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THE UMUNRI-ENUGWU UKWU ANCESTRAL CONNECTION: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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THE UMUNRI-ENUGWU UKWU ANCESTRAL CONNECTION: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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This paper is dedicated to the great Enugwu-Ukwu maestro AWUTOLO (Rest In Peace). Your music lives!

Salutations!

HRM Eze Enugwu-Ukwu and Igwe Umunri, Sir Ralph Ohumneme Ekpeh, Okpalanakana Ukabia Nri IV, members of the Royal cabinet, Ndi Ichie, Nze na Ozo, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen present.

I greet you.

I am standing here to present this paper not because I know it all but because the onus fell on me by sheer luck. Yes, I said ‘luck’ because I know that Enugwu-Ukwu has men and women with great intellect in archaeology, anthropology and history who may even do better than me but here I am. My late father Offorkansi Okoye Obiozor-Igbo will be smiling down on me now as I speak, remembering how I used to quiz him about my hometown – Enugwu-Ukwu.

Please do not consider me a historian but an adult educator which I have always been. I methodically researched and documented the data I got on UmuNri and Enugwu Ukwu, used the opportunity to interview many people although some chickened out because they do not want to be quoted in any form of controversy. I do not consider this presentation as controversial piece but just sharing with everyone what I gathered in the field as an academic and researcher. So, it is left for you to decide and choose what you want to believe.
INTRODUCTION

The history of Igbo nation in Southeast Nigeria of West Africa cannot be complete without the mention of the great UmuNri clan which emerged centuries ago from the revered Nri kingdom. The Igbo race of Southeastern Nigeria is among the three major tribes/ethnic groups in Nigeria (the others are Yoruba and Hausa). Ndi Igbo (the Igbo people) share linguistic ties with their neighbors - the Delta, Bini, Igala, Yoruba, Nupe, Ijaw, Ibibio and Idoma, with the split between them probably occurring thousands of years ago.

Ndi Igbo have common but richly endowed cultural identity, ancestral insignia and native trademark, which have been a source of education and pride over the centuries. The Igbo race speaks the same language, have great innovative and hardworking spirit, share the same customary rites, artistic and religious practices (Obiozor, 2008) and this makes Ndi Igbo unique and envy of other ethnic groups in Nigeria.

It is not surprising that global researchers and scholars of history, anthropology and archeology have focused their searchlight on Ndi Igbo over the years, and many years to come. For instance, Afigbo & Uchendu, 1965; Okere, 1983; VanderSluis, 2000; to mention but a few had this to say:

Within all of Africa, the Igbo homelands are probably one of the most densely populated regions. It is believed by many that this area and its people were one of the driving forces in the early development in the Iron
Age which has helped mold the world as we know it. Their culture has brought much to enrich the world . . . . The Igbo have a very unique and distinctive language. It is said often to be one of the hardest to learn. The difficulty of the language often stems from the fact that it is not spoken anywhere else in the world. It is a rich language with many variations. With heavy cultural roots directed at change for the better, the Igbo seem to be just as diverse as the changing language they speak . . . .

But of utmost importance in these historical lineages of Ndi Igbo is the fact that the Igbo tradition acknowledges Nri’s right to the traditional leadership of Igboland. This in effect, according to Eluwa (2008) makes the Nri clan the royal family of the Igbo nation. Not only is it acknowledged that the government of Igboland was regulated by Nri, it is also believed that the Nri ethnic clan provided the leadership that spearheaded the migration of a large populations of Igbo people, as well as large sections of other selected related tribes.

**UmuNri: A Historical Narration/Account**

Nri is the father of Umunri clan. The clan is made up of four autonomous communities. They are Enugwu-Ukwu, Nawfia, Agu-Ukwu and Enugwu-Agidi. The vast majority of Igbo trace their ancestral origin to Nri. And Enugwu-Ukwu being the descendants of the first son of Nri, has that responsibility. Nri is documented worldwide. In fact, the history and story of Nri is taught in
universities here in Nigeria and outside the country. So, it’s not controversial (Mkpume, 2014).

