuss in the sections that follow the influences of Catholicism (Christianity) on the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture and developments around the decentralized order of governance among the Igbo.

Positive aspects of Catholicism among the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance are self-evident as Ezeugwu (2010:61) and Okwu (2010:vii) point out while emphasizing the immense contributions made by the missionaries who evangelized among the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture and brought the desired changes to particular wrong practices and ways of living. Thus, Ezeugwu (2010:61) writes that this mission involved the inculcation of ethical and behavioural pattern in line with the teachings of the Christian Bible. There is also no doubt that our people lived and behaved in certain ways that could not have glorified our image as a people. It is clear that not all aspect of a culture are life flouring. Indeed the Igbo *Ohacracy* would not be very proud celebrating the killing of twins, human sacrifice, the *Osu* and slave system etc. that Christianity played strong roles to eliminate.

In essence, the achievements of Catholicism among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people ranges from Western education, medical care, housing and a host of other benefits that are enumerated below. However, a concern that needs attention in this study is that which Okwu (2010:vii), notes on the issue of the distraction and excuse of the missionaries on the Igbo *Ohacracy* proper Christianization. Okwu (2010:viii) points out that: "... the building of village schools as the expedient instrument for securing the cooperation of the local communities disarranged the focus of the missioners' Christianization strategy and thus became both the means as well as the end of their mission." This concern extends even in today's evangelisation. Evangelizers cannot exchange the message of Christ with other material needs of the society. It is my conviction in this study that as long as the evangelizer provides such social services like schools or health centres to the people, those should not replace the gospel message of

peace, love, social justice and forgiveness. The message of the Good News remains the focus and the primary event of Christianity other than any other amenities.

Igbo history demonstrates that Western education was introduced among the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture as part and parcel of the Catholic Church's evangelization strategy. Though education was rejected earlier, the Igbo *Ohacracy* embraced the system afterwards having noted it was the only way to "catch up" with other tribes who came in contact with the British much earlier and to gain white-collar jobs in the native authorities and administrations, (See Bersselaar 2005:57 and Ubah 1980:371-372). First, in what was later known as the 'school-miracle[80]', credit must be given to the Catholic missionaries for their use of the western education as component and package of their Christian evangelization among the Igbo *Ohacracy*. This initiative led to more Igbo community founded schools to educate the huge illiterate population.

Emphasizing this positive impact, Baur (1994:149-152) clearly notes how the missionaries used the Western education to lure Igbo families into believing and being attracted to the new found Christian religion (Achebe 1965:164-165). It is important to note that this method of Christian evangelization opened up a new avenue of learning and embracing modernisation more easily by the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. This helped the indigenous communities to communicate with the foreign world. By so doing, Christianity encouraged a common good for all who live in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. It should be noted though that while the Roman Catholic centralized system of education lasts, the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities were able to decentralize the practice. Hence, community schools grew up like mushrooms all over Igbo land and its environs. The Igbo communities made competition out of school establishments while the Roman Catholic Churches provided teaches trained for up keep of the schools.

Addressing the question why the Igbo eventually embraced Western education, it must be noted that the Igbo *Ohacracy* people are very enterprising. Therefore, seeing education in futuristic nature, that is, as the new way to live in the new world of Western contact, every family and community strived towards acquiring education. The opportunity or ability of Western education to launch its graduates into the new market of white-collar jobs in the new

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[80] The expression 'school miracle' was used here since the school event brought change in the Igbo response towards the gospel than any other strategies or agent used by the missionaries to convert the Igbo into Catholicism. The school was the game changer; and indeed the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities responded positively towards the message of Christ through Western schools foundations.

world became every family's envy and target. Hence, education received enormous acceptance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people for this competition to better oneself and the community than the others (see Okwu 2010:144). Moreover, that the "Out Caste" (the *Osu* - slaves) who were among the first to attend schools since their owners thought it wise to give them up to the new white European culture other than their free-born. But when these slaves came back home and were able to communicate with white Europeans and got employed by them to be local court clacks or serve as interpreters, the free born(s) were so jealous and had no less choice but to ask their parents to be allowed to acquire Western education so as to compete against the so called *Osu* in their new positions and status.

Though the Igbo resisted formal education, the common good and necessary changes for all Igbo *Ohacracy* people who lived in the land still remain vital. Later, Western education became a proud venture for all Igbo *Ohacracy* people. It was for this reason that Ubah (1980:385) observes:

> … one positive value of their presence and activities (missionaries) was the respect for education it instilled in people. Parents were now prepared to force their children to go to school, and the boys themselves, in expectations of a comfortable future, became generally more enthusiastic. It was no longer undignified to be called a schoolboy. … 1940s also saw the beginnings of Western education for girls. Prejudice against the education of women was so deep seated initially... parents thought that it was a waste of time and money to educate their daughters as the prime beneficiaries would be their future husband.

The future gain of education of course encouraged parents to send their children to school. It was noted that the Igbo *Ohacracy*'s perception of the potential returns from education in terms of cash, which took place once the colonial government employed local Igbo literate citizens as part of the daily running of government. Ubah (1980:385) confirm that education: "... sparked... race as villages, clans, and ethnic groups vied for honours in order to avoid relegation to the background."

In addition to the education projects, the Unions that emerged due to the migration factors are credited with the agency to provide education for young Igbo *ohacracy* youths who could not on their own achieve western education. It is of this great effort that Bersselaar (2005:60) argues that: "... the associations' activities included education, as they made education grants or loans available to promising youth, and agitated for – or actually built – schools for the migrants." Community based Igbo schools became truly a venture or project to reach out to

all its sons and daughters whom the Igbo *Ohacracy* prided in and prized as their future, equal to all foreign agents of modernisation. By taking pride in all they learned in these communities, education became a strong agent of Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model of governance. Hence, scholarships were encouraged, community sponsored school projects grew, more and less privileged Igbo families or individuals were sponsored to formal education and more bright Igbo students had the opportunity to study in foreign countries like Britain and in the Americas on community sponsored scholarship projects. The Igbo *Ohacracy* communities made school projects theirs and made both individual and community efforts to provide education for their young and hungry teaming youth population for western education, (Bersselaar 2005:64; Ubah 1980:374-376 and Egboh 1987:25-35). It was with such enthusiasm and motivation around schools that Okwu (2010:175) observes:

> …the free construction of the schools by the people themselves and the payment of the salaries of the Catechist-Teachers by the local communities were the additional significant attractions of the chapel schools. Shanahan reasoned that it was preferable "to spend our meager (sic) funds in building a living church in which each child is a stone, rather than in building a real edifice that would be magnificent – but empty". …the "living church" could only be a breathing sanctuary and an institution of vitality if the children did not abandon it...

Indeed not only being educated, the young Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens were sure of one employment or the other with the colonial system on the ground. Most were in turn after receiving education got employment as teachers which were then a very influential group with good work conditions made available. The teachers were indeed well treated by their community host schools or receiving communities' once in matters of transfer. More 'leadership' positions also came the way of the young Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens after their education which in most cases promoted or encouraged migration into new cities, they were better placed to play leadership roles having been educated in the western way life or culture, (see Bersselaar 2005:67 and Ubah 1980:379-380). And more so, these young Igbo *Ohacracy* teachers became the essential communication link in various ideas and meaningful messages between the Europeans; whether Catholic missionaries or colonial officials and the ordinary citizens of the Igbo *Ohacracy* societies. Of course, this role though good as it may sound, was a wrong means of the theology of language apostolate in missionary activities. This will be discussed in the next section while looking at the challenges of Catholicism among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people.

The same form of Western education that came with Catholicism among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people opened new doors for the Igbo teaming population and brought about new urban centres that grew rapidly and of course new cities that eventually came about. Indeed, migration was born among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities and the powerful 'Unions or Development Associations' equally came into being. These are credited to the chain-reaction (connectedness) or led-on progress of the social order. While emphasizing on this same observation, Bersselaar (2005:71) confirms that we should regard the language of development used by the urban migrants as an appropriation of the colonial concept of 'progress.' The unions therefore used 'progress' to justify interfering in the rural home towns in the same manner the colonizers used the concept to justify their interference in Igbo *Ohacracy* (African) communities. This interference brought enormous tensions between rural dwellers and their leaders, and the urban migrants who tried to recreate the city in their rural places. In most cases, this tension was in disagreement with the rural dwellers that would not see the sense and meaning of progress brought by the returning migrants.

Indeed, in this way and understanding the rural and traditional Igbo *Ohacracy* communities were redefined and therefore acquired new meaning. The education attraction and migrant chain-reactions, that brought about 'unions and their activities' into place among the Igbo *Ohacracy* may be another way of redefining the Igbo encounter with the West and the outside world. Hence, Bersselaar (2005:72) contends elsewhere re-emphasizing how the Igbo *Ohacracy* migrant population *reimagined* home while bringing with them tradition and culture into the cities and centres of migration stating:

> …the villages were nevertheless imagined in concrete terms, as rural communities of origin, and as the site of authentic, traditional African culture. This was partly the result of the extent to which hometown associations appropriated the colonizers' language of progress *versus* tradition, traditional elders *versus* modern youth and the claim that bringing progress entitled one to interfere in local affairs. All of this resulted in a redefinition of what constitutes the rural hometown, which, in addition to the many material changes that had also been taking place during this period, irrevocably altered that place.

Indeed, the physical influence of the Western style and culture on the Igbo *Ohacracy* people and the challenges or struggles the Igbo culture had to pass through while seeking acceptance outside its communities are glaringly evident. Yet, credit must be given to the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities who though in this encounter did not lose what they are; and effectively one can think about the reimagining home or traditions while in the migrant cites.

Moreover, between the 19th and 20th centuries, before the rise and establishment of Catholicism and Christianity, the birth of twins and other multiple births were considered an abomination and a curse from the gods among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of south-eastern Nigeria, and in most parts of Igbo *Ohacracy* land and its neighbouring communities such as the Ibibio. Multiple births were believed to be a thing belonging only to the animal kingdom while single births belonged to humans. The reason for such a belief may have been as a result of ignorance and limited knowledge of the human biological make-up. Twins were killed by abandonment in the flowing rivers and community's "evil forests"[81] or in some cases twins were instantly killed. After the birth of the children, the mother of the twins went through a cleansing ritual to purify herself from the abomination. Indeed Western education is credited with the eradication of such senseless killing of twin births among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of south-east Nigeria.

Another type of killing that occured among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people was human sacrifice which took place when chiefs and some noblemen of *Ozo*[82] titles died and were being buried. Western education and the efforts of the Roman Catholic Church are credited for the eradication of such practices. These noble title holders after their death and during burial were believed or thought that they would be in need of their 'slaves' or servants in the spirit world. For this reason, such slaves were sacrificed (Ilogu 1974:64-67). The Igbo *Ohacracy* religion believed in the on-going of life after physical death on earth and therefore would do everything possible to show the application of that believe.

By all means, such insane and unacceptable 'cultural practice' had to come to an end. The new Christian religion is credited for such a change in attitude among indigenous Igbo *Ohacracy* people. The abolition of the practice of human sacrifice (Clarke 1974:84), and the killing of twins in the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture are attributed to the emergence of Christianity among the Igbo people (Myers 2010:1) and the influence of education. At the abolition of these practices in the early years of the Christian advent among the Igbo *Ohacracy*

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[81] The evil forest referred to the bush where human bodies believed to have died of abominable courses like swollen stomach and leprosy were dumped and twin babies were left for dead to be eaten up by ants and wild animals (Achebe 1965:135-136).
[82] The *Ozo* titled men and women was already explained in chapter 4 as the study explored the Igbo *Ohacracy* cultural and development institutions.

communities, Mary Slessor[83] (1848-1915) who was a missionary among the Efick (Calabar) people of the West coast of South-eastern Igbo people, endured very difficult situations in order to bring to an end these inhuman practices. It was about this woman, Slessor's missionary work that Myers (2010:1) writes:

> …wherever Mary Slessor went on her triumphal tour among the churches, the people were enthralled as they heard her tell, in a simple and humble manner, how she had endured hunger and thirst under the flaming sun of Africa, had been smitten down by tropical fevers, had controlled drunken cannibals brandishing loaded muskets, had mastered hundreds of frenzied natives lusting for blood and had faced death a thousand times in her endeavour to bring redemption's story to Africans… They were moved to tears as she told of the slave markets, of human sacrifice …But the stories the Scotch Christians liked best of all were those telling how she had rescued from death hundreds of baby twins and other deserted babies thrown out in the forest to perish of hunger or to be eaten by ants or leopards (Myers 2010).

Impressively, the Igbo *Ohacracy* population that lived in this century of carnage of innocent lives were very open to the message of redemption from the Christian religion. This was against the evil of innocent lives destroyed in a blind practice of unawareness and lack of proper scientific knowledge of twin births. It is therefore noted that any human culture that does not save, care and nourish human life is rather retrogressive and does not thrive a society. Hence, the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture at the heart of these practices destroyed the progression, course or route to human development (Ilogu 1974:66). Of course, any reasonable person would ask how such a dark practice and culture could be termed cultural solidarity or development among the Igbo *Ohacracy* society. But this is not new of humans who even unite in evil political practises like apartheid, slavery and other repressive governments all over human history which have united in solidarity among these evil shocking activities.

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[83] Mary Slessor was such a woman who triumphed over such difficult conditions of infant sacrifices among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. She was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, December 2, 1848, and known as the White Queen of Calabar, a region on the North-west coast of Africa. Concerning this intrepid woman, J. H. Morrison pays this tribute: "She is entitled to a place in the front ranks of the heroines of history, and if goodness be counted an essential element of true greatness, if eminence be reckoned by love and self-sacrifice, by years of endurance and suffering, by a life of sustained heroism and purest devotion, it will be found difficult, if not impossible, to name her equal." (Myers 2010); such was Mary Slessor's influential missionary work. I am incredibly grateful and indebted to the abolition of twin killing since I am twin born at the period just after the abolition. My mother Alice Egwim-Anyanele of the blessed memory used to tell me how she was monitored by her neighbours of the wellbeing of my twin brother Peter and me, just after our birth. As a twin what a great role Christianity and informative education played in saving my life among many other Igbo *Ohacracy* innocent thousands of children who would have died for such a barbaric and ignorant practises.

The Igbo response to the enlightenment era that came with Catholic Christianity was genuine and meaningful. Their positive reaction to save the life of Igbo *Ohacracy* people and the innocent twin babies that were destroyed without full knowledge and awareness of human biology of the possibility of a woman giving birth to twins was a life giving and liberating event. The fact that there was a safe passage of the abolition of such practices, traces and shows cultural development among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. The general or total discontinuity of such a practice indicated and demonstrated the strong spirit of cultural solidarity (civilization) by which the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture had united the entire Igbo citizenry. Development as have been noted above is a positive growth of human understanding and practice that culminates into common good. Obviously the common good noted in the abolition of twins killing and human sacrifice is the respect and acceptable changes of all human life among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people.

The Western education as received among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people came in a centralized fashion and was able to serve a tool for evangelization. However, the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized this system of education. The community's' effort to build 'community schools' that served the common good to all was a clear indication for decentralization. Unlike the centralized educational system of the West which served as tool for Catholic recruitment of membership in Churches and indoctrination, the decentralized system targeted all members of the community to be afforded the opportunity to education. Not only this, the Igbo *Ohacracy* people's Unions or Development Associations also organised scholarships for such poor bright children whose families could not afford education. Igbo communities also hired and paid teachers and catechists who served the interest of all and unlike in the centralized system which took care of mainly those who could afford the costly education. Collective action and individualistic tendencies were eliminated by the common search for community schools and their wellbeing. The decentralized system in such common good thinking and practise was able to have a "large ear" as the theory of this study holds. While listening to all people of diverse and difficult situations unable to afford the much needed education, the intervention by progressive unions with the provision of scholarship, the much decentralised governance worked for the common good of the Igbo communities.

As this study appreciates and demonstrates the values of Western education to the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, it is evident that the Igbo people benefited immeasurably through the centralised system. Education as received from the Roman Catholic Church (the West) has

contributed and still does 'miracles' to both individuals and communities as it did in the first time of Western contact with the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. Education at its early stage among the Igbo *Ohacracy* acted as a liberating force or agent that humanized parts of Igbo life that saw violence, abuse and or dehumanization. A clear example is the stop of the killing of twins and the education of slaves as noted in this chapter.

Education therefore empowered the Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens by providing them the command of English language to be able to communicate with their new foreign visitors and invaders. This also provided the opportunity for the local indigenes to be able to explain and express themselves to the Western world to understand the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture differently and anew. The Igbo took authority of their lives when they gave up these evil practices that demean human life due to the classroom encounter of the Western world system. The written Igbo *Ohacracy* language was also part of the gain of this period. The Igbo language that is today has helped to preserve and document historical events was as a result of the Western education positive effect among the Igbo *Ohacracy*.

Education though receives such praises and acknowledgment of this study, it is equally meaningful and reasonable to note and recommend that the decentralised Igbo system of indigenous education must be respected and promoted too. Of course, with the method by which the centralised model introduced formal education to the Igbo communities, the locals were made to understand that it was the only way forward and guaranteed the future (Ubah 1980:385). The influx of the local population to gain Western education literally abandoning the indigenous system, thereby, collapsing the local decentralised tradition of upbringing. While the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model of education focussed on communal and individual security, the Western type focussed on the individual enrichment of their scholars which also disregarded the indigenous decentralised model. As historical heritage for all generations even yet unborn, the Igbo knowledge, artistry, music, belief system and culture among others deserves all attention to protect her future and survival. To disregard the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized educational system will almost tantamount to the death of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. The decentralized value system with regards to dialogue, consultation and ample time listening as in 'large ear' theory must be adhered to and promoted too.

Western education not only contributed greatly in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, so too was the medical infrastructure that came with Catholicism; and has equally made positive impact to

the lives of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. This section will evaluate the medical influence noted in the previous presentations.

In what has been described as "Medical factor in Evangelism", the study notes another dimension of credit by which Catholicism was introduced among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria. The effect of the health facilities like church clinics, community and large town hospitals that served the Igbo *Ohacracy* people and its neighbours was a huge achievement and brought a desired effect. While noting the vital and significant role that medical evangelism played among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, Ekechi (1972:224) emphasised strongly the need to remember and tell this story as he writes:

> …in relation to the Roman Catholic Church, the important role played by European medicine must never be neglected. There is absolutely no denying the fact that Roman Catholic medical work, especially among the Igbos, helped tremendously in the consolidation of Catholic influence even before 1900. And even though the operation cost the Holy Ghost Fathers considerable expenses, the end result seemed to justify the expenditure.

The new modern way of health care that was introduced by Christian missionaries contributed in the building of the participatory governance culture among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people as entire communities embraced and sought to establish more health care centres and clinics. These became obviously positive targets for community projects to provide a new way of health care for the population. In most Igbo *Ohacracy* communities, it became a major ambition to provide their own health centre or clinic for the people. It is due to such tremendous positive response to modern medicine that these health   facilities united the Igbo *Ohacracy* people in search of better health; and indeed, they took pride in contributing to the realization of health centres around Igbo *Ohacracy* land (Egboh 1987:42; 65; 72). It was on this fact that Ekechi (1972:221; 1993:292) respectively observes Father Joseph Luts, the Roman Catholic first missionary, was able to use European medicine to attract the indigenous people. Father Joseph won the sympathy of the Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens for handing out free medications to his Church adherents and would be converts. Most of Father Joseph's missionary work was said have been concentrated on medical work towards the indigenous people of Igbo origin. By this act of medical care, many parents who initially showed no interest in the new Catholic religion began to express tremendous interest to join the new congregation.

It is interesting to note the intensity by which the Catholic Church provided medical care and its role in the evangelization of the Igbo *Ohacracy* society and especially during epidemic attack. While citing Boer, Ekech (1993:290) affirms that: "it is a means to an end; it breaks down prejudice, and wins the affection and confidence of the people more than any other agency." It was even reported that many parents including Protestant sympathizers, were said to have allowed their children to be baptized by the Roman Catholic priests upon receiving medical treatment. This practice though positive and good as it looks, has received criticism since it minifies and complicates the methodology of evangelism.

More so, the lay and ignorant indigenous people should not have been so tempted or exposed to choose between conversion and medical treatment. Yet, no one with good conscience would continue to preach the Good News of conversion and neglect the sick Igbo people around. Medical cure was part of Jesus' ministry but mixing it up with "infant baptism" even without parents' consent raises more question than good. But as Ekechi (1993:291; 296) notes as he cites Dickson, "it was considered good policy to use material means to achieve spiritual ends. After all …was not the (care of the sick) one of the great features of the Master's work on earth, while 'He went about doing good?" And by so doing, the Catholic medical group by providing this care during the influenza epidemic won the heart of the local Igbo *Ohacracy* population; and they were indeed seen as humanitarians before their eyes.

But it should be clearly stated though that the poor and ill Igbo *Ohacracy* people in this era were in those cases taken advantage of and lured into Catholicism by the offer of Western medicine. By the use or agent of medicine, the Roman Catholic missionaries presented both medicine and conversion into Catholicism to be equal and the same. Hence, any sick person who went to seek medical care was at the same time admitted to baptism and belonging to the profession of faith without knowing or consented to such membership. It was even noted that Igbo indigenes that refused baptism were turned away from assessing medical cure or treatment.

As noted above, the medical care or evangelism lured the Igbo *Ohacracy* people into Catholicism. It equally at the same time devalued and destroyed the local ways of cure available. The use of indigenous approach which was not carefully considered by the Roman Catholics, created animosity and fight, both against the local diabia fraternity (local doctors) and the CMS Church groups who complained bitterly that the Roman Catholics have either

taken away members of their own Church or have destroyed their local medicine market. While emphasising on the bitter complaints, Ekechi (1972:222) notes that by 1890 the CMS report said it all. He writes that each day as the CMS protests, they met individuals who used to belong to them but left in favour of the Roman Catholics. Free medical care provided by the RCM group was blamed for this unhappy occurrences (see also Okwu 2010:127-129).

The dibia fraternity and their enterprise were also affected by the replacement of the local or indigenous medicine with a foreign Western one, thereby threatening the economic wellbeing of the group and the survival of cultural medicine heritage in general. This did not only threaten the economic survival of the dibia but the entire understanding of what we mean by "health" among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. It is a fact to establish in this study that both the centralized and decentralized systems have developed their system of medical care. While the Western centralized system will depend on the medicine (drug) thus provided for the remedy of an illness in search of a cure. On the other hand in the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized practice, medicine goes beyond drug for remedy in search of cure or healing of a particular sickness. For the later therefore, medical cure is holistic in nature thereby employs both the environment, the spirits (consulting the ancestors) and of course appealing to the emotions, psychology and spiritual aspects of the person for healing. Sickness among the Igbo *Ohacracy* as it is in other African countries is not just physical. Rather, sickness has also spiritual and psychological dimensions. Therefore healing can only be achieved by appealing to the whole person of three dimensional being physical, psychological and spiritual; thereby achieving a holistic healing of the sick.

Though in certain occasions the Western centralized medical understanding accuses the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized system to be 'superstitious' in nature and practice. Indeed, one may contend that superstition itself remains a way and practice in search for healing and therefore remains a valid and authentic way for the healer as means to reach/achieve healing. The act of healing is very complicated one indeed and so has no particular one way of success. Hence, the early Roman Catholic missionaries among the Igbo *Ohacracy* cannot claim to possess the only medical remedy for all sicknesses. Rather, it was an unfortunate situation that the Roman Catholic missionaries looked down upon the Igbo decentralized system of medical care just to promote their centralized medical system.

The *dibia* fraternity as already discussed in chapter 5, were the medical group who took care of the sick and provided a local sought cure, Uchendu (1965:15). However, the sudden appearance of the Catholic medical care as part of Christiendom mission (though saved lives as the local medication did), challenged the local providers of medical cure and particularly as regards their income or life sustenance. The locals who sort for foreign medical cure infuriated the *dibia* fraternity thereby provoking bad blood against the Roman Catholics. As Ekechi (1972:224) further notes:

> ...Some elements in the society... place some value on Western medicine. In this way the Christian missions clearly challenged the influence of the *dibia* and slowly but steadily eroded some of their traditional roles in the society. ...the *dibia* as a group would view missionary proselytization as detrimental to their interests... the *dibia* exhibited such relentless hostility towards the Christian elements…

This very incident though old as it may look, it remains ever new to the present day. The present day Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities have remained in conflict with choices of what source of medical cure/care to consult in moment of need or illness. Though the Catholic and Protestant struggle for dominance via the provision of medical services; the persistence of the indigenous Igbo (African) health care decentralized practise has remained intact, secured and attractive despite the missionary and colonial iconoclastic tendencies (Ekechi 1993:289).

This is so because according to an Igbo *Ohacracy* saying: "One can take fish out of water, but one cannot take water out of fish." This simply means that though the Western system may claim victory for a moment among the Igbo *Ohacracy*, yet the Igbo know where they belong at the long run. However, while the local *dibia* remains influential and effective in most cases, an individual Catholic Igbo would most of the time combine both the local and the Western medicine in search for cure in times of illness and disease. Most Igbo *Ohacracy* individuals will again in times of sickness or disease seek help from both the Catholic faith and the African traditional religions sources. Indeed this is how the Igbo *Ohacracy* world may be defined today. The Igbo *Ohacracy* is ever living in two worlds; and ever changing since the advent of Christianity or colonialism. The Igbo *Ohacracy* is therefore cut up into two worlds of the Western and the Igbo world. The two had ever been in conflict since the contact of both cultures.

6.3   Challenges of Igbo Catholicism and *Ohacracy* Governance

As the study had just enumerated some of the positive influences that Catholicism, the centralised model of governance (Christianity) brought to the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities, this section highlights some of the negative influences Catholicism brought and how these affected the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised model of governance. One of this negative influences as was unfortunately introduced and still retains 'deep scars and 'painful reality' today in the Igbo and Nigerian Catholic Church was the antagonistic method through which Christianity was introduced and established among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa.

As this study has already shown thus far, the Catholic foundation and Christianity in general did not command total positive influence as would be expected among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria. These negative influences remain historical facts that Catholicism and Christianity will have to deal with and are challenged to seek amendment and solution in the contemporary Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic order. This is so because Christianity is attributed with the ridicule and suppression of the rituals and destruction of the images and objects associated with the indigenous religious, political, social and cultural rituals as Okonjo (1976:34) points out. Citing Kraemer, Okonjo (1976:34-36) makes the following observation:

> The missionary is a revolutionary and he has to be so, for to preach and plant Christianity means to make a frontal attack on the beliefs, the customs, the apprehensions of life and the world and by implication (because tribal religions are primarily social realities) on the social structures and bases of primitive society. The missionary enterprise need not be ashamed of this, because colonial administrations, planters, merchants, western penetration, etc. perform a much more severe and destructive attack.

Unfortunately, this was the attitude and face of Christian missionaries who introduced the new religion to the Igbo *Ohacracy* order and Africans in general. In other words, the aim was to contribute to the complete uprooting and destruction of indigenous life in Africa. Hence, Igbo *Ohacracy* values faced a "frontal attack" from the Christian missionaries. More visible and negative influences by Catholic missionaries and Christianity in general as Ilogu (1974:72-75) notes: Other Igbo *Ohacracy* scholars differ from all we have noted above, hence this study notes the following as part of the not so good influences of Catholicism:

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i. The belief in spirits and the reverence (veneration) of the ancestors was seen to be evil and the people lost the morality of the continuity of ancestral moral observances that bonded the Igbo *Ohacracy* people.

ii. The bride wealth that played 'significant and symbolic' role in solidifying relationships between two families in marriage was misunderstood and misrepresented as 'bride purchase' and was interfered with.

iii. Polygamy was abolished and men with more than one wife were forced to abandon their customary legally obtained marriages. Families were destroyed and little or no attention was paid towards children and women who were therefore seriously affected in polygamous marriages.

iv. Customs like 'title taking' that played important roles in Igbo *Ohacracy* promotion of unity, dignity and honour of hard work was discouraged as idol worship (Egboh 1987:128-130).

v. Traditional dancing and masquerade seasonal observances that was a form of recreation to people, a means of keeping solidarity among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people and a way of socialization was discouraged as evil worship (Okonjo, 1976:34-35).

vi. The village or local religious priest (*dibia*) who controlled the social psychology and served the religious consciousness among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people was highly suppressed in favour of the foreign medical practice (Ilogu 1974:52).

vii. The Igbo customs of respecting nature and the environment were not spared either. The respect of great "trees and forests" that is currently acknowledged as nature conservation was misunderstood and interpreted as animalistic worship and therefore was unrecognised and called evil practices.

viii Finally, in her capture of the context under consideration, and while referring to Westermann, Oduyoye (1986:31) notes how Europe's attention turned from northern Africa and the Nile Basin to West Africa after the Portuguese adventurers brought gold and slaves back to Europe. The conversion of Africans to Christianity was one of the motives behind those adventures and "even slave-raiding and slave-trading were seriously regarded as acts of Christian charity, because they seemed to be the only means by which the salvation of heathen souls could be effected."

This thesis will now enumerate some Igbo *Ohacracy* negative influences that have emerged in the course of this work as noted also in Amadiume (2015:83; 151-171)

i. The *Osu* caste system as discussed in chapter 5 in which the Igbo *Ohacracy* has discriminated against a whole generation of Igbo citizens is a crime against free association of citizens in their own society. This practise wherever it occurs must be condemned in the strongest terms and be abolished (Ihenacho 2004:100-110).

ii. The treatment of widows as someone to be inherited by a male relative of the late husband does not have positive influence for women's security among the Igbo *Ohacracy*. Since women had access to land only as wives, a husband's death placed a woman in a state of great insecurity (Amadiume 2015:83). A widow could only survive with her children at the mercy of her living relatives. No human being should be dependent on another to live or move. Hence, this practice should be made away with.

iii. The Igbo *Ohacracy* practised the killing and sacrifices of humans like their twin born as noted in this chapter. This was wrong and thanks to Catholicism that worked for its abolition and saved thousands of innocent lives.

iv. Patriarchy and womanhood did not always fit in well in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. Though women participated in their own women's organisations, but in the area of 'title' taking or recognitions as noted in chapter 5 were not fully open to women. This marginalisation has always looked down on women and must therefore change for full inclusion and participation. This of course affected the power and authority negotiations in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities; in which women always lost own to their non-recognition or acknowledgment of achievements. More so, the "Kola-nut" significance and its refusal of women's ritual right to "break" it as discussed in chapter 5 remains a negative influence and questions the women's place in Igbo culture. Hence, as long as the Igbo *Ohacracy* continues to attach such importance to the Kola-nut and yet deny women of its ritual breakage defines women as unequal persons to their male folks.

All these and more are the negative influences identified with both establishments of Catholicism (Christianity) and the *Ohacracy* order among Igbo communities.

However, it must be noted that the negative attitude of the missionaries towards all the indigenous Igbo values noted in this militated against the growth and stability of cultural growth and solidarity among the Igbo speaking people. To a large extent, Catholicism can also be credited with positive influences among the Igbo *Ohacracy*. One is tempted to suggest or think that most of the traditional belief systems would have been saved if Catholicism was sensitive enough towards the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture and could have prevented these negative

effects. This was the case in most African countries and other contexts (cultures and traditions) at their point of meeting with Christianity. Strange though this situation may be the Christian religion was regularly accused of imposing itself on foreign cultures at its first contact.

Moreover, there has been a high level of mistrust and demeaning look and understanding between the Catholic Church and other Christian groups or denominations among the Igbo. As already noted in chapter 5, it was clear the Catholics (RCM) and the Anglican (CMS) missionaries were at each other's throat in order to win the Igbo *Ohacracy* converts. There were clear fights and struggles on who wins more people to the extent of each other's betrayal and antagonism. In fact, when I was young in the 1970s, this fight was still on inasmuch as a RCM member meets his neighbouring communities who may have belonged to the CMS Churches and there was bound to be fight or quarrel along the road owing to separate denominations particular individuals belong to. It is in regret to this reality while emphasizing on the stem and dimension by which the 'fight and castigation' has gone, the rising pro-RCM sympathies among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, that the CMS authorities intensified their anti-Catholic denunciation, Ekechi (1972:235) thus writes that archdeacon Dennis, the most vocal anti-Roman Catholic, spent much of his time and energy in trying to indoctrinate the agents against the Roman Catholic Church.

In other words, even the socio-political divide among the European in relation to countries on who belongs where and to which Church denominations, was literally exported from Europe into the Igbo and Nigerian indigenous contexts. Till this day, and to a large extent the Igbo and the entire Nigerian RCM and CMS Churches literally witnessed and felt the fight between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) of the Sinn Fein for the Catholic Northern Ireland region. And likewise, the support and the disagreement with the Protestant Anglican of the Queen Elizabeth were transferred to the South-eastern Nigerian Catholic situation. The support for the Northern Ireland social conflicts of The Sinn Fein, IRA 1970s was seen taken place in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. In effect and indeed, it is simply a scandal in the RCM and the CMS Christian history among the Igbo *Ohacracy* of South-eastern Nigeria to discuss this antagonism issue among members of how Christianity came to be introduced and established in this region.

Not only was this a problem, but there was clear evidence and allegation against these Churches regarding who supported the oppressive and repressive British (foreign) 'Royal Niger Company' who eventually supported the colonial masters against the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. This company that grabbed or forcefully took away the land of local indigenous people was openly supported by the CMS missionaries against the local Igbo *Ohacracy* population. It was to this evil and conniving with the oppressed 'Royal Niger Company' against the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised economic people that Ekechi (1972:234) notes in regret that between 1890 and 1898 the Company was in conflict with numerous Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. The RCM missionaries were frequently blamed of "political meddling" since the RCM stand against the destruction of villages and farm lands for their private gain. The CMS was rather in cooperation with this Western centralised system and ugly way of 'the might is right'.

It is indeed provocative and sinful for any Christian group to support or even cooperate with oppressive and repressive centralised governments in any form and for whatever reason. Again, it is scandalous to note this sort of attitude or behaviour continues to happen in today's world. It was still less than 25 years ago when apartheid oppressive political regime was so rude and in conflict with the indigenous people (local land grabbing) of black South African population. While their Christian cohorts Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduits Gereformeede Kerk*) was in sympathetic support of the evil system for their own gains and personal rewards, the black African communities were dispossessed of their land and properties.

Another aspect of negative influence of the school system that the Igbo *Ohacracy* order inherited from the Western Catholicism was the notion and association of education with conversion or evangelization. As already pointed out earlier, the Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens being ignorant of Christianity, poor in health and vulnerable to western suggestions were wooed into believing and accepting that education was synonymous with Catholicism as the missionaries presented Western medication, education and Catholicism for all to have come from one source and the same. Likewise, to this current day among the Igbo *Ohacracy* society, most institutions of learning are restricted to religious beliefs and affiliation lines. In this sense and practice, most Igbo *Ohacracy* and Nigerian people in general are not free to choose where and what kind of education and even medication they should access if they come from a "wrong" religion; and thanks to the early Catholicism practice and wrong applications. Ubah (1980:378) notes that conditions to belong to the Catholic Church

remained major reason to obtain any services from the centralised form of governance in this regard.

Moreover, the Catholic Church's cooperation with the colonial masters by the event or introduction of the "warrant chief" opened the Igbo *Ohacracy* order to corruption and self-enrichment. As Ubah (1987:173) confirms, "the warrant chiefs were the polluters of the political order, and the system under which they operated succeeded in brutalizing the Igbo world." As the new systems appointed Chiefs or Catechists, most of who were mainly men in the exclusion of able women, worked for their own gain; either by unlawfully imposing fines that were never accounted for or by wilfully giving/making wrong translations to the foreign missionaries for their personal intended gain afterwards (Ubah 1980:384). It was for such highly corrupt system that led to the 1929 Women's Riot/Protest in and around Igbo *Ohacracy* communities (Afigbo 2005:266). Indeed, the "concentration of power and authority" to one person (centralization) which the Igbo *Ohacracy* did not know, became a huge problem in the entire Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised communities. Ubah (1987:172) notes strongly on the negative effects of such a practice that the British did not show interest in discovering how the Igbo *Ohacracy* governed itself.

The point being made therefore is to highlight the danger that came with the side lining of the decentralised system thereby limiting the lay participation in their social order of Igbo *Ohacracy*. The lack of proper education of the Igbo *Ohacracy* participatory governance led to the colonial powers in cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church to force a change in the system. The theory of the 'large ear' listening as noted in this study was by no means applied in this case. The listening to the culture and people's way of life was the only way to avoid such destruction by the appointment of the "warrant chiefs" in the Igbo *Ohacracy* system that never knew individual power or authority rule in their communities. A listening ear would have made the difference that the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised needed for leadership as a way of meaningful participation in the social order. The Roman Catholic centralised system of governance was not well educated and ill-advised in this sense thereby disregarding the indigenous participatory governance system among the Igbo *Ohacracy*.

By so doing the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic Church established and tuned to serve a foreign interest towards which patriarchy and hierarchical leadership dominated and defined the Igbo Catholic church and society. Hence, this study concurs with the ecclesiological understanding

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of inculturation which the early church in Acts of the Apostolates (15;) observes and enacted too. Therefore, it is in affirmation with this conclusion that Uzukwu (1996:58) concurs that from the ecclesiology of Luke in the Acts of the Apostolates, we learn that it is not necessary to force local practices of a sister church, derived from her interaction with her world, on converts coming from another cultural background. Thus, it is not necessary for the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities to carry the burden of ancient Christian practices that the Western Churches find difficult to drop. The Igbo *Ohacracy* is a different experience and must be treated and respected as such.

Moreover, another critique and negative influence of the Catholic apostolate methodological establishment among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order is what has been termed as the 'language apostolate' of the Catholic missionaries. To enable this chapter to situate the issue of language here, Ani (2012:110) defines language as something irreplaceable. Language comes as a form of expression which is commonly conceived as an arbitrary set of orders used for communication. Ani (2012) concludes that language is a system of articulated sounds organized by human thoughts and used by a group of humans for purposes of communication. Language comes in forms of verbal, material, cultural and social practices that communicate sense or meaning to the user and the observer.

Language may be more defined as the bearer and communicator of meaning, value, culture and heritage among many other significant values it serves in a nation, and remains a huge challenge to the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic church and Nigeria in general, to this day. It is important to indicate that the Igbo *Ohacracy* language has been declared as one of the endangered languages exposed to extinction if no effort is made urgently to save the language. To this fact Ani (2012:110) emphasizes on the danger of Igbo language extinction stating that:

> …The fact Igbo language instead of gaining communication height in the hierarchy of languages is currently moving in the downward trend in the comity of human languages is drawing increasing consign amongst individuals and scholars within the Igbo nation and beyond. "But following the prediction by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Advisory Committee on Language Pluralism and Multi-language Education that Igbo language and by implication, culture, may be heading for extinction, and subsumed by other stronger Nigerian languages by 2025, if nothing is done, by its speakers to ensure that it is not only taught in schools, colleges and universities,…

The challenges that the Igbo *Ohacracy* language faces today can be mainly attributed to the Roman Catholic Apostolate style and preference for English language at the foundation phase of both the missionaries at Churches and in the introduction of the Western education among the Igbo-speaking people of South-eastern Nigeria. The Catholic missionaries were reported to had no interest in the language of the people and of course refused the culture, traditions, values and other cultural heritages that defined the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria. Their CMS counterparts showed interest in learning the language but owning to other complications they did not go too far with the full development of the spoken language. As Ebelebe (2009:71) agrees in the contemporary mission theology, any missionary venture or teaching must necessarily include the training of missionaries in the local languages of the cultures and people they will off for mission to. Stressing further the important role adequate learning of languages plays in the missionary apostolate; Ebelebe (2009:72) cites Pope Benedict XV on the call for adequate training with regards to modern era evangelization and writes:

> …call for a well-trained native clergy and for their assuming the leadership of their local churches was a significant and positive development for the missionary apostolate in Africa. The same, however, cannot be said of the theology behind the missionary enterprise to Africa and elsewhere and the language in which it was conveyed.

Indeed, language (whether as in the spoken form, cultural heritage and values) has become an essential tool to the missionary apostolate of the contemporary era. The ugly incident that this study had described in this chapter was clear in Ekechi (1972:235) as he points out the need for vernacular. Ekech (1972) acknowledged the CMS insistence on local language other than English language for instruction. Yet, the RCM took advantage of the high interest of the Igbo locals and opted for English language. The Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens were willing and ready to abandon their vernacular for the foreign language and eventually left the CMS vernacular instructions, for the RCM English instruction schools.

This was a huge mistake and a horrible easy option the RCM missionaries took and has led to the decline of the entirety of Igbo *Ohacracy* life and culture to this day. Having degraded the interest and quality of Igbo *Ohacracy* life and culture, the Igbo as a people and culture, was of course fully captured and defeated at all angles. By so doing, the RCM missionaries misled the people into believing that even their own language is no much meaningful to be treasured. What a fall of a culture and people!

The issue on language extinction had been a long lasting way and means of disabling cultures of the world which colonialism with the collaboration of the RCM missionaries and their cohorts had used to conquer and keep populations under their control and management. It should be noted here that not until at the mid of the last century between 1963-1965 when at the event of the Vatican II Council that the Western Latin Church agreed to drop the use of Latin language in worship and Mass celebrations. A new and participatory Church was finally born (see Cadorette 2009:201).

This change gave the vernacular languages and cultures to be used in liturgies and worship celebrations including local drums, and African style and way of worship in their Roman Catholic prayer meetings. It was in line with this understanding that after the event of the Vatican II Council that many other human traditions were quick to ask: "Orthodox Christians, Protestants, and members of other religious traditions, not to mention non-believers, wondered if the Catholic Church was really capable of being sincere in its attempt to engage in dialogue after centuries of hostility to their beliefs and values" (Cadorette 2009:197).

Yet, language issues that equally incorporate theme like inculturation in the Roman Catholic Church hardly receives much attention any longer. Inculturation in the Igbo-speaking Catholic Church has suffered tremendous setbacks owning to the local African clergy themselves and authorities in the hierarchical Church not making much effort to re-establish the Africanness in the Catholic world and worship. The local Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic church and Nigeria in general are once again being satisfied with the verbal vernacular change in the spoken language of church worship; and are rather too slow and lazy to see other areas of 'language implications' in cultural values and heritage that should be incorporated into the inculturation venture in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic Church.

Of course the *Ohacracy* decentralized system was affected since the majority of Igbo population were excluded from the use their Igbo language to express themselves in worship and adoration. Though the early missionaries thought the Igbo Latin in Mass dialogue, most of this was memory work that did not make any meaning and was rather senseless; due to lack of understanding. As the laity and all else worship in their own Igbo *Ohacracy* language today, thanks to the Vatican II event, there is particularly new energy and interest in worship since there is clear understanding of the liturgy celebrated in Igbo language. The promotion of local liturgical clothes, the display of Igbo art works, the acceptance of girl altar servers, the

participation of laity (both men and women) in governance roles like the chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and the promotion of indigenous musical instruments are some of the new languages that has been spoken in the Igbo Roman Catholic Church and Nigeria in general that has liberated the Igbo *Ohacracy* people to worship freely in self-expression. The ordinary Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens have a sense of belonging by their participation in their regular prayer meetings. Yet more needs to be done with regards to incultruation and indigenization of Catholicism and its practises among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people.

Furthermore, the Atlantic slave trade that haunts the Igbo *Ohacracy* order (and Africa in general) to this day can equally be attributed to Catholicism in participation or Christianity in general. Inasmuch as Catholicism fought against slavery it was also reported that it participated and also enriched herself with even buying slaves for their own gain or kept for their own use. It was in confirmation of this unclear stand against slavery that Clarke (1974:84) cites Father Luts (a Catholic priest of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers in charge of the Igbo missions then) stating:

> …it was to become apparent, …to the missionaries that they could be accused, despite their public pronouncements to the contrary, of participating in, perpetuating and exacerbating the very 'evil' they sought to wipe out. In 1887, for example, the slaves bought by the mission were used by the missionaries to build a hospital at Onitsha Wharf. The Fathers claimed they were using the labour of the internes (sic) at the mission for a charitable purpose and therefore could not be accused of enslaving them. The Asaba slave merchant… must have considered this method of evangelization to have been identical with the type of slavery in which he himself was engaged.

These slave interns were of course confined in the mission areas and remained in the place doing all kinds of manual labour including attending to the coffee plantation and being brought up as would be Catholics without any chance of deciding for themselves. As such, one would think that the Church equally, to a certain extent participated and gained from slave markets. Even though the intentions was to buy slaves and then in turn set them free in due time; the method as explained here, leaves much less to admire.