It is a great challenge to gather and submit historical accounts of the UmuNri. Several accounts on the origin and historical narrations and information on Nri Kingdom and UmuNri clan came from different sources namely; personal communications from aged men and women (otherwise local historians) from UmuNri and related communities; several author/editorial statements, archived research reports, online writings, gossips, and folk tales, etc. All these sources are reflected either within the work or in the Reference page of this paper.

The Enugwu-Agidi.org (2014) gave two distinct web accounts of UmuNri history with citations from the research reports of erudite Professor M.A. Onwuejeogwu. These historical/ancestry accounts are as follows:

1st Historical Account

The Umu-Nri (children of Nri) clan, made up of Nri, Enugwu-Ukwu, Nawfia, Enugwu-Agidi, and Oruora, which no longer exist. In other words, these towns belong to the same ancestral root, and the ancient divine kingship of Nri (Eze Nri). The name and place of Nri in the development of Igbo culture and tradition are at times confused with those of Eri. Eri is said to be the original legendary cultural head of the Igbo people, just as Oduduwa is to the Yoruba people.
From oral and recorded mythical accounts, Eri is said ‘to come down from the sky, having been sent by God’. Eri settled and established in the middle of Anambra River valley where he married two wives. The first of the wives bore him five children. The first was Agulu, the founder of Aguleri, the second was Nri Ifikuanim, the founder of Umunri, followed by Nri Onugu, the founder of Igbariam and Ogbodulu, the founder of Amanuke. The fifth one was a daughter called Iguedo, who is said to have born the founders of Nteje, and Awkuzu. As one of the children of Eri, Nri Ifikuanim migrated from Aguleri, which was and still is the ancestral temple of the people, in search of a place of settlement. He found such a place and settled near the present Enugwu-Ukwu.

2nd Historical Account

A version of the oral account mentioned Mkpume Onyilenyi as the spot of the original settlement at Enugwu-Ukwu. It has to be mentioned here that accounts given of developments from the period of this Enugwu-Ukwu settlement could be conflicting. According to the accounts by Professor M.A. Onwuejeogwu which holds that it was during the period of Nri Ifikuanim’s settlement at Enugwu-Ukwu area that he bore the progenitor or ancestor of the Enugwu-Ukwu, Nneofia and Enugwu-Agidi peoples. And that he later left that Enugwu-Ukwu site and came down the valley near the lake to establish the town of Agukwu.
This account leaves one to deduce that the progenitor of Agukwu was born later at the new settlement or that he in fact, was born at the Enugwu-Ukwu site but moved with father to the new place of settlement.

3rd Historical Account

The next account of Nri Kingdom confirms this second deduction. It holds that the progenitor of Agukwu, called Ewelana, was not only born at the Enugwu-Ukwu site, but also was the first son of Nri Ifikuanim. And that he migrated to the new site with his father. It is at this Agukwu site that Nri Ifikuanim established and became Eze Nri Ifikuanim, reigning till 1152 A.D. From written account, Nri Ifikuanim was not the first son of Eri, and one is inclined to believe this, since he did not inherit the father’s temple at Aguleri. One is, because of this position, tempted to ask why is it then that Nri Ifikuanim was the most famous and influential of the children of Eri. Prof. Onwuejeogwu’s written account supplied the answer by confirming that Nri Ifikuanim inherited a lot of qualities and powers from his father. The account further stated that Eri revealed to Nri Ifikuanim the secrets of the ‘mystical world’ and gave him two types of paraphernalia called NRIMERI.

One of them comprised of two staffs, OFO NRI and ALO NRI, and the other type comprised of objects of bronze, iron, and clay. Since the reign of Nri Ifikuanim, which, according to written account, stretched from 1042 to 1152 A.D., many other kings had ascended the Ezenri throne in an orderly succession.
It should be noted that lineages and control of Nri extended to major areas of Igbo land includingNsukka, Owerri, Asaba, Okigwe, and Agbor, etc.