In essence, slavery as an institution ceases the individual or group freedom of expression. The individual Igbo *Ohacracy* slaves could no longer participate freely in the social order due to their enslavement. Therefore this study having presented the dialogue values, the large ear listening to human conditions, and the participation in decision making process; believes that the slaves in confinement lost out in all ramifications of their lives as Igbo *Ohacracy* life has

demonstrated in all the aspects of this study. Indeed, the force of using slave labours to build hospital or school, denies the freedom of negotiation for cost of labour highlights the need for meaningful and free dialogue to take place between peoples.

In conclusion, although the Igbo *Ohacracy* society faced inevitable socio-political, cultural and economic changes and challenges, most of which have benefited the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities in one way or the other, such changes have also taken their toll on the traditional values as the study has already highlighted. The Post-colonial period for instance brought 'Kingship' (a Central State Affairs) into the Igbo *Ohacracy* society in search and desire to "look-like-others" (the 'kingship' tribes of the Yoruba and Hausas in Nigeria). This raised serious concern and thereby destroyed the decentralization values of listening, dialogue and consensus decision making as aspects in the Igbo *Ohacracy* participatory governance as indicated in chapter 5. It is vital to conclude with Hobbs (2001:453-459) as he rightly notes:

> …the stateless society of the Igbo was ideal in keeping any particular man from monopolizing the village and being prone to corruption. It is this same feature that situates wisdom in the *ndichie*[84] (collective), and not the individual men who leave the village unable to collect themselves after the Christian zealot, Enoch, unmasks one of the nine *egwugwu*…[85]

The next section of this chapter will discuss the major themes that have been selected randomly as pointed out in chapter 2 of data analysis for application to achieve the objectives and aim of this study towards participatory Igbo *Ohacracy* governance.

6.4   Key Themes that have Emerged from this Study

Several themes have emerged within the course of this study on Igbo *Ohacracy* order as a relevant indigenous model of participatory governance in the Roman Catholic Church order among the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria. Based on its methodology explained in chapter 2, these themes came to be chosen to clarify in the data analysis in the study and which are randomly selected to assist in the interpretive analysis. These themes are aimed in consideration of various aspects in this work which requires dialogue; and helps to enhance the understanding of participatory governance in both models of centralised and decentralised governance. In the remaining sections of this chapter, the study discusses the following key

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[84] *Ndichie* falls under the *Ozo* titled men/women institution among the Igbo as discussed in chapter 5, while *egwugwu* comes to the meaning of *Mmanwu* secret societies of sport which also serve as policing order in the land; see these topics as described yet in chapter 5.
[85] '*Things Fall Apart*' (Achebe 1965:168).

themes namely, participation of women in Catholic Church governance, the laity, inculturation, authority in centralization and decentralization models. Religion and culture are also interrogated as important themes of consideration.

6.4.1 Participatory Authority

Authority in the Catholic Church can be described as hierarchical in nature and fully centralized around the male clergy who by canon law and decree is tasked to govern and rule. However, the Igbo *Ohacracy* order presents different picture and positions through which authority is decentralized, collective, communitarian, collaborative and consultative. Authority among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order with regards to power to rule and govern is not vested in an individual. Authority is understood and practised communally with the entire Igbo *Ohacracy* nation as both rulers and subjects in different capacities. In fact, authority remains decentralized. No individual or group has the power of authority over another but the entire community who participate in the order and governance of the Igbo *Ohacracy* affairs.

In a strict sense, 'centralised' model of governance in the Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order and the Nigeria in general has been a worrying concern. It is from this concern and perspective while expressing this inflected power and authority of individuals in the institution that Barker (2000:147) states:

> …for the first time, the Church has papacy whose power is almost equal to its claims. This is certainly dangerous for the local life or the churches and will have to be addressed in the new millennium. …many of the characteristics of the papacy, including control of episcopal appointments, are very recent indeed and originated less in any scriptural or patristic basis than in the vagaries of history, and in the confusion of roles... the massive increase in centralization … followed the 1917 Code of Canon Law...

While favouring smaller groupings of governance style of local churches, ecclesiology seen and defined on such magnitude as today has not achieved its desired wishes and expectations since it negates cultures and peoples of different national values like the Igbo *Ohacracy* in view. It is from such a position that Barker (2000:148) suggests that the ministerial conception of authority in the Church has not, of course, vanished. Authority in this understanding of ecclesiology is essentially seen in the persons of the popes, the bishops and the clergy who are at the core of ecclesiastical office. Barker (2000) concludes that the difficulty with authority is not placed with persons and how the authority is implemented, but

rather, the system itself. The domination of ecclesiastical authority as in centralised structure, is able to encourage illogical use and in danger of corruption.

Indeed, the church's centralized model of power and authority in such a worldwide fashion is vulnerable to abuse and has also encouraged corruption and arbitrary use of authority by individual clergy and or groups who though are supposed to be answerable and accountable to their host communities, have instead (most of the times) referred issues to bigger bodies that cannot be easily reached or contacted for further investigation and intervention. Instead, Barker (2000:148) insists on a church that should "focus on communion... to shift the emphasis from an omnipresent papacy and Rome-centred ecclesiology to an emphasis on the local church." The local churches in this suggestion are able to live out and practice their faith in a manner to be accountable to their situations and contexts. By decentralizing authority and power, the church is able to therefore encourage personal responsibility and accountability. It is in agreement therefore with Collins, Barker (2000:149) concludes as he encourages the process of decentralization of governance and authority in the Catholic Church. Decentralised form of authority offers a whole new model for the papacy. The relationship of the pope to the rest of the Church will improve. This form of authority will revive the notion of servant leadership, by which the pope would encourage the growth of subsidiarity. The local Churches will assume responsibility for living out the faith in its own area. Barker (2000) concludes that gradually monarchical and bureaucratic centralism will die a natural death.

As already noted in chapter 3 of this study, authority and governance is identified with the ordained ministry in the Roman Catholic Church. It is to this effect and fact that Arrieta (2000:17) affirms while stressing the Vatican II documents of LG (10 and PO 2):

> …the sacred ministers receive with the sacrament of orders because of their particular mode of participating in the priestly office of Christ, namely, in *persona Christi capitis* (ministerial priesthood). This confers an ontological power essentially different from that of baptism... as leaders with functions of government... those who receive sacred orders thus assume the specific mission of tending to the pastoral functions of the Church.

This nature and practice of authority in the Catholic Church restricts and centres power and decision-making in and on the clergy. The idea of consultation and lay participation in governance of the Church is less and less emphasized. In fact, in most case even when the laity (the Parish Pastoral Council) may be consulted in meetings, the priest is said to have the veto-power to override the not so favouring opinions. Arrieta (2000:244) note citing canon

law (511) that "…the pastoral council possesses a consultative vote, and therefore its advice does not have binding value, even when such advice might be useful to the organs of governance." The pastoral council is allowed to pass information, suggestions and proposals as need may arise to the authorised personnel, namely the clergy.

Such indeed is the nature of governance in the Roman Catholic Church and leaves nothing much to desire in terms of full participation of all the faithful in Church governance. Whether ordained or not, the participatory hierarchy in the view of the study remains the way forward for the Igbo Catholic Church to be governed as to realize the Igbo *Ohacracy* model of governance among the Igbo of Nigeria. It is only natural for the Igbo to see the participatory hierarchy to take effect and offer the Igbo the opportunity to be themselves in matters of Catholic Church governance in Igbo land. It is sometimes demeaning therefore to the laity to take part in such meetings that they are fully aware are not taken serious and looks to be in fulfilment of formalities for the priests' governing; who is then vested with authority, decision-making, and commands where possible.

'Participatory hierarchy' in a Catholic Church set-up within the Igbo *Ohacracy* context would entail a community church where all members are able to participate in its governing activities. A good understanding will be in comparison with the "Chieftaincy" title conferment that is well explained in chapter 5. Chieftaincy among the Igbo *Ohacracy* is a hierarchy of recognition and acknowledgement of hard work and achievement in the community. These men and women in the Igbo decentralised system do not rule or have extraordinary authority over everyone else. Though the chiefs enjoy a level of respect and honour in the community, they continue to be acknowledged for their vital role but they do not command authority or power. This in essence means that every citizen participates in equal terms of dialogue, decision making and listening to each other in the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised governance.

Moreover, as this study demonstrates the event of the Vatican II ecumenical council opened new avenues for the laity to fully participate in the Catholic Church governance. The Councils rulings over laity participation in governance has not been fully realised since there has been set backs which have included domination by male clergy who are still hanging on to power and are unwilling to share authority as yet recommended by the Council. In any case, there are instances where liberal clergies who have gone above board to engage the lay more. In

some conservative cases, documents of Canon 511 had been used by clergy to restrict the participation of the laity in church governance. This situation calls for a review of particular rules and regulations that forbids the full participation of the non-ordained members of the Church in her governance. It is not good enough for Canon 511 to recommend the lay as consultative body in the governing authority of the Church. Rather, both the clergy and laity should be assigned duties that flow from the same Body of Faith that all belong and no one should be restricted for being ordained or not.

Moreover, the nature of authority in the modern era is no longer authoritative, commanding or hierarchical as Perkins (2004:33-34) and Cadorette (2009:87) would suggest. Rather, as this study suggests and in seeking to enhance and borrow from the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized governance, authority is understood from the perspective of calling upon the entire community to engage in mutual dialogue in decision-making, collaboration, exhortation and discernment. The value of seeking 'consensus' among members of the community which defines the entire Igbo *Ohacracy* order in this consideration, must therefore find a meaningful and valuable place in the Roman Catholic Church governance among the *Ohacracy* Igbo.

Therefore, the act of listening ability by 'the Chief with Large Ears' must be applicable in this understanding of authority in the Roman Catholic circles and governance. For the Roman Catholic Church in the Igbo or Nigerian context, it will mean share circle of authority with the laity seeking to be no-hierarchical in nature. Issues of importance (like erecting new church buildings and or changing the priest's car in the parish) cannot and should not be left to the priest alone for decision making. By so doing, authority becomes service to the community and not ruling or command of the relationship between the master and the subject. Participatory hierarchy in which all members play their vital role activities is then recommended in the Church governance of the contemporary order (Nichols 2004:124).

Moreover, it remains the understanding and affirmation of this study that indeed the Church stands to gain the professional gifts of the Laity if they are well and fully engaged in Church governance. Like in the decentralized system of the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, the Church will become richer with more lay active participants in both worship and governance. Indeed, it makes the whole difference and the process of governance becomes meaningful for adults in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic Church to be treated as such and not remain forever like infants, not able to participate in decision-making and governance within the context of their faith. It

is indeed disrespectful to lord on adults issues that would rather be meaningfully discussed and dialogued in consideration of different gifts of opinion in the community, than the authoritative nature of the clergy today in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities who would even threaten the laity with suspension if challenged for accountability and transparency in governing matters.

It therefore calls for a rethink and better understanding about the issues around governance in the Church. Of course, in line with the theory of the Chief with 'Large Ears', authority in this context must be collaborative, inclusive, dialogical, consultative and collective to carry most people along decision-making. No member of a community should be left behind in matters of governance. Hence, "*Palaver*" should be practised with no excuses for time wastage. Adequate listening and time must be given to all for self-expression and opinion to be heard in matters of decision-making. The clergy by this practice need not be bosses, rulers and commanders of every action in the community. They become rather, guide and guardian towards decisions in the community. This is done so to achieve the claim and belongingness of every project and decision to the people in the community. This is decentralization at its best, enhancing the 'family model' of Church which is at the centre of Vatican II proposal.

On the contrary, the Igbo *Ohacracy* order presents a different understanding whereby all citizens are in full participation of the governance structure and order. No one person has authority and power over the other. All who are appointed to lead in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, for example the elder-leaders council or the development Unions only does so in consultation with the entire community or group. No one manipulates or dominates others for their own selfish interests. This helps to manage and eliminate corruption and abuse in the system, as sometimes noted in the centralized system. The Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralization model encourages and calls for greater involvement of the entire community of faith, for more dialogue and consensus in decision-making for the communities to own their faith processed decisions.

6.4.2   The Active Laity

As already indicated in chapter three, the laity came to be defined as such in the 5th century, comprising of the non-ordained members of the Roman Catholic Church faithful. To apply 'political' understanding the laity may be described as the subjects to the governing body of

the elite clergy who are said to be called to cooperate and collaborate with the clergy in their divine ministerial priesthood task given by Christ in the Church. This 5th century Catholic era also saw at the Council of Chalcedon (451), the removal of lay participation of the election of bishops who would afterwards receive their fellow bishops' recommendations and consultations for new appointments (see McLoughlin 2000:125).

The 20th century Vatican II Council of 1965 rather brought some new life understanding and the notion about the laity. While describing this new event for the laity, McLoughlin (2000:126) rightly notes new forms of ministries and ways that the laity had to engage in Church administration. These include as the Vatican II used a variety of terms for the ministries of the laity – *munus, missio, charisma, apostolatus* (the most common) and *officium*. The ordained ministry is well distinct in comparison with the laity or the un-ordained members of the Church. The recognition of the laity with certain ministries like acolyte and readers, communion givers and community leaders alongside other ministries within the local church were reserved for the laity. This development in the Catholic Church was a new dawn made possible with the event of the Vatican II.

It is in conclusion while advocating for full lay participation in Catholic Church governance that Mcloughlin (2000:126) stressed further that:

> ...semi-formal expansion of ministries took place in some developing countries, where there may be pastoral assistants but no pastors. … lay facilitators or coordinators of ministry (came to be). ...parish sisters and female canon lawyers… marriage tribunals (have the lay in participation)[86]. New ministries … in the fields of education, youth service, care for the terminally ill (the hospice movement) …liturgy (music ministry, welcome ministry, etc. (the communion givers have all come in place for the lay).

This new and modern day reality that dawned on the Church was to include the laity in the activities and governance of the Church which then was solely dependent on the clergy. Prior to Vatican II, McLoughlin (2000:129) points out that, "...the official model of lay apostolate was, the laity as the outreach of the hierarchy into those areas which hierarchy cannot reach: civil society, politics, economics, the family, etc." It is also amazing to note that, it was only after the Vatican II Council that the Catholic Church laity was allowed to open the scripture to read and make effort to interpret in their own way, the meaning of the text which was strictly

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[86] The words in the brackets are mine

reserved to the all-knowing and powerful clergy. No wonder till this day the Roman Catholic laity do not so much read or know their bible. They rely on the priest for bible knowledge.

The place and role of the laity is hardly clear in the Catholic Church governance, and worst of all the laity is not consulted in the real governance issues of the local Catholic Churches unlike in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order where all citizens participate in the governance of the society. This situation has embittered the relationship between the laity and the clergy group in faith communities; and it was of this concern Hornsby-Smith (2000:14; 18) writes stating that there have also been tensions with styles of governance at the level of the relationships between clergy and laity in the life of the local Church. Autocratic style of leadership both on diocesan and parish levels can be noted. Consultations are hardly done before decisions are made by the clergy. A collaborative ministry is only seen as good 'rhetoric' in the Church since post-Vatican Council era.

This concern of lack of due consultation of adult Catholics continues to perpetuate the abuse of matured parents and adults as though they are infants in their own living faith communities. In essence, the laity could not offer their professional help and gifts to their faith communities owning to this unreasonable attitude towards the un-ordained members of the faith community. This is totally contrary to the Igbo *Ohacracy* indigenous value communities under considerations; where every adult member is given chance for self-expression, defence and accountability of their actions and decisions made in the governing of the Igbo people.

However, lay participation in the Church governance has become less and less effective in the local Catholic Church governance. Among the Igbo *Ohacracy* participatory order, all are actively involved in the day to day running of the community affairs, unlike in the Catholic governance where this participation has become lesser. It is from this bitter truth that Barker (2000:160) observes that in practice, it is not untypical to live all ones live within the same diocese without ever being asked one's opinion on any matter of diocesan or even parish significance. Sadly, people are so unused to being asked that they are a bit cynical when genuine attempts at consultation do occur – or so it appears. The non-practice of the recommendations of the Vatican II's over the lay participation in Church governance remains enigmatic struggle till this day.

Moreover, it is unacceptable to present the need of the laity roles as when the clergy needs them or may not. The roles and responsibilities of the laity must come not negotiable just as the duties and roles of the clergy. No one must become indispensable in the faith community since by baptism we are all called in the mission of Christ equally and accountable too in matters of Church governance. As Hornsby-Smith (2000:23) notes this discrepancies that exist between the ordained and laity ministry roles in the Church governance, which seem to present the clergy as 'indispensable' had to be re-evaluated in today's world of lack of ordained priests in many Churches of the world. This truth is observed in the Code of Canon Law, 230 No. iii, as Hornsby-Smith observes:

> ...when necessity and expediency in the Church require it, the Pastors … can entrust to the lay faithful certain offices and roles that are connected to their pastoral ministry but do not require the character of Orders. …When the necessity of the Church warrants it and when ministers are lacking, lay persons …can also supply for certain of their offices…

In application of the theory of chief with 'large ears' this study stressed the art of listening as a value to be inculcated into the governing structures of the Roman Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. Listening comes in various perspectives. The lay people cannot be useful only at the mercy of the clergy. The 'large ears' which the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church should have is a type that the laity should be assigned to their duties and tasks to be performed whether or not when the priest is present; as noted in the Canon 230. Adults need to be listened to as in the Igbo *Ohacracy* governing structures. No adult should be made to depend on instructions but to be responsible for the duties and tasks as assigned.

More so, the spirit of collaboration and collectivism as Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized system demonstrates, calls for communal spirit at work in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities. Individualism or unilateral decision that defines governance in the centralized system will always be frowned at by the laity or meet with resistance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic Church when the lay faithful are not taken along in decision-making. As Ezenezi (2015:214) rightly observes, the clergy, religious and lay Catholics faithful in Nigeria need to be given adequate formation in collaborative ministry which entails in depth listening of the context. Indeed such collaborative participation calls the clergy or church hierarchy to openly and actively engage the laity to fully participate in Catholic Church governance as the Vatican II encourages too.

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This is in order to ensure that all, both ordained and laity understand and appreciate that all have the right and responsibility to participate actively in the ministry and mission of the Church. It is in support of this listening to the need of the laity and adequate formation that in his Post-Synodal Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, John Paul II (1995:53-54) calls for the proper formation of the lay people to enable them perform well on their tasks in the Catholic Church; he writes:

> The laity are to be helped to become increasingly aware of their role in the Church, thereby fulfilling their particular mission as baptized and confirmed persons… Lay people are to be trained for their mission through suitable centres and schools of biblical and pastoral formation…

Finally, it will be unfortunate for the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy not to open up to the full responsibilities of the laity in Church participation. Needless to stress that the Catholic Church will only gain from the riches, gifts, expertise and talents of the lay faithful; and will have all to lose without engaging them. Transparency and openness therefore, should form the bases and point of departure of the clergy towards the engagement of the laity in the Catholic Church governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order and elsewhere.

6.4.3 Participation of Women in Governance

The position and place of women in the Igbo Catholic Church governance and elsewhere in Nigeria; is not clear and well defined as it is the case in the Catholic Church governance worldwide. As already noted in this study, women do not enjoy positions of leadership in both Igbo *Ohacracy* and the Catholic traditions. Men can be consoled since priests and deacons are male anyway, but women and especially young girls are regularly reminded how unequal they are to their male counterparts as they grow to see only men serving in this position in the Catholic Church (Uchem 2001:60-61). Women, to a large extent are therefore disenfranchised to exercise their natural rights and duties in these traditions with regard to governance.

The place and role of women in the Catholic Church raises the whole question about 'equality and emancipation' which should not even arise since every human society including the Catholic Church as an institutional society is expected to treat women equal with men. No human being should be treated differently in respecting to their sex or gender. A person's gender should not determine what position of governance they should hold in any religious and or social institutions. The subordination or 'submission' required by the patriarchal tradition and hierarchical orders should be revisited and through dialogue, must begin to

incorporate the women into the full governance role in both the Catholic and Igbo *Ohacracy* traditions as the study has demonstrated. Indeed, the domineering and the commanding attitude of the male gender are therefore questioned in reference to the governance role of women in the Catholic Church. The Church should strive towards justice, ethics and equal right in every human endeavour and cannot at the same time deny women their rightful places of governance in the Catholic domain based on their divinely given gifts. It is in the light of this understanding that Barker (2000:145) in dialogue with feminist theologians cites Johnson saying that "emphasis on relational authority characterized by mutuality, reciprocity, love and justice is consistent with the search in feminist theology for appropriate ways to speak about God in a church which many women experience as pervaded by sexism with its twin faces of patriarchy and androcentrism..."

In light of such suggestion, and observation within feminist theology, one seems to be lured towards a strong thinking of an inclusive language (Cahill 2004:144), in both verbal and cultural practices that should include 'womanhood' in theological and ecclesiological expressions. As an assumption, though this may sound that an inclusive language will enhance participation of women in the Church, the fact remains that women think/feel excluded when their counterparts men are regularly mentioned and they are hardly mentioned. Hence, Barker (2000:146) concurs with Johnson arguing:

> …women have been subordinated in theological theory and ecclesial practice at every turn... women in the Catholic community are excluded from full participation in the sacramental system, from ecclesial centres of significant decision making, law making, and symbol making, and from official public leadership roles whether in governance or the liturgical assembly. …legitimate representatives can only be male, all of which places their persons precisely as female in a peripheral role. Their femaleness is judged to be not suitable as metaphor for speech about God.

The issues raised here are very reasonable and requires honest attention from the highest levels of authority in the Catholic Church. There is need for relational community where the presence and participation of all members who makeup Church community (whether male or female) are assigned to play their roles and duties in the community without hindrance or denial (Perkins 2004:25-26). It is this way that the Church will fully reflect the "family model" of Church as has been alluded in this study. As noted in chapter 5, while discussing the Igbo *Ohacracy* institutions, all groups and individual genders are assigned their duties and responsibilities without interference or objection of another and this they perform to keep the

community together and equal. This is what has historically informed communal living of all people (male and female) in Igbo *Ohacracy*. Likewise, the Catholic Church can be thus organised on the lines of giving responsibilities by sharing cultural tradition and practices of the host communities. In this way, proper inculturation would be anticipated.

For instance, there seem to be deliberate avoidance of women's religious group consultations in the Catholic Church in favour for male religious groups who are regularly consulted then the female ones follow later. Barker (2000:147) makes this observation and thinks that in the Church government, few women hold senior posts. "…despite the fact that there are ten times as many international female congregations as there are male's, the Vatican authorities typically consult the male congregations on matters of significance pertaining to the women before referring to the women religious directly."

Important to mention therefore is the need to support women towards full participation in various roles in the life of the Catholic Church and governance in general. It is with such an understanding that Cahill (2004:141) observes Pope John Paul II in his pontificate writing in support of the women's course stating:

> …the striking interactions of Jesus with women in the Gospels, including his resurrection appearance first of all to women, and his sending of Mary Magdalene to announce the gospel, for which she has been called rightly "apostle to the apostles." …the women disciples have "a special sensitivity which is characteristic of their femininity." …men and women are equal in "dignity," ...Even for those who are not literally mothers, the special vocation of women is to love and care for others; love and sensitivity constitute a special "genius" that is the mark and fulfillment (sic) of women's feminine identity.

It is quite remarkable how women had been praised with words almost flattering, but are not included to show some of these qualities in the governing and leadership ministries in the Church. Yet, having such good words are not good enough for most women who insist on seeing these good words bear practical fruits and action in the governing system of the Church. Such fruits women contend are an open and sincere dialogue towards woman's ordination in the Catholic Church. While referring to John Paul II, Nichols (2004:123) highlights with regret how a 'ban' was placed on Catholics from discussing the ordination of women in the Catholic Church. This command document "*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*" was issued at the pontificate of John Paul II who was at the same time showering praises of the "motherly genius" qualities of women (Cahill 2004:127); but not open to the possibilities of

women ordination, and which then, does not allow women's participatory policy in the Church governance as already noted.

But the silencing of further discussion on women's participation in the ministry was already noted in the early Catholic Church fathers like Tertullian (c. 160-220) who became critical of women's participation in the Catholic ordained ministry. Citing Fiorenza, Rakoczy (2004:212) writes: "…No woman is allowed to speak in church, or even to teach, to baptize, or to discharge any man's function, much less to take upon herself the priestly office." Indeed this indicates that women have always been part of the ordained ministry but the domineering patriarchal and hierarchal tradition of the Catholic Church thrust women out of the ministry. Yet, it was at this attempt to silence women and Catholics over the discussion on the ordination of women (by John Paul II) that Barker (2000:147) gives a warning on the danger of angering and losing more educated women in the Church.[87]

Moreover, following the sex abuse scandal that had rocked and haunted the Catholic Church in the last two decades (to an extent of threatening to close dawn some dioceses in Europe and America); opinions and arguments against child abuses would suggest that this could not have happened in the high rate it did had women participated in the governing structures and policies of the Catholic Church. It is in line with this understanding that Cahill (2000:127) argue stating, "If the current sex abuse crisis in the Catholic Church urges a call for greater lay participation, it is the participation of women in decision-making roles that, above all, must be enhanced." This study could not have agreed any better! The Catholic Church in the inclusion of women in the mainstream governance structures in the Church will only gain in the professional gifts of women; and will have nothing to lose but only hierarchical and patriarchal domination in Church governance.

With regards to the Igbo *Ohacracy* women's cultural subordination, this study therefore contends that the Igbo *Ohacracy* women by their 1929 protest spoke or made strong statement against women's domination and marginalization. This therefore shows a significant demonstration of women's independence in the pre-colonial Igbo *Ohacracy* culture and

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[87] As Cahill (2004:148) noted, there are two main arguments of the Catholic Church against the ordination of women, are, that women cannot represent the male Christ on the altar and that there is an unbroken Catholic Christian tradition of the priestly ordination of men only. See the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Inter Insigniores*, 1976 (*Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood*); John Paul II, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 1994 (*Apostolic Letter on Ordination and Women*), and Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Responsum ad Dubium*, 1995 (*Response Concerning Ordinatio Sacredotalis*).

Nigeria in general. Yet, this women's tradition can still be called upon today to empower women of the Roman Catholic circles to stand up and be counted in self-defence against any male domination. A good example to cite here is that, when there are important issues to consider in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities, women's view is also consulted and given time to come up with their ideas and suggestions towards a commonly acceptable solution. Their male counterparts do not just make decisions without consulting them. Consultation as connected to the 'large ear' listening theory as used in this study becomes vital and highly valuable. Uchem (2001:50) concurs in support of this view stating:

> …the fiery strong response of these women to the erosion of their rights, conclusively, showed not only that women had political roles and rights in pre-colonial times, but also that the political institutions through which they claimed these rights were integral parts of the political tradition in Igboland... it also showed their political acumen, foresight and vision, and revealed the existence of a powerful, highly efficient, political structure…

More significance can still be attributed to this all important Igbo women's 1929 protest, namely, that women deserve inclusion to participate in the local governance in the Igbo *Ohacracy* affairs. Not only has women lost their powerful leadership positions among the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture and customs following the effect of colonialism, but it remains a national loss of women's rightful places for governance and qualities they possess in the entire national project (Uchem 2001:51). The Igbo *Ohacracy* women's traditional institutions which pre-exist Christianity had helped unite women under one purpose of self-protection and security from male patriarchal and hierarchical dominations. These women's organisations as noted in the study separate men from Igbo *Ohacracy* women who control and adjudicate their own affairs different from that of men. This defines power or authority negotiations between men and women.

No matter what men may decide in the Igbo *Ohacracy* society, women's group must have their say and equally allowed to differ from their male counterparts on issues that affect them or their children and businesses alike. It is interesting to note in one of the instances demonstrated by Uchem (2001:55) who cites Green on the issue of the independence of women among the Igbo when she argues that it is very interesting in this connection how men react to women's effective corrective measure on them:

> ...after one such sanctionary (sic) act of killing a man's life-stock, which was eating up the women's crops in Agbaja village, …she interrogated a man as to whether the culprit would not seek redress or take action against the women, he replied in the negative. He illustrated that it would be out of order to do so,

since the women's collective action was a traditionally recognized political institution. "It is the women who own us... and it is (they) who give the men food and cook it for them. What the men bring is palm wine," he explained.

The independence of Igbo *Ohacracy* women is never under any question given their powerful traditional and collective actions carried out by their women's institutions, that no man or group can question. In cases where both men and women's organisations disagree on an issue, women had always acted as a collective or group and may use 'Food or Sex' sanctions to force men into negotiation and agreement (Uchem 2001:55-56). Such is the political participatory position of the Igbo *Ohacracy* women in Nigeria and deserves an indeed high credit in comparison to the Western understanding and place of women in the Catholic Church governance.

This is the most single and powerful Unit of the women that has survived every era and turbulence and should be encouraged by every woman and Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens to protect and give security to women's right and value that is today eroding away by both political and religious forces in the contemporary era. Women in the life and cultural activities of the Igbo *Ohacracy* have always had their places and positions protected in general and are therefore called upon to use their collective power and group acting to bring the desired changes and preservation of Igbo *Ohacracy* cultural values so highly needed. More so, the Catholic Church is hereby encouraged to acquire such united front for women's issues and courses to be fully support towards women's active participation in the Church.

More importantly, the Igbo *Ohacracy* women's institutions of the contemporary era, are called upon and challenged to commission academic studies to be done about their "women's traditional institutions. This should be fully studied and documented as Igbo *Ohacracy* heritage projects. It will hence serve as future references and authentic histories of the Igbo *Ohacracy* women's institutions. The Igbo *Ohacracy* women academia must see the need for this future studies to be done by women and not men since it will give it all the need fragrance and colouring needed for a good and worthy taste and perception.

Moreover, it is crucial to note that women's participation in the governance within the Catholic Church will be highly encouraged and acknowledged for the fact that the *Ohacracy* was not be complete without meaningful and valuable participation of Igbo *Ohacracy* women. The *Ohacracy* women are highly credited for bringing along their cultural organizations that

united them in one action to check and against operation, subjugation and discrimination of men in the society. In their cooperative associations, *Ohacracy* women became independent farmers, economic self-determinant and heads of house holders different from their male counterparts.

With regards to women's education, the *Ohacracy* order at the advent of Western education embraced women's participation and therefore as a result gained more liberation and empowerment. No one can underrate the effects of education in any particular individual's life or community that brings positive changes. Affirming this truth, Uzomah (2017:4) cites Mandela noting: "It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation." Education in whatever form it comes is capable to change a situation of intimidation to courage, from naivety to knowledge, from domination or subjugation to liberation of one and from poverty to riches. Hence, the Catholic Church governance structure will be of great help to promote women (especially in the rural areas), by encouraging education for rural girls and the like in order to improve their participation in the governance; both in the Catholic Church and in the Igbo *Ohacracy* environments.

As noted in chapter five on women's participation on the *Ohacracy* order, the economic independence of Igbo *Ohacracy* women set them on high pedestal of freedom from depending on men for their livelihood. This economic liberation is a value that can also be promoted in the Catholic order so that women's course can be secured through their economic freedom. Hence, basic organisations and cooperatives should be encouraged in Christian communities to achieve this noble course to promote women's course towards economic freedom. This will reduce the heavily dependence of women on men who will always take advantage of them for depending on men. Therefore, it is meaningful to state in this study that, the Catholic Church will not be the Church that God intends her to be unless women's course and participation is fully guaranteed and realized. Womanhood must be embraced and as equals to work within the Catholic arena. This is part of the greatest gift of Vatican II Council which proclaimed the equality of humans everywhere (GS.60) noting that at present women are involved in nearly all spheres of life. "…they (women) ought to be permitted to play their part fully according to their own particular nature. It is up to everyone to see to it that woman's specific and necessary participation in cultural life be acknowledged and fostered."

And indeed, Vatican II helped to promote the course of women's issues which has given rise to "feminist themes" though critics say there haven't been enough changes regarding the status of women in the Catholic Church.

Reflecting on equality within the Catholic Church, "A discipleship of equals" is now a known expression coined or submitted by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (a feminist theologian) who in a new perspective gives a description of the Church in which women would no longer feel estranged, subjugated or dominated (Collins 1999:1). In a rather critical perspective, Fiorenza (1975:607) looks at this subjugation to be ('male') patriarchal made in order to dominate female; she writes that the feminist critique of culture has pointed out that nature and biology are not the "destiny" of women, but rather sexist culture and its socialization. She concludes thus:

> Women are denied the full range of human potentiality; we are socialized to view ourselves as dependent, less intelligent, and derivative from men. From earliest childhood we learn our roles as subservient beings and value ourselves through the eyes of a male culture. We are the "other," socialized into helpmates of men or sex objects for their desire. Journals, advertisements, television, and movies represent us either as dependent little girls (e.g., to address "baby"), as sexy and seductive women, or as self-sacrificing wives and mothers. Teachers, psychologists, philosophers, writers, and preachers define us as derivative, inferior, and subordinate beings who lack the intelligence, courage, and genius of men.

This perspective is a whole indictment on the patriarchal culture in the Roman Catholic Church and the whole social order of cultures with regards to the view of women and their value worth. This radical and feminist hard stand on how things went wrong calls for a radical rethink, both for men and women who are used to make such demeaning understanding of women. Yet, in this 21st Century Igbo *Ohacracy* order, the value of women must go beyond their sex worth and motherly roles. The dignity of every human being is not dependent on their sexuality; rather on the fact that they are human beings created in the image of God. It is the same God who so loved humans that God the Son became human like us. By so doing, God sanctified and showed commitment in the project of human beings' redemption. Women, our girls, our sisters, our wives and our mothers are indeed part of this God's project. Therefore, no culture, tradition or even religion can change this course of divine event and human history. Religion and tradition may delay it, but they will not stop the equality of both genders from being realised in the human history.

Finally, in a rather lighter note, Rakoczy (2004:217-218) goes further to reflect on the sisterly and brotherly relationship that should define discipleship other than inequality that is seen today in the Roman Catholic Church governance. She insists that:

> Persons relate to another without the structures of domination and subordination which are essential to *kyriarchy*[88]…disciples are not to be naive…but…to act without dominating power and its accompany subordination. …faith in the risen Christ, thus transformed relationships between Jews and Gentiles, masters and slaves, men and women (Gal 3:28). There is a new kinship relationship of equality since all are following the one Christ and serving one another.

6.4.4 Inculturation

As already mentioned, inculturation is at the heart of this study in relation to the desired form of ecclesiology among the Igbo *Ohacracy* within the context of the Catholic Church of the South-eastern Nigeria. Throughout, this study has shown and demonstrated the need to return to the indigenous knowledge and understanding of *Ohacracy* values and practice in riving a decentralised model of governance within the Catholic in the Igbo context. Concern has been raise over the fast eroding away of these values that have giving meaning, value and reason of existence to the Igbo *Ohacracy* nation.

The Vatican II Council was said to have initiated a new Catholic Church in the light of culture, tradition and all other sources that could enrich the Church as an institution. It is to this fact that Cadorette, (2009:224) notes that there is an abundance of cultural and religious assets that could be tapped to strengthen people's faith and commitment in the Catholic context. Time has come to discover the riches in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities in connection with the traditional Catholicism. Rather than stressing the differences in religious beliefs, their similarities between Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and African Traditional Religion (ATR) Cadorette (2009) insists, should rather be emphasised instead. Vatican II in this regard has indeed unleashed the forces of a contextualized church whose power no one could have anticipated.

Indeed, it is the gift of the Vatican II Council that so opened new doors for every Church and cultures to recover and re-establish its past and cultural values that have been neglected and overlooked by both present and past Church missionaries and authorities. It is in the light and

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[88] *Kyriarchal* means, the 'Father' power of the society.

direction of Vatican II that Cadorette (2009:38) articulates that the relationship between a religion and its surrounding cultural environment is a balancing act. If it is to make sense to people it must, to some degree, resonate with prevailing values and cultural assumptions. This relationship should be contextual. Otherwise, such religion will end being esoteric if not actually incomprehensible to the majority of people. The term and understanding that scholars of religion have used for this process of religious assimilation is 'inculturation'.

Inculturation therefore challenges and injects energy to all cultures and peoples to work towards self-realization and self-establishment in the Catholic traditions and culture. This esoteric nature and style was the early Western missionaries' presentation of Catholicism among the Igbo Catholic communities of *Ohacracy*. It is based on this fact that inculturation calls for a redress and for the Igbo to be afforded with self-expression and realization in worship. As though the Vatican II opened the door for a contextual Church to be built through the Council, it has become obvious that a new era has dawned in the Catholic context. To this fact, Cadorette (2009:194) writes arguing:

> …John XXIII intended to draw on the "new theology" and emerging forms of contextualized Catholicism to help the church chart a course for the future, counterbalancing the excessive centralization that was holding the church captive to the past. Vatican I had been about the papacy and the threat of modernity. Vatican II would be about the church as a community of believers grappling with the future…

But, in all that the study had discussed on inculturation and all its intricacies as a project, it is clear that the Vatican II project have achieved quite a lot. However, the process of inculturation has also received some serious drawbacks and resistance against any new form of Catholicism even among the Igbo *Ohacracy* circles. Most notably of this resistance are the Clergy of the Catholic Church to a large extent. Ebelebe (2009:148) notes that the clergy have resisted any change and or compromise in governance positions to involve and let the laity participate in governance. In particular, women are not afforded roles to play to feel part of the new order of participatory governance in Catholic Church.

Acknowledging of the progress of inculturation that has been made in this regard to decentralize governance and let all participate in the Church, Veneranda (2011:475) points out a new form of leadership among women in the Catholic Church. This seeks to reinforce values such as "cooperation, inclusion, respect for differences and collaborative decision-

making." He therefore concludes stressing that further progress has been made in the leadership participation of women as he writes:

> …Chief executives of hospitals and Catholic social service agencies; as chancellors, archivists, and members of marriage tribunals in dioceses. An increasing number of women hold positions of national authority in the Catholic Church. On the parish level, women's leadership is found in pastoral ministry and religious education, in teaching and administration in schools, in ministry to the elderly and justice activities.

Indeed, to improve the participation of women with leadership position in the Catholic Church in an Igbo *Ohacracy* context would therefore serve the role as to win back women's confidence and those who are disenchanted in the Church. This strong point of inculturating leadership in the Igbo Catholic Church will also make the Church an equal ground of gender participation including women of course (Veneranda 2011:477). However, this same value will equally serve the same meaning in the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture. As noted in chapter 5 in this study, the significance of the Igbo symbols of the *Oji* and the *Ofo* in the unity and leadership roles among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities was well stressed and noted. Women's role in these symbols is highly minimised. It is therefore, the opinion of this study that such highly regarded symbols and their significance in the Igbo culture must open for equal gender role or representation. Igbo women cannot be prevented in such powerful symbols while men's place is well protected and secured. The Igbo *Ohacracy* model of common participatory value is rather challenged to open up and listen to the calls of the womanhood asking for equality. The theory of the 'large ear' listening used in this study therefore calls for valuable hearing.

Based on this understanding, Igbo *Ohacracy* symbolic practices of *Oji* and *Ofo* should find meaningful application in the Catholic centralized model in clarifying and deepening the understanding of Church theology. *Ofo* as staff of leadership finds anchor on truth in leadership in the decentralized model and will serve a meaningful purpose in the centralized Catholic governance. *Oji* as an element of welcoming and sincerity to a gathered community in the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized practice will serve the same great deal for understanding Catholic symbols or purpose for the centralized Catholic *Ohacracy* communities. *Oji* and *Ofo* symbols have powerful and compelling meanings in understanding the Igbo *Ohacracy* religion or culture in general as shown in chapter 5. The Catholic centralised community will do well by utilizing these two most important symbols in the Igbo decentralized system. As local objects, these two symbols hold communal and participatory means of communication

and understanding. By using *Oji* and *Ofo* in the form of inculturation to explain symbols like the Lamb, the Altar, the Cross and other important symbols in the centralized system the Igbo *Ohacracy* will be at home with these other 'foreign' expressions.

From another perspective, more actions need to be taken towards the realization of inculturation values in the Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. As Obiwulu (2003:9) rightly suggests, when inculturation takes root, "...there is then dialogue between the Christian message and African culture. Christianity then begins to make use of the cultural values in speaking to the people, using their own culture and tradition (including symbols and signs, practise that makes sense and speak to the Igbo *Ohacracy* order)."[89] In essence, the values of Christianity which is based on the love of life and fulfilment of joy as Jesus' fundamental and basic role in human existence is concerned (John, 10:10); would have nothing in contradiction to how and where this is to be achieved. For this study therefore, inculturation remains the where and how this full joy of life is fulfilled among the Igbo *Ohacracy* in consideration.

The culture, customs and traditions of the Igbo *Ohacracy* order is central and speaks reason and sense of this realisation as John Paul II (1995:60) who notes that, "...for the Incarnation of the Son of God, precisely because it was complete and concrete, was also an incarnation in a particular culture." Not until the Catholic governance understands this basic fact and truth, the conflict of the "two worlds" in the life of the Igbo people will forever remain visible. This conflict is well expressed in Obiwulu (2003:9) stating:

> … (an) Option would be in the direction of a reconciliation of the two major forces battling for the African soul namely, Western influence and Indigenous tradition. It is a fact of African life that these two forces have confronted themselves on the Continent and that they are presently unreconciled.

Of course, this does not mean that there will be not reconciliation between these two; but some serious thinking and hard work need to be done by both Catholic and Igbo *Ohacracy* indigenous models. Inculturation is the way forward to make this reconciliation a reality.

Overall, recognition must be given to the official Catholic Church in particular in the pontificate of John Paul II in 1995 when he issued his '*Ecclesia in Africa; Post-synodal*

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[89] The words in brackets are mine.

Apostolic Exhortation, The Church in Africa and its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000' upon which he encouraged new forms of inculturation in the African Church. In chapter 3 of '*Ecclesia in Africa*,' he discusses evangelization and inculturation and, he encouraged the translation of the Bible into local languages to enable young people of African Catholic Churches to have access to the Word of God (John Paul II 1995:58). Noting inculturation as an urgent priority in the life of particular Churches (dioceses), John Paul II (1995:59) saw "a firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa; and as one of the greatest challenges for the Church in the Continent in the eve of the Third Millennium." Concluding John Paul II (1995:61) taught that "inculturation" as a form of theology must "of the Good News take on all authentic human values, purifying them of sin and restoring to them their full meaning."

At this juncture one wonders why the entire project towards inculturation is almost non-existent in today's Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities. While other parts of Africa and the world, the Church has moved on with embracing the gifts of culture and tradition as part of God's own revelation among peoples yet the Igbo *Ohacracy* Church is still very far from achieving this reality and the realization of the theory among its own people. As Ebelebe (2009:190) attributes this 'lazy' and 'I do not care' attitude from the bishops and clergy of the Igbo land Catholic Churches, they do it to please and impress the Roman authorities to be credited and in the name of promotion of "orthodox doctrine and approved liturgical practices." It was while attributing this praise to the then pontiff, John Paul II's approval of the Nigerian clergy when he visited Nigerian Catholic Church in 1982. Ebelebe (2009:190) emphasizes on this pathetic situation stating:

> ...Such unflinching and uncritical attachment to orthodoxy is why it is difficult to find an Igbo bishop who has ever been on the wrong side of the Vatican tendency of dampening positive statements on inculturation with several notes of caution on the difficulties and the dangers, real or imagined, associated with this process. In this the Vatican has found willing allies in the Igbo bishops, who have been more than willing to let the possibility of endangering the faith be a deterrent to serious and genuine inculturation.

As though the Pontiff cautions against mistakes, quick action and preservation of the Apostolic Tradition, some African theologians like Uzukwu (1996:62) would think otherwise and thus proposes an African ecclesia that should not be worried or ashamed of mistakes which in the early Christian era, heresies, played a meaningful role in helping the Church emerge in her orthodoxy practices and teachings. It is in agreement with John Paul II that Ebelebe (2009:147) sees inculturation as a base of authenticity of the gospel in Africa writes

and speaks about this concept as a movement towards full evangelization. "…It seeks to dispose people to receive Jesus Christ in an integral manner. It touches them on the personal, cultural, economic and political levels so that they can live a holy life in total union with God the Father, through the action of the Holy Spirit."

Therefore, highlighting ways centralized model of the Catholic Church could apply inculturation to achieving decentralized governance as valued in the *Ohacracy* indigenous model becomes a concern to be fulfilled. Principally, this calls for the clergy and the leadership of bishops in the Igbo Catholic Churches to encourage regular dialogue, consultation and emphasize the value of 'palaver' in the Catholic circles. A number of established *Ohacracy* and the Catholic Church's practises should be recognized and adopted in this process.

Moreover, as noted in chapter 5 (No.5.7.2 under the *Igba-Ndu* ritual, binding life together) this section will discuss and of course recommend through inculturation theology on the needed values it communicates to the Igbo Catholic communities. First, in some Igbo *Ohacracy* communities, this mending life ritual is known as *Igba-oriko*, meaning that the individuals or parties in conflict put their hands into the same dish to eat; signifying the sharing of life. Not only has this developed in the contemporary era referred to as '*ala di mma,*' which means, 'may the land be well or good;' it is also practised by welfare organizations or unions to welcome their new members into their circles and demand of good behaviour from them (see Uzukwu, 1997:282).