The final act of destruction of Nri influence was in 1911 after the British introduced the warrant Chief system and summoned all chiefs and community leaders and forced them to denounce Eze Nri. But before then, Eze Nri Obalike was forced to abrogate all codes of taboo and abomination still binding the towns to Nri. It was as the result of this hostility that the ritual influence of Nri got narrowed to the nearest relations of the kingship, made up of Nri (Agukwu, Akamkpisi and Dido), Enugwu-Ukwu, Nawfia, Enugwu-Agidi and Oruora jointly referred to as Umunri.

4th Historical Account

From the book – “My People of UmuNri/Enugwu Ukwu: Socio-political Heritage and Ancient Migration” written by Engr. B.O. Amaegwu (published in 2013), the origin of Nri Kingdom was traced to the Biblical days where UmuNri was said to be founded around 900AD by the progenitor, Eri. The book traced the origin of Eri to the time of Abraham who died at the age of 175 years in 2200 BC. Eri came into the picture as a descendant of Gad (Erites) who joined other Israelites to enter Egypt. The author added that some of the Israelites founded settlements in the Southern part of Sudan, while some travelled further south; some branched off to Jukun, in the Northern part of Nigeria, while others
continued and arrived at the confluence of River Niger and Anambra which is called “Ezu na Omambala” and settled there.

An Erite arrived at the confluence of “Ezu na Omambala” and had two wives, Nneamaku and Oboli. He settled at Obuga which was later renamed Aguleri; Nneamaku bore him Agulu, Nri Ifiakwuanim, Nri Onugu, Ogbodudu and a daughter, Iguedo. Oboli bore him Onoja, who was one of the founders of Igala kingdom in Kogi state. Agulu remained at their father’s temple and founded Aguleri. Ogbodudu left the temple and begot Nrinaoke N’Ogbodudu and Ezikannebo. Nrinaoke N’Ogbodudu founded the Diodo dynasty while his brother Ezikannebo founded Akakpisi and Amanuke. Nri Onugu founded Igbariam. Iguedo the only daughter begot Ogbunike, Okuzu (Awkuzu), Nando, Umuleri and Nteje known as Umu-Iguedo.

Nri Ifiakwuanim was the last to leave Obuga (Aguleri). He traveled south wards through Amanuke, and settled among the Ugbene people. He was allowed to settle on part of their forest land called Agu-Ukwu (big land area Agu-Ukwu Ugbene). There, he perfected the practices of his craft of native doctor and diviner. He begot his sons and a daughter. Later, Nri Ifiakuanim moved further into the heart of Igbo land. He first settled at Mkpume Onyilenyi, in what is now known as Enugwu-Ukwu (Ugwu Awovu). Nri Ifiakwuanim’s first son Okpalanankanu remained and established himself at Mkpume Onyilenyi and became the progenitor of Enugwu Ukwu.
The second son, Okpalanriam left Mkpume Onyilenyi to carry on his farming in the nearby “Nne-ofia” and founded what is now known as Nnofia (Nawfia). The third son, Aguiyi, also a farmer moved out to establish his own location now known as Enugwu-Agidi. There is also the story about a controversial son Oruora who also relocated northeast of Enugwu-Agidi but now said to be extinct though his descendants are said to be presently settled in towns like Isu, Ukwulu and Nawgu and even in Enugwu-Agidi. The daughter of Nri Ifiakwuanim was said to be the mother of Amawbia while Nri Ifiakwuanim went down the valley and settled there, at the present Agu-ukwu.

Thus, Enugwu Ukwu, Agu-ukwu, Nwafia, and Enugwu-Agidi are the present UmuNri clan. Nri Ifiakwuanim settled and established the Agu-ukwu Nri site and reigned from 1042 to 1152 AD as Eze Nri Ifiakwuanim. As a father, he was said to have given his sons gifts which included the sacred staff (Ofo) when they were leaving for different places of their settlements. The gifts to his children included a long cane basket (Ukpa) and a sacred staff for travelling (Ofo ije) which was given to Enugwu-Ukwu and Agu-Ukwu; a clay dish for yam (Oku Ifejioku) was given to Nawfia while Enugwu-Agidi was given a clay dish for Cocoyam (Oku Ede). All his sons were given the Ofo. This justifies why Enugwu-Ukwu holds the Ofo Nri.