Though the *Igba-ndu* ritual is Christianized among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order (Uzukwu 1997:280), it must be noted that the difference in this practice between the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised system with the Catholic Church centralised model are seen as two different ways of governance. 'Sin', 'Offence' or 'Conflict' that occurs and requires one to seek forgiveness in the community or between two parties are notably and clearly understood and treated differently by the two orders of the decentralised Igbo *Ohacracy* and the centralised Roman Catholic. While the Catholic practice of 'the sacrament of Confession' is between the offender and the community (faithful) representative in this case the priest; who listens and gives absolution thereby pronouncing absolution or forgiveness on the offender and the sin is absolved, (See Hirmer 2007:122-125; CCC 1421, 1467 and 1445).

In further consideration, the Western dawn of individualism which has given rise to the style of this sacrament has come under criticism since it does not consider the decentralised nature of sin and forgiveness among the Igbo *Ohacracy* common participatory governance. Therefore, the privatization of sin and forgiveness that has negatively impacted the community is not only a problem but a questionable practise within the Igbo *Ohacracy* context that the centralised order still needs to reconsider and adopt a more indigenous model. Though this sacrament is practised very much in the Roman Catholic order, its relevance has diminished tremendously especially among Igbo citizens in the city parishes of the Catholic Church. Hence, questions have been raised over the worth and value of the sacrament of reconciliation in the Catholic Church today among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people in evaluation of its value and worth. The call for the full Christianisation and adoption of *Igba-ndu* ritual among Igbo Catholics has grown even louder since offence and sin has grown much bigger as individuals offend the community and goes in private to confess and be forgiven without the involvement of those he or she had offended. This calls for a renewal and review of the practise so to encourage public participation.

Yet, the role or place of 'shame' has not been properly considered in the decentralised system among the Igbo people where the Roman Catholic order operates. In the decentralised order of the Igbo *Ohacracy*, 'shame' mechanism has been used to deter people from frequent offenses in the community. Hence, when the understanding of sin and forgiveness is decentralised as in the *Igba-ndu* order, it does enhance meaningful participation unlike the centralised system which does not involve nor has community effect on the individual offender. This 'shame' factor in the Igbo *Ohacracy* where the individual offender experiences has an implication on people whereby they are eventually deterred from regular offensive behaviour that would prompt the *Igba-ndu* ritual through which one's offensive practices are made public resulting to individual shame and his/her generations to come. Though the centralised order has shame element, it is much of an individual shame effect with the one confession is made, in this case, the priest. Meanwhile, that of the decentralised order where there are more lay participation and the effect therefore differs on the individual offender and the community at large who are in participation.

In the Igbo *Ohacracy* practice therefore, sin and the search for forgiveness is a community affair. The community as noted in the *Igba-ndu* ritual (an equivalence of confessions and forgiveness in the Catholic Church) are fully involved owning to the understanding that one

person's ill or sin also affects the community relationship with each other thereby becoming a collective issue, especially in the African context. Seeking forgiveness therefore over a known ill happening or sinfulness act is sought for in the presence of the offender, the offended and the community or the assembly for sin to be absolved or forgiven (Uzukwu 1997:282). Forgiveness in this sense becomes a process; and it also provides us with a dialogue perspective where by the two conflicting parties are engaged in practical talks until an amicable agreement has been reached. The *Igba-ndu* ritual has therefore become a means of healing amending relationship among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order.

By this common participation in the institution of life mending concept among the Igbo *Ohacracy* model of governance, the process achieves peace, stability, respect for life and property by this single act of reconciliation. *Igba-ndu* therefore adds enormous value and meaning to the entire Igbo *Ohacracy* population. This reconciliatory concept will therefore support the Vatican II era of peace and reconciliatory search among conflicting nations of the world and the Igbo *Ohacracy* in particular. This hence reintegrates separated individuals back to the communities' thereby re-establishing harmony and coexistence (see CCC 1443); without which a community collapses.

In essence, whenever the 'ritual meal' (as *Igba-ndu/iri-oriko* as is sometimes referred to) is celebrated, peace, joy and happiness, unity and harmony are the reached targets. The re-enforcement of life bond that exists in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order or communities in support of all that cohabit in the land is always the focus. The participation of one and all in the very act of 'sharing meal' is a symbolic gesture of re-enforcement of the life to all. A covenant of this nature is reached to respect all who live in the land; and one dare not think of breaking the agreement made in the ritual meal. The *Igba-ndu* as an Igbo institution of life mending, serves a great deal to improve the indigenous Igbo *Ohacracy* life towards progress and improvement.

Moreover, one most vital issue this section has presented is the sacrament of reconciliation as discussed earlier, is by nature and practice 'individualistic' and 'privatized' in the centralized Catholic Church model of governance. However, by the application and introduction of inculturation dialogue in the *Ohacracy* decentralized model this sacrament can acquire more meaning and understanding for the Igbo Catholics. Sin and reconciliation in the Igbo *Ohacracy* spirituality has four (4) dimensional views. It separates and affects the individual

sinner, the community, the ancestors (spirits) and the Great Spirit *Chukwu*. Hence, the communal or decentralized perspective or understanding of sin when it occurs in the community is as a result of its communal perspective. This of course depends on the degree or level of taboo[90] (*Aru*) of any offence.

This therefore means that sin/offence is not privatized in the decentralized model of governance. Offences receive a community attention that the offender is made to confess to the community, asks the forgiveness from the ancestors by offering sacrifice and finally *Chukwu* (Great Spirit) is called to heal the land again after the murder pollution of the offence. The offender is reintegrated again in the community after the offence is confessed and forgiven on communal level. By so doing the community participate in the resolution and forgiveness of an offender who becomes a brother/sister again to the communal family after all the cleansing rituals are performed in the presence of all.

This way of communal participation and decentralizing offence and reconciliation will make more sense to the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities than the privatized form which has in most cases lost sense of meaning in the Igbo communities. Hence, the practice of a sinner going to the priest in private to confess a communal issue all by him/herself does not hold much meaning to the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized model of practice. One can therefore see why the sacrament of penance (reconciliation) is challenged till this day among the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities. This way of understanding sin and offence and method of reconciliation among the Igbo *Ohacracy* checks regular occurrence of sin/offence in the society. Sin also brings shame and expensive to resolve among the Igbo *Ohacracy* model which serve as deterrence to anyone thinking, tempted or planning to commit any crime or offence in the society. Hence, the centralized Catholic model of governance will need an honest inculturation dialogue with the Igbo decentralized model of governance for meaning, understanding and clarity around sin and forgiveness.

In effect, the place of *Igba-ndu* in the Igbo *Ohacracy* spirituality cannot be over emphasized here. Yet, the Catholic centralized model can listen and dialogue with this practice taking note

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[90] A sin of taboo known as *Aru* in Igbo language is a high degree offence and is said to have been committed against the Mother Earth, the guide and ruler of all who dwell on it. Offences like murder and incest are part of such sins that the land abhors and usually attracts sacrifices for purification or sanctification of the land where such rituals like *Oriko* or *Igba-ndu* is utilized and the offender is reunited with the community again. See also chapter 5 for further clarifications.

how it is applied and the communal need for the ritual of reconciliation among the decentralized model.

Moreover, as the theology of inculturation entails addressing culture and flourishes in bringing about a re-communication of the Gospel and Christian life in terms of the cultures addressed (Shorter 1995:94). It is based on such understanding of inculturation that this study appreciates theology when it is said to be contextual, liberation and or feminist. This is so because every theology can be better understood from a point of view of its context. Context gives birth to theology. It is therefore inappropriate to import a theological view or a solution from one context with a hope to solve a problem in another. The pre-Vatican II era of Catholic theology was centred on uniformity of culture for all people. The post Vatican II however was rather too critical towards this uniformity move in favour of contextual or liberation theology in Latin America, Africa and even in Europe. Besides inculturation, this study also calls into consideration the use of 'indigenization' and or 'localization' to describe the need for decentralization of Catholic Church centralized governance. As Ezenezi (2015:237) will emphasize, theology of inculturation represents an active encounter between the Gospel message and culture. Inculturation remains a call by Vatican II to all people to make the Gospel incarnate in the lives and culture of the people though it uses the terms 'accommodation' and 'adaptation' other than inculturation (GS.58).

The *dibia* fraternity will also serve a great deal of measure in this regard towards the process of inculturation. As Western medical care has become too exorbitant for the poor masses, the attitude of the *dibia* towards healing among the Igbo *Ohacracy* should be inculcated in the Catholic centralized model among the *Ohacracy* communities. The *dibia* as presented in chapter 5 do not charge any particular cost for healing the sick, but depends on the gift given to him by the sick or the relatives of the patient, is a welcome value to be instilled in the Catholic Church centralized tradition within the Igbo community. The Catholic Church medical facilities among the *Ohacracy* communities should not serve as profit making ventures but as lifesaving services to humanity. As though profit has taken the centre stage in health provision in today's Catholic central model, a consideration for the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized *dibia* attitude towards health care provision must take course by instituting inculturation.

Moreover, the values enumerated in the Development Unions/Associations cannot be over emphasized either. With regards to inculturate and decentralize education for most Igbo *Ohacracy* individual families, the centralized Catholic governance can borrow a leaf too. The effort of these Igbo *Ohacracy* Development Associations localizing the effort of the first Igbo communities that built community schools to attract missionaries in their domains was good inculturation in decentralizing education. So too, the centralized Catholic model is challenged by these Development Associations to provide scholarships, encourage education of the poor to alleviate ignorance and poverty among the Igbo decentralized order. The incarnation (inculturation) of these practices among the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities will of course incarnate Christ in faith and action, thereby enhancing communal living of all within the "family model" of the Church.

Of course, the hierarchical Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* today has been too centred on the clergy influence and domination as already mentioned. The clergy would not give up or open to share their power and leadership positions in the Church which *Ohacracy* or decentralization model challenges in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. Hence, by sharing these positions of leadership and governance, inculturation as in the Igbo consensus system will be realized. This will encourage meaningful laity participation in a centralised model of the Catholic Church.

On the other hand, one can indeed begin to understand why the inculturation theory remains in the papers and books of Igbo libraries and never practised in the assemblies of the faithful Igbo Catholic Churches if real efforts are not made to redress these anomalies among the Igbo. It is to this raw and uncomfortable truth that Ebelebe (2009:190) cites Uzukwu Elochukwu bitterly concluding:

> … The near absolute power, which the bishop and parish priest exercise in Igboland, is unknown in Igbo traditional culture, where consultation and consensus is the essence of leadership and authority. The "Igbo do not tolerate autocracy," yet "an imported Roman and feudal autocracy, which dominates the present ministerial practice of the Roman Catholic Church" has been imposed on the Igbo people.

One may raise the concern on whether inculturation theology has any limit? Indeed, the Vatican II should and must be commended for opening up the new doors for meaningful and valuable cultures of the traditional and modern world be recognised. As a good venture in the Vatican II ecclesiology, inculturation should be embraced with sincerity. Its limitation should

be considered in terms of its aspects and style of introduction into the Roman Catholic Church. Proper information and adequate preparation must be made to avoid commotion and disruption of the Roman Catholic Church's tradition that has come and survived millennia. For this reason the Igbo Catholicism and particular Churches must set up action groups whose duty and task will be to identify and study valuable and meaningful local practises for recommendations and adoptions as Roman Catholic practise in the local context.

Finally, for many Catholics among the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized model, it seems inculturation is more or less limited to the renewal of some elements of liturgy found with the use of vernacular, the beating of drums and other local instruments, the use of local made arts and liturgical vestments and in ceremonies in the Church. Inculturation must go beyond liturgical activities if Christ of the Gospels would be incarnate in African contexts. It is good to have made the efforts to begin, but these alone, are not good enough. Inculturation must speak to real life situations of the Igbo *Ohacracy* along the streets and poor homes. Anything less than addressing and improving the real situation of the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic faithful would remain rhetoric statements that do not address the reality on the ground.

6.4.5   Religion (Faith) and Culture

Religion and culture is two legged pot of inter-changeable functions. These two are much related in function and idea. In this entire study I have shown how close religion is interwoven within the Igbo *Ohacracy* culture of governance. Religion forms part of culture and therefore cannot be separated from the daily life activities of the Igbo community. Culture is prior to and is all embracing which includes religion. Cadorette (2009:31) concurs with this position stating: "We are born in a particular culture and historical moment that shape our self-understanding, creating lenses through which we see reality but also limiting what we see."

Religion, he says "evolve and sometimes die." Religion in this understanding exists and forms part of the values of a culture. This distinction is important as Cadorette (2009:139) shows that the Jesuits who evangelized the Asians respected their culture as not to impose the Christian religion on them. Having realized this difference between culture and religion, the former is seen as medium and the later, message. He concludes thus that "Imposed Christianity could never be real Christianity. Belief had to be understood and affirmed as true,

not forced on people trying to mollify their conquerors for the sake of survival" (Cadorette 2009:139).

Moreover, this simply means that Christianity as a message therefore, needs a culture in order for it to be transmitted to the hearers or would be converts. In this case, cultures remain the vehicle and means through which Christianity could be transmitted. The message will not make more sense or remain meaningful if the true culture of the receiver is not used to transmit the message. Through this analogy, one can easily deduce that the Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people has to a large extent lacked true or proper channel of communication since much of the Igbo *Ohacracy* cultural symbols and institutions were disregarded at the point of evangelization. It is in this light and such circumstance that Gittins (2016:3) describes evangelization which has destroyed cultures of people in the name of Christ as "sinful." While critically looking at this he writes observing:

> …The Christianizing of culture is not Romanization or Curialization (sic), nor indoctrination or religionizing (sic), colonization or subjugation of culture. It is the "Jesus Christing" (sic) of culture. The danger is that instead of God's revelation through Jesus touching the lives of every people, the Christian religion (itself culturally compromised), with rules and restrictions, doctrines and dogmas will be what people of culture encounter. The challenge is to ensure that Christ and God's revelation truly encounters a culture, so as to energize, redirect, humanize and divinize (sic) it; this has rarely happened (Gittins 2016:4).

As noted earlier, both religion and culture need each other and none of the entities can fully live up to its expectations without the other. Indeed it is absurd to think of a religion without culture or any culture without religion. As Gittins (2016:3) affirms reasons for non-separation of these two, he notes that culture is the concretization of human existence, so faith needs culture in order to be born. Faith in this sense becomes a life waiting to be born. When eventually faith comes to birth, it has to be in a human culture.

As this study has argued, it was wrong, that at the encounter between the Igbo *Ohacracy* people and the Western form of Christianity, a false belief and wrong notion was ensued. This came about when the Igbo *Ohacracy* order was defined as lacking culture or valuable religion. This regrettable idea underestimated and undermined the Igbo *Ohacracy* religion and culture in general. In what Gittins (2016:3) called "Cultural Christianity" was instead introduced among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. The centralized system used a foreign culture to introduce

Christianity in such a manner that did not speak meaningfully or holistically to the indigenous people of the Igbo *Ohacracy*.

This impacted negatively on the decentralized order when the 'large ear' listening theory was disregarded by the foreign religion. It imposed a system whereby the priest (clergy) made decisions without consulting the people. Also since the political and religious fronts worked hand in hand, the abolition of 'Village Assembly' which afforded each family a representation in community gatherings, for the 'Warrant Chief' system, an individual authority who made arbitrary arrests and decisions in the community was a taboo the Igbo *Ohacracy* never knew. The *Ohacracy* consultative forum was lost to the centralized autocratic individuals assigned by the new system to give orders to the people. The Igbo decentralized order was indeed corrupted with individualism, selfishness and self-centredness. Communalism was abrogated for individualism and community lives fail apart. Indeed things fall apart! It was based on such notion and practices that Obiwulu (2003:8) cites Uzukwu regrettably writing:

> …the deep-seated exploitative colonial program along with the then European prejudice against Africans failed to be lucidly examined by the missionaries. Consequently, the African was treated as having neither culture nor religion nor social, economic, or political values worth preserving. The change of the identity of the African person meant, in practice, the abandonment of the indigenous culture, values, and religion in order to embrace those of the West.

Moreover, both culture and religion as we have examined in the study remain natural order and cannot be denied to a particular individual or group Cadorette (2009:208). Though the Igbo *Ohacracy* were denied of their religion and culture in the past, the emergence of the Vatican II Council has clear teaching on the dialogue that must take place between Catholicism and other religions and cultures to find a common ground and basis for understanding. First, such cultural basis in the decentralized *Ohacracy* system includes consultative value. By this cultural value the Igbo has built a community of dialogue. This means an assembly listening to each other in order to resolve a case or issues presented. Consultation of this type has helped the Igbo decentralized system to build trust and community that is united in one action towards common good. Consultation also creates a space for full participation of all community members towards a target or goal to be reached.

Second, another important cultural basis to be discussed here is consensus value. The Igbo decentralized system is a type constructed on such strong foundations of consensus in order to facilitate progress and common vision. The decentralized *Ohacracy* order seeks progress and

peaceful coexistence through consensus. To achieve this process the Igbo *Ohacracy* applies the wisdom of 'Palaver' through which all representative in a dialogue gathering is listened to and offered equal chance for opinions to be expressed and evaluated. Consensus remains an important value to be instilled in the centralized cultural system to re-ignite peaceful coexistence among the *Ohacracy* Catholic communities of this day.

Finally, another religio-cultural value that will aid the centralized Catholic order among the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized system is communalism. Communalism is the root of *Ohacracy* order in Igbo communities and therefore holds a very vital value for the meaning and worth of *ohacracy* culture. Communalism as a value in the decentralized order is a collective action determined by common shared interest for the good of a given people or community. Individualism negates communalism thereby promoting self-centredness and selfishness in the community. The centralized Catholic system will become relevant today among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order if these values mentioned herewith are applied to enhance the decentralized Igbo *Ohacracy* system in the spirit of dialogue as encouraged by Vatican II.

Whenever and where this dialogue takes place, as already mentioned through the undertaking of inculturation in the Catholic Church; attention and sincere dialogue is required so as to reach a meaningful and reasonable outcome. As the Catholic Church engages other religious beliefs in their cultural backgrounds therefore, it is highly commendable that there is openness towards other truths of indigenous peoples of the world including the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria. While commending this new understanding, Cadorette (2009:211) notes this fact of respect towards other religions and cultures and the official declaration on this new expansive perceptive of the human search for meaning and in her new relationship with the rest of mankind emphasize that:

> …The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. It has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from its own teaching, nevertheless reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women.

Having discussed the intertwined nature of religion and culture as relates to the inculturation process, the following section of the chapter evaluates the complex of Igbo *Ohacracy* indigenous model of participatory governance in the Igbo Catholic Church of South-eastern Nigeria.

6.5   Critical Evaluation of the Study

Indeed this study has sought to bring to light the antiquity of aristocracy, monarchy, socio-cultural perspectives of the Igbo republic and the paraphernalia of the Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria with regards to governance. This study has also investigated the kingship and the absence of absoluteness. It has also interrogated the governance role of the clergy and the absoluteness of the pontiff. The study has examined the non-participatory role of the laity; the conflict in relation to gender roles with special reference to women and the unfailing inter-dependence of the indigenous Igbo perception of *Ohacracy* content of life and its worldview have all been considered. However, as Ifemesia (2002:116) also concurs, we have seen instances of the latter-day abandonment of age-long cultural humane values, beliefs and practices in favour of other practices perceived as more fashionable than cultural solidarity practised in the traditional Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. These are true and inevitable changes every culture and tradition goes through. Even so, it is evidently clear in the words of Nzimiro (1971:177) who argues:

> …change has not penetrated equally to all sections of culture and belief and the adoption of a new set of customs and beliefs in one context does not necessarily imply a corresponding modification of custom and belief in another. A change in one aspect of social system may alter one institution completely, modify yet another, and leave a third relatively unaffected.

This analysis captures the true state of Igbo *Ohacracy* order and the Catholic Church as the study has demonstrated. Notably, this is not only in relation to the Igbo *Ohacracy* people's situation as illustrated in this study but equally with other human cultures that are open to assimilation and reformation at any point of foreign cultural and religious contact. Yet, the Igbo *Ohacracy* people have a natural obligation to hold fast to those values and the cultural heritage that has defined them as noted in the study. It might as well be for the Igbo *Ohacracy* people to take a close and serious look at some of their present-day social, political and religious problems in the light of their cultural heritage and practice. For there is the possibility that these problems, including cases of misunderstanding among themselves and of themselves by others, could be referred, in some degree, to their unhelpful departure from some of those ancestral concepts and usages by which they had lived and made good through time.

Ifemesia (2002:117) continues to observe that this deviation has evidently contributed to the glamorization of such peculiar phenomena and behaviour as being kingless and restiveness,

individualism and materialism, assertiveness and aggressiveness – manifestations which have not always resonated well for peace and harmony among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people themselves, nor between them and their neighbours. Perhaps the Igbo *Ohacracy* people may be able to improve their present position in many respects by picking up more of the time-honoured threads from where they were left off in the not-too-remote past. In a rather clearer insight, the traditional Igbo *Ohacracy* cultural solidarity highlighted in this study has a lot of mishaps and misgivings to correct against the Igbo *Ohacracy* indigenous people at their point of encounter with the centralized Catholic Church governance. These influences whether negative or positive have all been highlighted with regards to governance.

Indeed, the study has provided us with enough information and evidence of internal socio-political, educational, religious, economic and communal cohesion, of spontaneous and sustained physical and mental, emotional and spiritual historical orders of governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people of South-eastern Nigeria. More so, all these have focused upon human interests and values; upon empathy, consideration, compassion and orderliness vested upon humankind wellness. Indeed, the investigations and findings presented in this study, clearly demonstrate the complexity and profundity of the Catholic Church governance and the relevance of the *Ohacracy* Indigenous model of participatory governance among the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria.

In the section that follows, this study considers some of the challenging factors and aspects of Igbo *Ohacracy* in the current context of the Catholic Church governance as noted above. These need some urgent attention since they epitomize a positive or negative connotation other than common good as it also applies socio-cultural analysis to dissect the decentralized or centralized models of governance.

With the notion of sickness and cure as noted earlier, the story in this era has completely changed. The focus has changed from health care to 'money making' venture or practice. It should be noted though that there are communities and states that provide free health care services to its citizens, this must be commended and applauded since vital amenities such as health is available to the poor rural population in enhancing rural and common health cohesion in the society.

Instances of communities or countries where the sick and elderly people die while waiting for unaffordable medical treatment are condemned by the value of common good system that has prevailed through the history of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people as outlined in this study with regards to the dibia fraternity and the Catholic missionaries who went out all their ways to save the lives of the Igbo people. It is therefore a scandal on the face of the Igbo *Ohacracy* and the African continent in general, so rich in natural resources and yet we hear and read about people dying of curable diseases such as Malaria, Tuberculosis and others… all the time. The "common good" vision is reserved for the so called heads of states and their cabinet cohorts who are flown overseas in search of cures for their own diseases when they fall ill, at the expense of their country's ordinary tax payers who die from mere malaria attacks. This is disheartening and should be discouraged by all means.

Needless to emphasize that the contemporary Nigerian leaders including those from the *Ohacracy* order have not lived up to expectations with regards to health care provision. These have resulted to seeking for better health care services abroad than provide universal health care services for all citizens. The attitude observed seem to reflect high magnitudes 'individualistic and selfishness' that is so prevalent in the centralized systems. In the spirit of dialogue, the decentralized order is challenged by the Christian tradition to commit to communal or community life; a life defined by brotherhood and sisterhood. Hence, the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized order calls for a redress and proposes the communal and collaborative attitude towards the Catholic Church provision of medical care in today's *Ohacracy* society. The early missionaries among the Igbo *Ohacracy* provided health care for the poor masses whiling introducing Catholicism. Yet, over a century and half afterwards, the Igbo *Ohacracy* still struggles over health care. The situation therefore calls for adequate attention towards the provision of a universal health care service for all.

The 'Chieftaincy' title is also an issue of concern which has mutated due to the influences of the centralized system over the centuries among the Igbo *Ohacracy* needing an urgent attention. As noted in chapter 5, the chieftaincy titles no longer serve their original purpose for promotion of adequate food production, recognition, promotion of ethics and good morals and promotion of hard work and invention among others in the Igbo *Ohacracy* society. Due to the negative influences of the centralized system among the Igbo Roman Catholic communities, the chieftaincy titles have either been declared evil or been discouraged

altogether. Nonetheless, there has been extensive change in purpose and value of titles among the decentralized Igbo communities.

The production of food among the Igbo *Ohacracy* is an old tradition as noted in chapter 4. The use of land in cultivation is seen as a spiritual exercise among the decentralized order and gives great meaning since God after creation made humans as stewards of creation through tilling of the land (Gen. 2:15). Indeed the Igbo *Ohacracy* has utilized the chieftaincy institution to progress the need for food production. The activity on the land has a divine call and duties to sustain human life around the *Ohacracy* land. It is part of this participatory therefore that chieftaincy becomes a duty and responsibility to all Igbo citizens to support and promote chieftaincy titles to continue to promote the values surrounding this great cultural practice.

Hence, the corruption that has invaded or surrounds the title of recognition of individual and community's achievements among the decentralized *Ohacracy* calls for an urgent attention for the reinstatement of the original purpose and value. Such corruption as offering money or soliciting for some, by the so-called Igbo Kings must be discouraged and discontinued. Young people who need social recognition should be made to know that it is only true and hard work that individuals and communities are recognized and acknowledged for their outstanding achievements in the *Ohacracy* societies. Therefore, the interference of the centralized system in this case should be redressed as both the centralized and decentralized systems seek grounds of mutual understanding and reconciliation. Such Igbo *Ohacracy* high valued cultural practice cannot be under estimated for its capabilities.

Considering the unique intention of the Igbo *Ohacracy Mmanwu*, the Masquerade institution of sports and recreational development (namely entertainment, policing and serving as law enforcement agent etc…), the young Igbo *Ohacracy* are challenged by this institution. As the future of any society is defined by life and growth of the youth, the *Mmanwu* remains an institution that dares both the young and old to foster and forward the future of the *Ohacracy* decentralized nation. This institution targets the youth to explore and empower the young to recreate and be creative towards the growth and sustainability of the future of the *Ohacracy* decentralized order. As Vatican II supports such opinion, the youthful initiative can be very explosive, powerful and stands out as very important influence in the modern society (see Vt. II *Apostolicam Actuositatem,*-AA.12). Hence when the young Igbo *Ohacracy* unites their

effort towards securing the *Ohacracy* nation the future will be secured and the Church will be proud of its young people who are united in good course of unity and common good.

Of course, the *Mmanwu* institution has played a positive role towards the progress of Catholicism among the Igbo. Mbabuike and Salamone (1995:169) observe that contextual and cultural values are in danger of disappearing and have reached a worrisome level. In today's experience, the activities of the masquerade institution among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities have become rather diabolical instead of being peaceful and progressive. Yet, the Catholic centralize system is expected to contribute positively towards the preservation of the cultural values among the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized culture.

Of course, not to forget the early Catholic missionaries condemnation of the institution of masquerade as 'evil and demonic' owning to their lack of in-depth understanding and full knowledge of Igbo *Ohacracy* culture as already noted. In fact, some writers and thinkers have suggested that the Catholic Church owes the Igbo *Ohacracy* people an extended apology and compensation for the destruction of the masquerade institution which in essence has devastated the Igbo *Ohacracy* cultural values. Notwithstanding this far, it is important to note in this study that the destruction of any past values of the Igbo culture is challenged today by the inculturation motif to re-evaluate and rethink on how to re-initiate these values into the *Ohacracy* Roman Catholic communities. By so doing the youth will be fully engaged and participate in the decentralized order.

Among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities today, one could witness the youth stand aimlessly along the streets with no purpose since some basic infrastructure and foundations have disinterested from the culture by the centralized order. No much enthusiasm and creativity can be noted in the young aimless lives of Igbo young people. The *Mmanwu* institution therefore stands the ground to reignite enthusiasm in the lives of the youth if the centralized Roman Catholic order would take a positive step to encourage the re-installation of the *Mmanwu* institution through the work of inculturation among the Igbo. This move will reignite the reconciliation process as inculturation is defined. Hence, the youth will have their rightful place in both the Church and *Ohacracy* societies as they are fully engaged (AA.12).

Having made such observations and reflecting further on the perception of the Catholic Church based on Vatican II theology, this study is compelled to call for a Church that is all

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inclusive and embracing all who are called by the name of the Children of God. Alluding to 'Church as Family of God' as earlier discussed, the African bishops extended the Vatican II as 'open door system.' That means Church is seen in a new perspective of being 'Church' since this embraces all cultures and traditions and people to share in the family of God. Igbo *Ohacracy* indeed finds home to belong in the spirit of dialogue of accommodation of all peoples in this family of God. Hence, 'communion theology' as the Vatican II event may be referred to by the African bishops in their 1995 synod, rightly called for the well applied and inclusive Church in structure and governance (John Paul 1995:23-26).

From the perspective of individualism, centralization, mono-cultural images and patriarchy that have defined the Catholic Church governance for decades, this study has presented the arguments of inclusiveness of community, decentralization, and multi-cultural practices which define the Igbo *Ohacracy* order to be considered. This is in line with the Vatican II's recommendation and acknowledgement of the good that exists in all cultures. Community living is a typology of value that cannot be over emphasized and which has already been discussed extensively in this study having played a central role among the Igbo *Ohacracy* tradition. The Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* establishment must promote and secure therefore all the values that do not encourage exclusion and discrimination as further discussed below. By so doing she would have promoted the Vatican II proposals of an all-inclusive ecclesiology. Of course, the equal gender representation in the Igbo *Ohacracy* living communities as noted in the communities remains a point of future dialogue.

Most prominently in this study are the two models of governance namely the values of *Ohacracy* decentralized and that of Roman Catholic centralized model of governance. The value of *Ohacracy* has been defined as a system of full participatory order, in which majority of citizens are afforded the opportunity to partake and belong to the system that they share in the duties and responsibilities of community life. While the Roman Catholic centralized model is seen as centred on the clergy, still has an enormous value to share since the event of the Vatican II. It is therefore, the central message and value that challenges both systems to enter into valuable dialogue in the form of inculturation based recommendations of the Vatican II Council.

As already mentioned the Igbo *Ohacracy* 'Village Community' serve the purpose for primary or basic ground for full *Ohacracy* operations. The 'parish church' in the notion of community gathering, should be envision for the Catholic Church a place of common participatory

governance where all the faithful are able to express and belong to the community. This will allow the entire assembly to participate in all it means to govern the Church. As recommended by Vatican II therefore on lay apostolate, their active participation as part of decision making body in parish council, finance committee, lay extra-ordinary ministries and associations, marriage commissions and the like will achieve this purpose. All these will serve as good ground for the laity to partake in the parish governance and remove the dominance of the clergy in Church governance. This will then make sense to the Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens to own their Church and since the Igbo *Ohacracy* system of governance is an order where all people in the community form an assembly of deliberations on Igbo common concerns. In effect, the *Oha* (people or assembly) are wholly and actively involved in the community affairs that contribute towards the welfare and development of the Igbo communities.

Although various setbacks have been highlighted regarding the Catholic Church governance approach among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, the Catholic Church should also be acknowledged and credited for its positive role towards Igbo *Ohacracy*'s full realization of common participation through community schools, Cathedrals, health care centres, hospitals and community pipe borne water projects most of which have received Igbo *Ohacracy* nation's approval and participation. On the other hand, the Catholic Church community among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people face various challenges in relation to aiding and bringing the desired decentralized governance into fulfilment as noted in this study. These challenges include working towards the sanctity, renewal, and the preservation of the Igbo *Ohacracy* cultural heritage values of the South-eastern Nigeria.

In contemporary understanding and as shown in this study of the Igbo *Ohacracy* model of participatory governance, the task of religion can no longer be to conquer and destroy cultures of possible converts. As rightly observed by Okonjo (1976:34) cited earlier in this study, a missionary is said to be a revolutionary and he/she has to be so, for to preach and plant Christianity means to make a frontal attack on the beliefs, the customs and the apprehensions of life. For Uzukwu (1996:59), though Christianity (Catholicism in particular), participated in the exploitation and the abuse of Africans with attempts to abolish their cultural heritage as the Western world plunged into the continent. This manner of Christian missionary task cannot be excused nor tolerated any more due to its negative impact in today's understanding of human cultures and practices. Having analysed and explained the role Igbo traditional religion played and still plays in the promotion of participatory governance, which remains

the central concern that this study explores, no other culture can aver supremacy over the other. As strongly noted though in the study, no culture has a right or authority to judge another culture or claim superiority over the other. Cultures should inter-mingle with envisioned purpose to complement each other. None should claim purer or higher than the other. This calls for humility and respect of other cultures at various points of meeting.

Therefore, the task to recognise, appreciate and acknowledge the values in other cultures remains crucial for Christianity (and Catholicism in particular); working to accomplish its mandate as it continues to minister over Igbo *Ohacracy* communities in the South-eastern Nigeria. As this study will further note, all the areas of concern herewith mentioned requires urgent attention. Crucial for this process, Catholicism is tasked with renewal and change as she continues to enhance and contribute towards the Igbo *Ohacracy* values and heritage in order to repair the past damages by the early missionaries among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people.

Hence, the Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized order is empowered to look for all-inclusive structures to engage and encourage full participation of all in Church governance. Therefore, it is providential to acclaim that the decentralized Igbo system has prepared the ground for such easy and simplicity in understanding and practicing for all-inclusive Catholic Church governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy*. The instance to understand ecclesiology with a picture of 'Church as Family of God' illustrates the notion of natural family understanding among the Igbo *Ohacracy* and a general African family concept. The symbolism of this description fits to the socio-cultural values of African family as solidarity, communalism, interrelatedness (as in extended families), and collaborative in nature as common way of description in *Ohacracy* and decentralized system of governance. The imagery shown here points towards the common responsibility that should exist in both centralized and decentralised system as this study as revealed.

Furthermore, Ezenezi (2015:197) extends the notion of 'Church as a Family of God' into the African or Igbo *Ohacracy* social dimension. By this he sees Church as lived in the form of a family becomes a functional model in confronting the problems and tensions created by some contexts peculiar to African culture. When this idea is put in action as the Igbo *Ohacracy* family wills, everybody is welcomed, every person finds a home and belongs to the one Christian family, the Church. This, again, trikes codes home to the decentralized governance order which will be opened to all who belongs to the family. No one will be discriminated

against due to one's gender, race, class, language or nationality. This model therefore depicts the Church as a home for all and to all who profess and follow God through its structures and governance.

The home is not discriminatory. Being at home speaks equal chances and opportunities given to all who belong. Home is not a division of human race or sexes. The home is a unit of unity. The home cares and renews and sustains life. The home does not separate people but unifies all in their quest to belong to the home. While capturing the image and understanding of Church as Family the African Synod of Bishops of 1995 indicates that it's statement is connected to the Church's resolution to transform the unjust and violent conditions in the human society. It is to this end that Uzukwu (1996:47) writes:

> …Envy, jealousy, racism, war, division of the human race into first, second, third and fourth worlds, cults of wealth, disparity between nations, and exploitation and humiliation of the African continent through debt burden and unfair trade arrangements or by media, are all going to be changed when we live the Church as family in the image of the Trinitarian family.

Hence, the strong call for the Catholic Church to attend and have a 'large ear' model for listening to her members who may have complains or sad feelings towards particular structural treatments they receive from the Church family which has been home for decades. For example, this should call the Church to stop and listen to complains of women for not being ordained to the ministry of Orders. Complain of the laity for not feeling welcomed in the authority and governance structures and roles in the Catholic Church as home for all.

In a family therefore, equality for all will never be achieved in instances where some individuals are given special status and positions of office based on their gender, while other members remain ordinary and second citizens. Hence the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized order calls for equality in the family of God for all to belong. The situation being described questions the male hierarchical position and power structures in the Catholic Church. Yet, this study has encouraged and envisioned new possibilities of change through the 'chief with large ears' model to listen to its members who are unhappy. Interestingly, the special Synod of African bishops (1994:15), emphasised on the route which this dialogue must take suggesting that:

> …the "Church as Family" therefore is "not an association of clans and ethnic groupings, but a brotherhood and sisterhood beyond the frontiers of blood

relationship, clan, ethnic group or race. The absolute and ultimate reference
point is God, the Father of all, over all, through all and within all (Eph.4:5)

Another perspective and theological idea close to the 'Church as Family of God' is the Small Christian Community (SCC) among Igbo *Ohacracy* Roman Catholic communities. As already noted, although this form of being Church has not taken deep root among the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities due to the resistance and non-openness of the clergy and the bishops in the area, the SCC's remains the valid and valuable way of being Church as family. The resistance of the clergy is based on the notion that the laity is made part of the governing body of the Church through the activities of the SCC's. The SCC's almost act as checks and balances in rural Catholic communities where the priest is called to the accountability of his governing office. As noted in chapter 1, the Vatican II has given rise to this new form of being Church as initiated in South America through liberation theology and has spread in the universal Church including Africa.

This form of SCC Church as family plays a very central role in Catholic parish communities as they become the crucial body of participatory Church. The SCC's as basic way of being Church has helped in developing the Church life with regards to relationship between members, the clergy and personal relationship with God. As self-evangelizing groups, the SCC's are means of close outreach with particular families and individuals of the bigger parish communities; thereby closing the gap between parish members and the wider community.

Indeed, the SCC serves as the renewal and transformation agents of the Church and cannot be underestimated looking at its achievements in these regards. The SCC's rapid development in the Catholic centralized system is due to the popularity it has gained with the laity who are involved in the community regular prayer meetings as a means of full participation in the Church ministries and governance. Indeed, this Vatican II initiative of the lay apostolate has sort to root the laity in the reading and studying of the scriptures and while living out the demands of the word by self-ministering to fellow members and others within their vicinity. In this way, the laity finds the ground to express and share their gifts, talents and expertise with their fellow faithful in the Catholic communities. Hence, the decentralized *Ohacracy* finds home with the SCC's prayer meetings which has expressed a similar inclination towards a tradition of participatory community involvement thereby fitting very well in the dialogue

initiated through the theology of inculturation being proposed in the light of Vatican II of a new form of being Church.

Therefore, as the SCCs target the grassroots level of the Church faithful, it fosters the renewal and empowerment of the lay people among the *Ohacracy* communities. The African Synod of Bishops maintained strongly the meaningful value that the SCCs' represent in the Catholic communities as it promotes the lay participatory needs in Church governance. It is with this observation that Ezenezi (2015:233) emphasises while citing the bishops stating:

> …the synod Fathers recognized that the Church as Family cannot reach her full potential as Church unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships. …primarily they should be places engaged in evangelizing themselves, so that subsequently they can bring the Good News to others: they should moreover be communities which pray and listen to God's Word, encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel…

This kind of co-responsibility and collaboration experienced by the laity in the SCC's organizations truly represents the participatory governance required in their local community faith activities. Ezenezi (2015:233) valuably observes that the Catholic communities in "…Nigeria are beginning to see the need to break the present parish set-up into small, manageable "cells" or "zones," consisting of Christians who are able to know one another properly, visit one another regularly and share in one another's joys and sorrows, anxieties and worries." In this way the centralized Catholic communities become decentralized. The laity indeed gets the opportunity to get involved or engaged in the day to day governance of the Catholic communities which was formerly under the supervision of the clergy alone.

These SCCs' have grown to become practical examples of Christian living families and communities. They radiate joy, love and co-responsibility that rise above the confines of human basic problems or difficulties. Such difficulties like discriminations based on status, divisions and exclusion based on gender and sexuality, hierarchical separations and the like can easily be overcomed with spirituality based on brotherhood and sisterhood that exists among members of the community. While capturing this very activity in the 'Family of God' concept and new form of being Church as Vatican II and theology of inculturation have encouraged, Iroegbu (1996:99) identifies in the decentralized *Ohacracy* order the ground of understanding and dialogue. He notes that the Nigerian Church hierarchy should therefore

develop additional methods that would lead to a sincere reception and gratitude of an ecclesiology that inspires a relational attitude typical of basic Christian communities.

Meanwhile, the '*Umunna*' structure discussed in chapter four within Igbo culture can serve this purpose too. The notion being proposed here suggests a basic community that shows a people belonging together through faith and shared ancestral origin. Of course the ground for good dialogue exists between the two decentralized and centralized models that have been presented in this study. It will rest with the present day Igbo *Ohacracy* theologians, clergy and bishops and of course not forgetting the laity to determine the levels and styles of inculturaltion dialogue that the Vatican II has envisioned.

Throughout this study, the notion of clericalism in the Catholic Church has been very prominent. In chapter 3 in particular, the exclusive governance authority of the priest has been legally placed in and round the Church's laws and regulations of the canon law. This clergy dominated concept of authority in the Catholic Church has raised serious concerns in different quarters and thoughts. Meanwhile, the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized perception around authority has rather been collaborative and/or interdependency. Yet, the 'chief with large ears' theory that has listening abilities as its anchor has emerged from some African theologians advocating for the "African palaver" model of authority (see Uzukwu 1996:18; Ezekwonna 2005:150-168 and Bujo 2001:45-54).

The "Palaver" as presented in this study represents an Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized value that can open new avenue to succeed in the dialogue based on what Vatican II has proposed with other cultures, traditions and religions. "Palaver" remains the process of dialogue in the Igbo political philosophy by which resolution and consensus is arrived in the decentralized model of governance. In this process, the art of listening which endures in lasting and ample time for individual and group representation to be heard and considered provides an amicable way and means of reaching a consensus. Hence, 'palaver' can be seen as agent of evangelization among Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities. The centralized system as represented in the Western governance order can gain from this perception of authority which collaborates and consult with the community in the Igbo decentralized system to arrive to common good view other than autocratic and commanding authority.

In effect, the spoken "word" in this process becomes the building bricks by which the *Ohacracy* seeks common view. The process tastes different individual and group views and perspectives in search for a ground of common and group understanding over any issue being discussed. According to Bujo (2001:151), the aim and purpose is not to astonish or mislead the participants by magniloquence. Instead the community in discussion strive for a good and correct word, analysing its capability to heal and to build up the community. Therefore, in order to avoid conflicts and disagreements in both the centralized Catholic Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized system, "Palaver" has become inevitable and urgent priority for the inculturation theological project among the Igbo Catholics.

Moreover, after fifty years of the Vatican II event and its call to renewal, most of the initiatives and suggestions of this ecumenical council are yet to be achieved or realized fully. Though efforts have been made towards the implementation and realization of Vatican II vision of a communal and collaborative ecclesiology, the clergy particularly the bishops, priests and religious (not forgetting the laity) have failed to champion and play their vital role towards the full realization. Hence, the need for enlightenment and on-going formation of all to bring about the required changes the Vatican II has recommended is very crucial. Such information as regards the reception of the theology on the laity involvement and engagement in the Church governance becomes vital to improve the laity's participation in the Church order. It therefore remains the duties and responsibilities of the diocesan bishop to acquire regular information through local workshops and theological enquiries on how best to engage the laity's involvement as required and recommended in the Vativan II. While expressing this concern in the *Ecclesia in Africa* John Paul II (1995:98) writes:

> …Moreover, they (bishops) are regularly to update themselves theologically and to foster their spiritual life, taking part as much as possible in the sessions of renewal and formation organized by the Episcopal Conferences or the Apostolic See. In particular, they should never forget the admonition of Pope Saint Gregory the Great, according to whom the Pastor is the light of his faithful above all through an exemplary moral conduct marked by holiness.

It is to this effect that such ministry of the head of governance in his particular Church that the bishop, with his clergy and the religious are charged to work towards the realization of all-inclusive and collaborative Church where all are welcome and have the sense of belonging.

Chapter Summary

In essence, this chapter discussed and identified the need for decentralized and meaningful participatory governance in the Catholic Church establishment communities among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order by introducing specific indigenous model values, symbols and institutions towards collaborative governance. The Igbo *Ohacracy* order as a major theme and concern in this study is also directed to the revival, renewal, restoration, consolidation and preservation of the Igbo *Ohacracy* cultural heritage. Hence, the challenge facing the Igbo Catholic communities and governance is not to reject or condemn the values herewith noted in this study. Rather, this is to serve a purpose of re-discovery of indigenous values of *Ohacracy* decentralized governance and through considering inculturation, move towards participatory governance. This indeed calls for the renewal and the preservation of these Igbo *Ohacracy* values, symbols and institutions that have so much positively contributed towards participatory governance.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:
MANAGING THE SITUATION AND LIVING WITH THE REALITY

7.1 Introduction

Through the means of applying secondary research data, this dissertation has sought to analyse and understand the pros and cons of both centralized and the decentralized forms of governance in the Roman Catholic Church and the Igbo *Ohacracy* orders. The purpose of the study was to narrate both forms of governance thereby serving as a point of reference for charting a participatory (communal) form of ecclesiology in the Roman Catholic Church. The study has achieved its purpose by expanding the indigenous Igbo value system of participation, inclusion, community, collaboration, listening as dialogue and inculturation as integrated in the Igbo *Ohacracy* and the Roman Catholic Church orders thereby envisioning meaningful participatory governance for both orders. As part of the purpose for this study, the event of the Vatican II has been extensively explored. Indeed signalling a paradigm shift in the theology of the laity and in particular that of women participation and inclusion in the Roman Catholic Church governance.

Therefore, this concluding chapter seeks to synthesize the entire study. Based on the data collected, the study develops a signpost towards further research on these models of governance while taking into account practical suggestions that have emerged from the study. And while showing how this study has achieved its goals, which of course, for the Igbo *Ohacracy* tradition, this would mean to get "restless" until the values discussed herein are restored in the Igbo communities.

To be content with the present challenging situations would be a taboo and unacceptable among all the Igbo *Ohacracy* sons and daughters. For the Catholic Church governance, the process of supporting the Igbo *Ohacracy* recovery and restoration of its lost values means to respect the Gospel that asserts good tidings in every human culture. This concluding chapter also indicates whether the objectives of the study have been achieved. The chapter therefore highlights significant gaps and limitations while also discussing specific aspects on how this

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study has made contribution to new knowledge. The chapter concludes with a final statement as general conclusion.

7.2   Summary of Conclusions about the Research Questions

With respect to this study, the critical question which this study sought to address was:

> How can both centralised and the decentralised models of governance complement each other for the good of the Igbo *Ohacracy* society?

To address this question, the objectives that this study focused to achieve was how the laity would participate and contribute meaningfully within the Catholic Church structures and governance with reference to Vatican II council.

Indeed, the question of full participation of all the Roman Catholic faithful in Nigeria and in particular the Igbo *Ohacracy* society has been addressed. By applying the approach of the "large ear" concept of listening and the inculturation theories, the Vatican II era has been used to demonstrate a dawn of a new shift in Catholic Church governance. This opened a new door for the lay participation in the Roman Catholic Church governance which has been centred on the clergy. The laity can now enjoy being part and parcel of the Catholic Church governance activity and no longer appearing as onlookers in their own homes of faith. By utilizing the Igbo *Ohacracy* model of governance, her symbols, institutions and the prominent role of women in the *Ohacracy* indigenous model, the study has presented the decentralised model of governance by which every Igbo citizen is offered the opportunity to participate fully in the day to day events in the land.

Careful attention has been paid to both centralized and decentralized forms of governance. By the *Ohacracy* decentralized values of full participation, inclusion, consensus, communalism and collaboration, this study has encouraged 'listening' as a form of dialogue. With respect to inculturation theology, a form of family or participatory ecclesiology has been proposed. This participatory ecclesiology has been recommended to the Igbo Roman Catholic communities through the application of the Vatican II theology of the laity. This has drawn the attention of this study on the meaningful participation of the laity and women in particular, as its central focus.

This study utilized a qualitative research approach. Through this approach, the study showed interest in how the Igbo social life and setting is organised and carried out through the involvement of everyone in the community. The study therefore illustrated how both the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized and the Roman Catholic centralized models make sense of their governance structures and surroundings through symbols, rituals, organisations, social roles and their established institutions to engage citizens into active participation in their governance roles. In actual fact, what this study has demonstrated is that governance in Igbo Ohacracy order is 'by the people for the people.'

Two theoretical frameworks have been utilised for aid theoretical analysis and discussions in this study. These are "The Chief with the large ear" and the "theology of inculturation" respectively. The former provides this study with the concept and serves as the value of 'listening' which remains central for this study. The value of listening is rooted on the palaver thought system which leads the *Ohacracy* community into consensus for common action at any level of deliberation as this study has shown.

By utilising the palaver indigenous value, the Roman Catholic centralized system thereby challenged to embrace a 'large ear listening' to her Igbo *Ohacracy* host communities for collaborative, participatory and inclusive governance. The later as in the theology of inculturation presented this study with the means for dialogue between the centralized Roman Catholic and the decentralized Igbo *Ohacracy* models. The 'large ear' has been utilized to demonstrate the possibility of inclusive meaningful participation within both indigenous Igbo and ecclesial systems within the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. The Vatican II event and the theology of the laity and inculturation have made this form of dialogue possible. By providing new opportunities that could acknowledge and recognise the Igbo *Ohacracy* indigenous symbols and institutions as valuable means of opening to cultures other than the Roman Catholic Church is something impressive.

With regards to the findings this study has made, it is clear that both centralized and decentralized systems can co-exist among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people and the Nigerian Catholic Church context in general. As demonstrated in both Chapters five and six of the study, the value of dialogue (Palaver) as a listening mechanism in the Igbo *Ohacracy* model presents a new outlook of community, partispatory and family ecclesiology. The Igbo *Ohacracy* family description and her institutions establish key points of references, with

specific tasks and places portraying how the *Ohacracy* citizens participate actively in the decentralized governance system. As demonstrated in this study, all members of Ohacracy community are valued, treasured, respected and are afforded equal opportunities in the decentralized system of governance.

In the centralized system, the laity and in particular women's role and involvement in the Roman Catholic Church governance can no longer be neglected. With the image of the Church presented as the 'Family of God' in chapters one, two, and six, the family is where both men and women, young and old are believed to belonging. The Vatican II theology on both the laity and inculturation in this regard has been utilized to call for equal and adequate opportunities to be created and made available within the Catholic parish churches for all who belong for active and meaningful participation. This condition therefore helps all to play their roles fully, based on divine gifting by sharing their talents and expertise in the service and provision of common good for all.

Moreover, as noted in the institution of *Igba-Ndu* in chapter four a participatory governance approach among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, its role on conflict resolution and reconciliation remains a model that can (and should) be utilised through the inculturation process in the Catholic Church with regards to governance. The current Igbo *Ohacracy* world which is ridden with conflict and crisis necessitates the need for the value of reconciliation and this cannot be over emphasized. Whenever the ritual of *Igba-Ndu*,[91] is celebrated, the outcome is often transformation among Igbo *Ohacracy* communities, calling for peace and reconciliation after conflict or crisis had occurred. As Igwebuike (2010:17) noted, whenever the *Igba-ndu* meal is celebrated, peace, joy, happiness, unity and harmony is the target to be reached. The reinforcement of life bond which exists in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities in support of all who cohabit in the land is always the focus. A positive dimension that is finally realised is a type of covenant that is created. Oduyoye (1986:111) affirms this notion as she writes:

> …because we Africans have our roots in the same soil, drink from the same river or recognize the same divinity, a bond is created that one does not dream of breaking; it imposes a responsibility to each other that all endeavour to fulfil. Unity of life therefore is the cohesive principle in the African

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91 *Igba-Ndu* as a ritual is the final or concluding phase of reconciliation celebrated as communal meal in which all participants partake in. Through this ritual, the particular Igbo community cements all peaceful agreements arrived during the proceedings of communal dialogue (palaver) and discussions over conflict or crisis that had occurred and is finally resolved through this ritual meal. As a process this can go on for months if not years. Time is given for all to express their grievances so to arrive at amicable solution.

community. We human beings, with all created things, participate in life whole source is the One God. …

Among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people, conflicts are not just resolved but reconciliation is also genuinely sought after. This entails that a physical, emotional or spiritual solution is sought after a conflict has occurred. The Igbo understanding clearly states that a conflict situation presents us with both physical and emotional (psychological) damages. This mechanism provides a two way resolution of conflicts; hence the need for emotional ritual-meal for healing (organised for two parties or communities involved); after which the actual dialogue to resolve a conflict is achieved. In affirmation of this process of seeking reconciliation among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order, Nweke (2012:205) notes that what usually comes to people's mind when conflicts is mentioned is war, fighting, misunderstanding, endless arguments, anarchy, stress, crisis and aggression. Negative associations of conflicts tend to handle them in a destructive manner with negative effects. Hence, Nweke (2012) concludes that "…having positive a mind-set to conflict helps to manage them in a constructive manner with positive results such as dialogue, development, change, understanding, friendship and improved communication process…"

Based on this value therefore, the study submits that the value of *Igba-ndu* institutional model of conflict resolution in Igbo *Ohacracy* order can be recommended to serve as a strong basis for the inculturation theory as alternative the "sacrament of reconciliation" in the Catholic Church governance among the Igbo Church and Nigeria in a broader sense.

Therefore, by the application of the qualitative methodology in this study, the story, culture and belief systems of both centralized and decentralized models of governance have been well narrated and established. Meanwhile, major achievements of the objectives set for this study for mutual and possible integration of both systems among the Igbo *Ohacracy* model can be identified. For instance that consensus is possible in an organized listening dialogue, the Vatican II theology on the laity and inculturation, opened door for all faithful to belong and participate actively in Catholic Church governance. This established a possibility of communal ecclesiology where the family of God's people can be realized as a key approach, women's participation in Church governance is made possible and the role of laity can no longer be questioned etc... Such a dialogue has been made possible by the application of the

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'large ear' and 'inculturation' theories where by all Roman Catholic faithful in the Igbo communities are afforded equal and adequate chances of full participation in governance.

Moreover, the roles and places of Western education and medicine have been prominent in the course of this study. These two agencies played particular roles of awareness, knowledge and wellness. As agents of evangelization, the centralized Western education and medicine became means through which the educator (Roman Catholicism) and the educated (Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens) find the grounds and means of communication, conciliation, conversion and relationship. Indeed, despite the opposing structures between the centralised and the decentralised models of governance as this study has noted in the entire presentation, both Catholicism and the Igbo *Ohacracy* had found grounds of cooperation, collaboration and support to each other. The future indeed is very bright for more areas of cooperation.

7.3   Challenges and Major Implications for Study Findings

To highlight some of the challenges this study has presented, it is important to note that the study has been a very complex venture. The Igbo *Ohacracy* world view and the Roman Catholic Church's models are two opposing structures of governance. This presented this study with a research question that has been very difficult to answer. Indeed, as noted in chapter one, the centralised model of the Catholic Church governance in contrast with the decentralised model of Igbo *Ohacracy* governance provided us with the problem statement of this study. This therefore made this study a much difficult undertaking to navigate to its logical end in ensuring that the study objectives are achieved. It is within such complexity therefore that this study evolved.

In other words, with such universal magnitude of the Roman Catholic Church in today's world of governance makes it very complex to conceive the Church in a decentralized fashion or governance as in the Igbo *Ohacracy* model. Such conception of church governance today will cause enormous confusion in structural organization of church from within its understanding as an 'institution.' The Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized model is organized in a rather small scale communal size known as 'village assembly', a manageable size in governance today. Hence, the size factor remains a huge challenge to organize or consider decentralized governance in our contemporary setting where by the Igbo *Ohacracy* population has grown too much complex in size for a manageable and easy maintenance. Yet, it remains

a challenge to the universal Catholic Church governance to pursue such governance in the contemporary world that will make reasonable sense to the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities.

Modernity as presented in chapter three of this study is another factor that challenges the reality of the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized model today. With respect to modernity as representing the contemporary while negating the past or tradition; in order to fit to the most generally acceptable mode of behaviour and attitude indeed brings a challenge to this study. Modernity has had tremendous effect on the subject of Catholicism and domination by power and centralization of governance among the Igbo *Ohacracy*. Hence, the movement towards change in human culture and institutions always affects age-long institutions such as the Igbo *Ohacracy*. As long as human opinion varies in terms of perceptions and contemporary practices, the Igbo *Ohacracy* order remains a concern to the *Ohacracy* actualization. Nonetheless, one could argue that the Vatican II event has made available a window of opportunity for modern practises to be utilised, for example in relation to governance. Yet, care must be given to both models, not to throw away values that have kept generations for ages.

However, both theology and culture changes through the normal process of human struggle to fit into a much changing world and even more, change that has come with the renewal of human enlightenment. With this observation, contextual theology as a perspective in doing theology, confirms this fluid and change in the human experience as noted in chapter one. This follows therefore that as much as culture is fluid to changes, the same should be noted of contexts of human living. Of course, the event of the Vatican II in the 20th century confirms this change when Catholicism transformed (mutated) and sought adaptation to the context of the modern world. Hence, this study signals an implication of a changing theology that struggles to fit to ever changing world of the Igbo *Ohacracy* model. This implies that as long as human society exists and state rule endures, theology in the aspect of ecclesiology will be challenged to come alongside the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. This means that for ecclesiology to remain reasonable and meaningful in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order it must contextualize to fit to the needs of the time. Indigenisation has been proposed for this process. The Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized model of governance presents such challenges to the Roman Catholic centralized model of governance in order to remain relevant in the ever changing *Ohacracy* society.

As noted in both chapters three and four of this study, women's role and place full for meaningful participation in governance for both centralized and decentralized models is very prevalent. The place of women has not always enjoyed maximum support in the centralized Catholic model of governance. Yet, women as part of the laity as observed by Vatican II and this study as well, encourages and calls for change regarding their full participation in Church governance. This position of course challenges the present day Catholic Church structures to afford women their rightful place in the Church. This therefore implies that both the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised and the centralised Roman Catholic Church model should avail equal opportunities to women as their male counterparts. This equal chance of education and exposure, will afford both men and women, the opportunities for full participation in both models of governance.

Finally, in chapter three this study has discussed both mono and multi-cultural instances by which both models of governance have been identified respectively. While the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized model falls under multi-cultural experience, the Roman Catholic centralized model was identified as a mono-cultural practise. As presented, it appears that particular stand and practise of cultures as in 'mono' outlook guarantees sustainability and future. The *Ohacratic* 'multi' stand and approach towards culture actually becomes too exposed and vulnerable to other cultures (e.g. Catholicism), and of course faces the risk of getting absorbed (lost) in the process. This implies that in the process of such pressures that *Ohacracy* order encounters in her effort to 'look or be like others cultures,' the Igbo *Ohacracy* governance gets mixed-up in the directions and protection of its belief systems and values. This idea of trying to accommodate 'all others' while not being careful of what it has, has led to the danger and possibility of self-extinction. Hence, the Igbo decentralized model is therefore challenged to ensure self-protection and conservation while still being open to the reception of modernity or new practises. This calls for a balance in the dance of life.

7.4   Contribution to New Knowledge and Areas of Further Research

As this study draws to its logical conclusion, it is vital to point out few ideas which could be identified as new knowledge that has emerged. The three prominent areas that come to mind would include: The *Ohacracy* universal concept of sin, the communal approach to reconciliation and the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized model of governance as indigenous heritage knowledge. Each of this area will be considered.

7.4.1   The Communal Concept of Sin

This study has shown clearly in chapters five and six that the notion of sin in the decentralized model among the Igbo *Ohacracy* has a communal effect unlike the centralized model that treats sin at a particular or individual level. As an aspect contributing to new knowledge, this communal understanding has described sin to have negative effects on the entire community in similar manner as upright living or behaviour has positive effects to the human community on the whole. This understanding also flows from the Igbo *Ohacracy* notion or philosophy of 'the web.' Hence, when a string line of the cob web moves, the entire web is affected and indeed, vibrates. In the same way, sin or wrong doing affects the entire community when and wherever it occurs. With this in mind, this study has laid emphasis on how the individual's immoral actions attracts or induces communal punishment. This necessitates the need for reconciliation as a way of dealing with the offence committed against the land often known as a taboo (*Aru*). The *Ohacracy* is credited for this alternative and communal understanding of sin within a Catholic Church context where sin is highly individualised.

7.4.2   The Communal Notion of Reconciliation

When and where sin occurs, the Igbo *Ohacracy* order seeks a communal reconciliation. This notion re-integrates the offender back to the communal and humane living which is compatible with tradition and practise. Opposed to the centralized practise of the Catholic Church, the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized order makes forgiveness and reconciliation a communal affair as a process by which a sinner is accepted back to the living community as those to who the offence was committed. As wrong doing separates or alienates the individual or group from the rest of their community, reconciliation restores, renews and re-establishes an offender back to the community. In this communal sense the offender is not rejected but is afforded the opportunity to make a renewed come back to the living community. This is unlike the centralized order which has privatized forgiveness and reconciliation from a communal practise as among the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities.

However, it is vital to mention the Catholic Church's (Western) 'privatization' of conflict between parties in which followers are advised to go for confession. This notion of sin has weakened the community dimension of *Igba-ndu* ritual among the Igbo *Ohacracy*. The community involvement in bringing about reconciliation with an offender in the community is very crucial. As the individual is isolated by sin from the community, it takes the community

effort to bring back the individual into full relationship and participation in the community events. Though this practise is different from the centralized system, it appears to be a trustworthy practise that should be developed in the Roman Catholic governance structures among the Igbo to enhance reconciliation and forgiveness. The ritual described below is valuable in this regard. A life true story of *Igba-ndu* ritual among the Igbo *Ohacracy* participatory governance as narrated in Anyanele (2001:3):

> …it was in one of these occasions that I participated in a ritual meal for peace and harmony celebrated between my community *Umudurukwaku* and the neighbouring *Umuegwu* community in *Isi-Ala Mbano* Local Government Area, in Imo State, Nigeria. This took place on the 20th May, 1982 in the community meeting square where such great celebrations are held. The cause of the ritual meal was because of a fight between the two communities for a long time of about Fifty (50) years without resolution. The fight was over a piece of land which each community claimed to belong to their ancestors. There was animosity, betrayal, quarrel, and attempted murder among members of these two communities. Two generations passed by without a desired resolution over the conflict. My generation has quite a different outlook over the conflict from our fathers and grad fathers. The resolution started with the agreement between the two communities to have the land in question divided into two equal parts for the use of the communities. In order to complete this peaceful process between the two communities, *Igba-ndu* meal or *Oriko* (sharing meal together) as it is sometimes called, is needed. The agreed day of the actual celebration saw the convocation of the members of the two communities and other witnessing neighbouring communities who had come by invitation. The central community square served as a common ground and had a central shrine where all had gathered for the reconciliation celebration. The two main elderly *diabias* (priest's fraternity) representing the two communities, led in the first part of ancestral settlement by presenting Kola-nuts and doing libation on behalf of the two reconciling parties. This is done to call on the ancestral participation in the ritual and to win both their agreement and that of the Great Spirit, God the creator. A litany of the ancestors was jointly announced by the presiding priests as the people responded with a pleading or peaceful acclamation, iseee! iseee!! iseee!!! Meaning, they all agreed to the request of the two elders leading in the prayer. This was followed by the sacrifice of two goats on behalf of the two communities and atoning for all the sins or abominations committed in the past two generations; namely destruction of life and properties. At the end of the spiritual phase of the ceremony, came the music and dance scenery, namely the Youth (boys and girls) dancing group and of course, the masquerade which entertained the convocation. While all this was going on, the women were busy preparing the main meal which would finally seal the covenant of peace and reconciliation between the two communities. The act of sharing meal together from the same bowl of pounded Yam-*foofoo* with a good sauce to fit symbolises the peace that had been reached. This took place as soon as the meals were ready and everybody present was led into eating by the two elderly priests representing the two communities; having performed the libation ritual. All present was moved with tears of joy, relief and happiness as peace was being restored

when the two leading male priests gave each other bowls of meal leading into all sharing in the main meal. By this all were led into peace; and friendship began to exist again between my community and the neighbouring *Umuegwu* community till this day. No fighting or killing was tolerated in the two communities because of the land in question and anything contrary of the established peace would attract punishment from the ancestors and of course, offensive to the Great Spirit, God. Peace was finally restored."[92]

Hence, inculturation theory as applied in this study calls for restoration and renewal of the community aspects of sin and conflict in the Roman Catholic centralised governance. The Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralised practise holds the value of dialogue that restores peace and builds reconciliation between an individual and the community. The Roman Catholic centralised system will become decentralise in this notion of sin if inculturated in the Igbo communities. By so doing, the new knowledge this study offers will bring reconciliation between the two opposing systems of governance.

7.4.3   The *Ohacracy* Decentralised Model of Governance as Heritage Knowledge

By utilising the decentralised system of governance this study has demonstrated an aspect of new knowledge based on indigenous understanding and practise. It is clear that this model signifies a new way of consensus, dialogue, consultation and listening by which the Igbo *Ohacratic* understanding arrives at a decisive moments of decision making. The Igbo *Ohacracy* system is entirely different from the centralised form of governance of the Roman Catholic Church which can be defined as a unilateral, individualistic and a non-communal system which does not fully consult dialogue and or listen to her members before any major decision is reached. Having been able to keep and held the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities for centuries, the Igbo decentralised system has proven beyond all doubts that it is a trust worthy indigenous system capable of good and reliable governance.

7.5   Gaps for Further Research

Beyond the immediate objectives that were set for this study, it is vital to note that future opportunities for further research should make attempts to address the aspect of an inclusive theology as a new area of study. An inclusive theology referred to herewith should give attention to the role of women in the Catholic Church governance as those who had not received the same opportunity as accorded to their male counterparts.

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[92] This true life story was my own personal experience of the ritual of *Igba-Ndu* among the Igbo *Ohacracy* participatory governance of the South-eastern Nigeria.

Other areas for further research that require equal attention include:

First, a detailed work and practical resolution regarding concerns related to the 'inculturation theory' in the Catholic Church. Such research should endeavour to spelt out what an authentic process of inculturation would entail in order to overcome and avoid confusion and misunderstanding over this controversial area of the 21st century worship. Therefore, theological dialogue around inculturation demands that the challenges for the appreciation of culture and tradition as containing and expressing God's revelation should be encourage and acknowledged. The Igbo Catholic Church bishops, religious and clergy governance bodies can no longer reschedule or postpone the call for Igbo *Ohacracy* people's self-representation in commissions that seek to actualise self-determination in Church governance. The inculturation of *Ohacracy* value systems of dialogue, consensus for decision making process and individual participation in local Church governance should be promoted.

As already noted in this study, such a process should address, for example the 'privatization' of individual sins as already evident in the Catholic sacraments of reconciliation or confessions between the priest and the sinner. Meanwhile, sin is understood as affecting the entire community in the decentralized Igbo *Ohacracy* order. Within this model, sin and conflict is resolved within the community confluence and not just an individual concern. The prerequisite to make sin a public concern will therefore eliminate causes of corruption and promote the consideration of the community's interest while addressing evils of individualism, selfishness, greed and self-centred interest.

Second, a detailed work on equal partnership in the sacrament of marriage could be an area of interest too. Such a study should seek to interrogate and address the impression that has established the subjugation of women as unequal to their male counterparts for granted. This idea will of course help to awaken in men and even women alike, necessity to respect, honour, acknowledge, admire, believe and treat women with equal worth, value and justice as human. Further work in this area will help both men and women to overcome social, cultural, religious, psychological and emotional prejudices and set-backs that have not helped women to realize their meaningful potential due to discrimination towards women. This kind of research will help to mend and seek to bring healing to the unequal gender relations in both the Igbo *Ohacracy* and the Roman Catholic social orders. Thus this will relate to a more

visible and participatory roles assigned to women, thus allowing them to share their natural gifts and talents in the two governing orders of Igbo *Ohacracy* and RC respectively.

Third, the role and place of Chieftaincy and 'Kingship' among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order avails another opportunity for further research. The issue of kingship is still very confusing in Igbo *Ohacracy* communities; in consideration with its historical development among the Igbo. With regards to the "role" of chieftaincy as already maintained in this study, the present day young men and women who parade themselves as Igbo 'Kings,' 'Queens,' and 'Chiefs' of different Igbo *Ohacracy* communities is a misplaced priority and meaning of cultural practises in today's Igboland of South-eastern Nigeria. As noted in chapter five and six, the Igbo *Ohacracy* does not crown any King! Rather, it is an individual's hard work that helps them to achieve trustworthiness in the community for such a honourable titles to be given to them. One must establish good standing worthy reputation in the community for such an award to be granted. Yet, there are so many young Igbo citizens today who claim and identify themselves as 'chiefs' of the Igbo communities without much reputation and achievement accompanying their names. Chieftaincy will therefore symbolize community animation towards good behaviour and participation in governing towards growth and sustainability of Igbo *Ohacracy* societies. By so doing young Igbo *Ohacracy* population is motivated towards participating actively in community building and growth. This situation therefore calls for further research in order to bring clarity in the mind of Igbo young generations who would admire the authentic meaning of chieftaincy titles among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people.

Finally, the *Osu* caste system as noted in chapter five of this study remains a human right controversy in the Igbo *Ohacracy* system and should be fully eradicated. It is shocking that in this 21st century, certain quarter of men and women of Igbo *Ohacracy* origin still receive ill treatment and discrimination due to the fact that they are categorised to have their lineage from the *Osu* generations. This group of people are not allowed to intermarry with the so called 'free borne(s).' It is painful to see human beings being treated in this manner. A study of this nature will explore, examine, interrogate and propose suggestions for human peaceful coexistence. The abolition of the *Osu* caste will liberate all *Ohacracy* citizens to participate openly and freely in the dialogue and consensus decision making in both RCM and Igbo *Ohacracy* social orders. The full participation and acceptance of all Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens like the *Osu* generations will enhance human relationship in the social governance order.

7.6   Practical Recommendations

On practical suggestions, of course, such powerful ecclesiological imageries like 'Church as family' has been utilised to buttress the need for lay participation in governance in the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, children of the same mother as the imagery suggests, cannot be discriminated against. All who belong to the same family therefore must be afforded equal opportunity to grow, educate and play equal roles in the family for its sustainability. Likewise, women and laity should be afforded equal chances as equal disciples and followers of Christ like their clergy counterparts to play their role and participate fully in the Church governance. Hence, effort to educate and inform women and laity in general is geared towards the common good and enrichment of both centralized and the decentralized models of governance.

Lately, in the Catholic Church the issue and challenges posed by priest's sexual abuse of children and having children even when they are not married have raised questions around celibacy and the priest as the head of the assembly or Church family. With reference to the Igbo *Ohacracy*, the sexual abuse of children is an abomination, unacceptable and scandalous. Such sin will only attract excommunication from a community as noted in chapters 5 and 7. Therefore it is appalling to note in the Catholic Church that such shameful act of the priest have been treated with glove hands of transfers of such priest from one parish to the other. No silence is tolerated in such crimes. Such priests as in the recent times demands to be imprisoned for such heinous crimes against the innocent. Imprisonment will serve the equivalence of excommunication in every community activities until such time when the perpetrators have served their sentence and then repent and reform to integrate in the community. Uchendu (1995:13-20) in his *Ohajoku* lecture demonstrated that marriage institution is an important part of Igbo life and culture. Uchendu (1995) therefore concludes that "…until the Catholic Christian religion introduced celibacy as a virtue, an unmarried Igbo male cuts a sad picture of hopeless poverty; and the unmarried female was a social disaster."

On the other hand, celibacy is not foreign practice though among the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. In certain Igbo South-east communities, when one is called to a higher function for the community like the local priest (*dibia*) whether male or female, it may be demanded of him/her neither engages in sexual activities nor marriage. Hence, such a person is totally dedicated to the "Spiritual" service of the community and the ancestors. He/she goes on to

choose their successors before passing on. To break the rule of the 'gods' will attract such heavy punishments like ostrasization, community involved cleansing sacrifice of the mother-earth as noted in chapters 4 and 7; serving as reconciliation and reintegration ritual into the community.

More so, as already illustrated, for the Igbo *Ohacracy* life is not dissected in compartments of politics, economy, education and religion etc., but is rather treated as holistic and integral. Hence, Church governance cannot restrain itself or remain only in religious or faith spaces rather than to address the basic human issues and value crises facing the Igbo *Ohacracy* order. In other words, socio-political and economic problems should have equal attention and not otherwise. This is vital in order to face the true reality of the Igbo *Ohacracy* people's order. All efforts should be made not to be distracted from the main issues that harm, divide and destroy the creation of common good in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order.

As Uzukwu (1996:4) rightly concludes, it is therefore an open truth to proclaim that for the majority of Igbo *Ohacracy*, the integral well-being of humans beings in this world is seen as the ultimate reality and meaning. Not in another world to come after this present one! There is no other world that has been given to humans but this. Therefore, every effort must be made to get all Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens participate fully in day to day activities in promotion of common good. This will be made possible by the common sense of establishing common good policy at all levels of human dealings aided by Catholic Church governance activities in Igbo land.

Recalling some of the issues dealt with in this study, Ukachukwu (2007:258) noted the *Iri Ji Ohuru* festivals[93] by which the Igbo *Ohacracy* order honour certain individuals with chieftaincy titles as merited. This festival should not be seen as just occasions of joyful celebrations but moments for an Igbo *Ohacracy* to fulfil a religious obligation to cultivate yams in order to feed the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. This annual harvest (or appearance as it is referred to among the Igbo) of yam proclaims a renewal and revival message in the Igbo world view for food production. Farming and agricultural activities is neglected in present day Igbo *Ohacracy* communities in pursuit for raw cash. Mechanized agriculture (see Ebelebe

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93 See chapter four on the "Agriculture, trade and manufacture." In this festival the Igbo communities celebrate the arrival of new harvesting season whereby food assurance becomes eminent. *Iri Ji ohuru* is otherwise known as New-Yam- Festivals among the Igbo *Ohacracy* of South-eastern Nigeria.

2009:180), must be well encouraged to boost food security which is no longer thought to be a serious concern for all among the Igbo *Ohacracy*.

The yearly new yam festival among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people must therefore be given a new outlook as a call to go back to the land. It is by being actively involved on the land that the Igbo *Ohacracy* people will find food security thereby saving the lives of millions of her children who starve to death due to lack of food and good body nutrition. The Igbo *Ohacracy* new yam festival reminds the present day African state rulers to renew and attend to the need for new and sustainable policies for food production. As this call to return to the land awakens every mind, conscious effort must be made to benefit individuals and the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities. Therefore, monitoring policies and systems should be put in place enabling members of the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities who are willing to take up this call and challenge be given necessary support for food production.

The Igbo people whose ancestors had been fed with yams instead of dependence on hand-outs cannot grow lazy in the contemporary social economic and agricultural mechanized cultures of the day. This study has clearly demonstrated and called on the entire Igbo *Ohacracy* communities to stand on their feet and repossess their ancient heritage in the production of food that has sustained the entire Igbo *Ohacracy* population. Ukachukwu (2007:260) points out a major *Ohacracy* development lesson and challenge of the yearly celebrated *Iri-Ji Ohuru* (the eating of new yam) festival as that most Igbo *Ohacracy* citizens must strive to excel in any enterprise they invest their talents in, especially in agriculture. He writes:

> …the bountiful production of yams in ancient Igbo land with crude implements reminds us of the industry and diligence that had hardened the sinews of their ancestors. …the industry of …yesteryears must be replicated in various skills and expertise the postmodern age requires of the Igbo. They must join the course being championed by the latest advancements in biotechnology required to revolutionize modern agriculture, cultivation and marketability of yams.

Ukachukwu (2007:260) emphasizes on the need for the Igbo *Ohacracy* not to depend on oil, since the present oil-driven economy in Nigeria can easily be disrupted by unexpected winds of change. The persistent conflict in the Niger Delta is a clear picture calling citizens to work on other economic strengths in the Igbo communities. To avoid this quandary on which there is a 'hand-writing on the wall' the chances to promote agriculture and food production can no longer be neglected. The neglect of agriculture will surely rain down doom for the Igbo

Ohacracy order if no urgent action is taken to revive the massive production of yam and other staple foodstuffs. Since massive food production will serve as sustainable development for Igbo *Ohacracy* communities, full participation on food production is the way forward.

Chapter Summary

In this last chapter, the study has shown the entire focus of the study on implications and recommendations as regards to decentralized and centralized models of ecclesiastical governance. The significance of the chief with 'big ear' and inculturation theories has yielded some values and impressions that have been addressed. Having explained in the previous chapters the need for participatory Church among the Igbo *Ohacracy*, this chapter has employed both decentralized and centralized systems to make practical suggestions in the light of the Vatican II ecclesiology to chat the way forward for the full participation of women and laity in Catholic Church governance. Indeed the effort being made is also to foster a good spirit of communal Church and solidarity as forms of witnessing and ministry between the laity and clergy in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic Church and Nigeria in general. With this effort, the Vatican II ecclesiology or communal Church as pertaining full participation of all who belong to the 'Family of God's People,' the Council's adaptation and full application within the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic Church will be realized.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Ecclesiology as defined in the theology of the Vatican II Council presented this study with focus on the full participation of the laity in the Catholic Church governance. Previous Councils and pre-conciliar tendencies saw the laity as mere spectators depending on the enterprises of the clergy. Those periods focussed on the clergy. The Vatican II opened a new ecclesial space with possibilities or the lay people to play their role as well in Catholic Church governance. Hence, such symbolic imageries as discussed in the study such as 'People of God,' 'Church as communion' and 'Family of God's People, which also has strong roots in the Igbo *Ohacracy* traditions on the institution of the family, has made enormous difference as presented in the indigenous model proposed.

Through this, both individuals and groups in both decentralized and centralized systems as presented in the institutional structures participate actively for sustenance. As baptismal membership gives all Catholics the right to belong in the Roman Catholic Church, so also does citizenship gives belongingness to the Igbo *Ohacracy* members to participate in the *Ohacratic* system. Hence, all who belong are called to participate without discrimination, separation or division. The faithful therefore (including the clergy and lay), belong to this same Church Family that share in the equal role of participation in Catholic Church governance.

As this study concludes, clarity must be sort over the participation in governance of the lay in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities and Nigeria in general. With hermeneutical distinctions already made in chapters three and six on ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of the faithful, the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic Church communities could as well be hanging on to the past or pre-conciliar implications which interpreted and assumed the lay to be passive in Catholic Church governance. Such interpretation presents us with a legally hierarchical defined Church or an ecclesiology that is highly 'institutionalised' rather than a fellowship of Christ followers. Such an understanding of Church does not consider the full participation of all who belong to full belonging. Ranks for office or position, in this case, is rather emphasized other than services of servanthood that could be provided for the common good of all which this study has stressed and proposed. Such a position pushes for a mentality

of status based on 'power and authority' of the clergy over and above the general priesthood of the faithful.

Yet, the centralized Roman Catholic Church as defined in structure and governance of the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic Church, has not received adequate attention and co-accountability towards the realization of full participation in governance. This is a real challenge as the recommendation of the Vatican II ecclesiology or theology on the laity and as in the decentralized system discussed in this study has strongly suggested. To realize this vision of co-responsibility and unity in the Igbo *Ohacracy* Catholic communities and Nigeria in general, a well thought out developed collegial, diocesan and parish level structures and actions is required and recommended to involve the laity in Catholic Church governance. With more involvement and adequate engagement of the laity and women in particular, reconciliation and peace will be achieved between both systems as discussed in this study.

Furthermore, the Church and governance in the Catholic Church in Nigeria in explaining the relevance of the Igbo *Ohacracy* order of participatory governance among the South-eastern Nigeria has been a complex and tedious exercise. As noted above, most areas of development that took place among the Igbo *Ohacracy* decentralized context, for instance, the Western education, Church cathedrals and Church medical centres etc., could only take root by the early contacts with the West and the openness of the Igbo *Ohacracy*. Hence, it is true to state that urbanization, capitalism, modernism, globalisation, Catholicism and western education among others, are some key factors which have influenced the Igbo *Ohacracy* people. Such have informed and changed their traditional value systems, influencing them to assimilate different worldviews and new values. In this this case, Ifemesia (2002:115) writes:

> …down the millennia, long before the coming of Western Christian missionaries and others (colonialism), the Igbo people just led their lives and ordered their affairs in the way they found most suitable to their basic and periodic needs, in keeping with their natural environment...the Igbo people did not undergo any irreversible social and political revolution as a result of dramatic and traumatic external intervention. Indeed, nothing had happened to invalidate the wisdom of the ancients.

In hunger and pursuit for Western modernization, the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities employed some of the institutions like Development or Welfare Unionism as instruments for bringing both the rural to urban and urban (informed by western culture) back to rural as noted in chapters four and five of this study. Each community organised its own welfare union branch

comprising both the new city migrants and their rural farming communities, but federated to the central union organisation. This central body was vested with powers of control so much that they were able to realise the expected positive changes and development through the monitory contributions of its branches. It must be noted that these development unions are in existence to this day in all cities and countries where an ample number of Igbo *Ohacracy* people have migrated; and such still plays significant roles as in the past.

As the study has noted, when the drive for modernisation heightened, other similar organisations that came on board assisted the Igbo *Ohacracy* people to grow their participatory governance by enabling its social order to progress rapidly. These included women's associations, parent-teacher associations, age-grades, social clubs, co-operative societies and Christian communities which helped to make life worth living in the community settings as highlighted by Egboh (1987:180). Hence, such amenities like health institutions, primary and secondary schools, pipe-borne water, town halls or civic centres, accessible roads, modern markets and postal services came about by the practical *Ohacracy* model of participatory governance. Economic and welfare projects like cassava, rubber and palm plantations were established as a result of these organisations to help improve the entire life in the Igbo governance. Important to note therefore is that while these other organisations centred their effort on the provision of socio-economic institutions, the Christian governance in their own efforts were determined on the provision of cathedrals and pro-cathedrals that beautified the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities.

Several reasons can be highlighted to explain in great length of success stories among the Igbo *Ohacracy* people's self-help and growth as noted in participatory governance. The Igbo people's origin from the same stock as Ifemesia (2002:115) suggests, having a common Igbo language, worshipping the same superintending Earth-Deity, enjoying the common sense of identity by short and long distant trade communications, cultural relations that existed among village-groups and clans were among other symbolic evidences that led to this unity of purpose and growth. All these therefore aided the Igbo people by their possession of this common heritage, experiencing a sense of cultural uniformity and unity throughout the span of their broad native land. Equally, it was based on the entire above mentioned common heritage that the Catholic Church governance grew with regards to the provision of Western education, medical facilities and other areas of the Catholic Church influences, being so much supported by Igbo *Ohacracy* spirit.

The Catholic Church in her governance had offered and played a vital role by giving incentives and helping to lead the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities by way of providing technical assistance, funds and advice to the communities' benefit and growth. As Egboh (1987:181) rightly notes, the Catholic Church had also helped by training local leaders who supervised leadership trainings, and had encouraged its agencies of charitable organizations to support the local efforts to impact on life in order to address the poverty and ignorant situations among the Igbo *Ohacracy* societies. The task and function of co-operative societies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) towards the improvement of life in the rural Igbo dwellings is equally remarkable as well specified in chapter six of this study.

The value of common good that has been described and proposed in this study is such that it promotes and nourishes life to its full realization if all members of a given society respond accordingly. This is so because as Njoku (2004:187) rightly argue that, common good is a horizon of values and responsibilities to be realized and tasks to be done in "the mutual complementation and development of members of society or state." It is this type of common good that he calls "Common Good of Covenanted Will" (Njoku 2004:187). Njoku notes that covenanted subjects come to life because people want to bring out the best in themselves and to create the best conditions within which their flourishing can be realized. Life values of health, property, education, peace and security are such motivating agents for individuals and communities to foster efforts towards well-being. Njoku (2004) concludes that, "…in other words, actions of leaders and the led alike are judged good or bad, right or wrong according to as they foster or impede the common good…"

However, this vital clarity as noted above, calls for a total change of cause by the Catholic Church leadership in and around Nigeria and the Igbo *Ohacracy* order in particular. Hence, the present day Catholic Church governing leaders in Nigeria, and the entire populace of the Church can borrow a leaf from the "Common Good of Covenanted Will" and improve on the policy of pursuing a common goal that would enrich all who live in the Nigerian Church society. The present day Nigerian Catholic Church which has rather become 'self-centred and self-serving' in many ramifications of religious worship; must instead become open towards servant hood and service to the poor, the less privileged, women and children, the abused, the trafficked, the unemployed youth, and indeed the entire Nigerian populace to continue to serve the needy in the true missionary nature of the Church. By so doing the Catholic leadership in Nigeria and the Igbo *Ohacracy* church in particular will not only proclaim that

the sacrament of baptism is not just the covenant of water (that washes dirt - sin - away) but equally blood (that remains and runs life in every vein) related covenant to all who are united by faith in Christ.

By the practice of common good where effort is centred on improving the life of all who live in a society, all citizens of Nigerian Catholic Church would feel a sense of belonging and be committed to the improvement of life in their faith communities. The rampant Nigerian Church difficulties and evils of sectionalism, ethnic segregation, language discrimination, tribalism, religio-political divisions and conflicts and conscious exclusions of some sections of the country on economic and welfare matters, should give way to conscious and mutual respect for all human person. The leaders and the led would be able to work together in full conscious applying a holistic approach towards the realization and renewal of values as already noted in the study.

As Uzukwu (1996:151) acknowledges and concludes, that this conscious change would require that all governance in religion, politics and traditional Igbo to adopt a model for listening to the reality on the ground (e.g. corruption in all levels of governance that has caused abject poverty, regional and state conflicts, immense hunger and untold suffering caused by unemployment etc...) through involving the masses in a conversation and dialogue for change and renewal. He goes further to say that it is through this 'listening model' which in political terms may be called consultation, deliberation, or decentralization at all levels of governance, and indeed which will mean Igbo *Ohacracy* be seen alive among the Igbo Catholic Church context.

This listening model as a concept applied in this study within the theoretical frame work of the 'chief with large ears' will finally mean the very practice of consultative forum as noted in all the aspects of this study in the decentralization in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order of the South-eastern Nigeria. The difficult situation of suffering in all ramifications of life in the Igbo *Ohacracy* communities calls for a radical response and turnaround in order to address or redress this cruel malignant. Uzukwu (1996:152) once again writes on this 'about-turn' (*metanoya*[94]), explaining that 'people sally forth, abandon cherished property, abandon the

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94 *Metanoya* is a Greco-Roman (Christian) term used to describe a converting or repentant person making a conscious abandonment of his or her former life for a new Christian discovered life. This is a turnabout or turnaround for a better way of following the Christian practice.

security of their homes, expose their flanks, put their lives on the line, and die in order to realize the higher motives on which society is founded.'

Only in taking such steps to renew life and give authentic meaning to all who live in the society, will the Catholic Church governance and the Igbo *Ohacracy* order be able to address life as it should. Abandonment of one's self interest (individualism) for the common good of all in the society is the right call towards change. In this perception Uzukwu concludes:

> Africa has come to such a crossroads! The most sacred sanctuaries of value and meaning are being eroded by criminal manipulators, military Mafiosi, and archaic propagators of an authoritarianism which holds the Spirit of life captive. The cry "Of what worth is life!" must publicly resound as a cry of open, frank, bold witness… (1996:152).

In essence, life as described in this study with the effects of Catholic Church governance and loss of values among the Igbo *Ohacracy* seem to be held captive, hostage and enslaved. The Igbo *Ohacracy* life must be liberated from the enslavement of the present day empty promises and deception of religious indoctrination that does not address the suffering reality of Igbo life on the ground. This call invites the Igbo *Ohacracy* populace to hold their religious and political leaders accountable at all levels of governance. By so doing the whole act of dialogue and listening as proposed in the Igbo *Ohacracy* order will be realized and achieved. Indeed, concurring with Ngambi's (2011:13) call for accountability in governance is inescapable as she states:

> …leadership...engaging with current realities and developing leaders...requires an eye for targeting potential talent and supporting it. ...leadership dedicated to educating, training, developing, retaining and rewarding talent, not mediocrity. ...not support incompetency that arises from misplaced loyalty, but is value driven and principled enough to reject any form of toxic behaviour, even from close allies.

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23 December 2015

Rev. Chikadi J. Anyanele 214584854
School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Rev Anyanele

Protocol reference number: HSS/1823/015D
Project title: Church and governance in the Catholic Church in Nigeria: An exploration of the Relevance of the Ohacracy Indigenous model of participatory Governance in the Igbo Church of South-eastern Nigeria.

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 15 December 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor:
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Denis
cc School Administrator: Mrs C Murugan

Appendix 010 UKZN – Certificate of Approval, 23 December 2015

Appendix No. 1 of Item 1, See 5.6.1 Dibia among the Owerri Igbo as discussed in chapter 5.

Appendix No.1of Item 2, Dibia as seen among the Okigwe Igbo in chapter 5, 5.6.1 above.

Appendix No.2 See Masquerade in 5.7.3 as discussed in chapter 5 above.

Appendix No.3 Oji as discussed in 5.3.1 above on chapter 5

Appendix No.4 Item 1 of Ofo used among the Owerri Igbo. See 5.3.2 chapter 5 above.

Appendix No. 4 of Item 2 Ofo used among the Okigwe Igbo. See 5.3.2 chapter 5 above.

Appendix No. 5, Item 1 the Pontif and his Episcopates in the Vatican, Rome as discussed in chapter 3, see 3.3 and 3.4 respectively

Appendix No.5, Item 2 showing a presbyter being ordained, the laying on of hands on the deacon by priests as seen in chapter 3 of 3.4.1above.

Appendix No.6 The 'King' and his Red Cap Chiefs or of the Ozo as seen in chapter 5, see 5.6.2 above