**5th Historical Account**
According to Oba Nwachukwu Arinze, born in 1918; “There is no doubt that Enugwu-Ukwu is the Okpala Nri. The present Agukwu community is not Nri rather Aka mkpisi is the Nri and they are the Ichie Ezegbo – people of Agukwu. Aka mkpisi is the father of Nri who gave birth to Enugwu Ukwu, then Nawfia, Enugwu Agidi and then Oru ora who had no child. Oru ora left and its land was shared by the relatives (Nawfia and Enugwu-Agidi). Agukwu came from the Ugbene community called *Agu-ukwu Ugebene enu* which are located at Ebenebe community (around Awka North). So, Enugwu Ukwu is the first son of Nri. This issue of who comes first amongst Nri children have long ago been laid to rest during the reign of His Royal Majesty (HRM) Igwe Osita Agwuna III; signed and sealed by the late Igwe with the government of the state years ago”.

The community leader further disclosed that the historical archives of Anambra State and Igwe Agwuna’s library stored the right information on the history of Umunri and Enugwu-Ukwu’s first son position, if anyone can access the documents. “It is worthy to note that Avomimi decides on the Onwa Asato season – New yam feast/festival” (Personal Communication: Oba Nwachukwu Arinze, November 30, 2014).

Nwaezeigwe (2013) corroborated the historical story about Agukwu in his essay writings on *The politics of Igbo Origin and culture*. Though biased in some quarters but Nwaezeigwe mentioned that “the Agukwu group joined the other marriage groups later after having settled and lived at Ugbene from where they derived
their name, Agukwu-Ugbene, which is a reference to the area of their original settlement at Ugbene”.

6th Historical Account

Writing a rejoinder on a discussion on *Ndigbo and her ‘integrated’ Eri/Nri Brother* (Radoillo, online Personal Communication, October 24, 2013), Radiollo said, *I didn’t want to include this bit in my thread because I didn’t want to step on Nri-centric toes, and because I felt it was largely external to what I was talking; but this is what our traditions, recorded by Amanke Okafor, says about Eri and Nri Ifiukwuanim.*

“According to the tradition of the Nri themselves, a man of Igala stock from Idah called Eri, son of Achado, a native doctor and hunter, came down the Omambala River in search of the River at a place later called Aguleri (Aguleri Igbo), and begat a number of children, to whom he passed on the secrets of his arts. His eldest son, who succeeded to the paraphernalia of his trade, was called Nriifikwuanim. This first son moved farther into Igbo land and settled among the Ugbene people, who showed him a portion of their farmland called “Agu Ukwu” to live and farm upon.

Nriifikwuanim prospered and became known not only for his powers to cure diseases, but also for his readiness to assume the risk of cleansing people of abominations. *He was able to do this because abominations were sins against the Earth goddess – Aja Ana, and being a non-Igbo*
person he was not subject to the power of any Aja Ana in Igboland. What was “Alu” — abomination to the Igbo was not Alu to him, and what was “Nso” (forbidden conduct) did not concern him. He came from a different clime. He could, therefore, perform ceremonies to cleanse people of abominations attaching to them, and so make them acceptable to their communities once more. He took things – clothes, property – for his own use which the Igbos regarded as unclean or prohibited from the Igbo gods. He got rich thereby. From removing the stains of abomination from people, Nriifikwuanim developed the technique of sanctifying things in general, by rituals which he devised; for example, driving away evil spirits from or around people (exorcism). When he became famous, he decided to move from Ugbene to the more populous areas of Igboland. He came and dwelt near Oka, on the land of another Igbo community, the Adama, owners of the land where he settled, by giving them a percentage of his earnings, in cash or kind; hence the saying “Ivbe Nri evbe Adama” — What you pay to Nri Nri pays to Adama’s people.

Adama was the Head of Umudiana Village of Adazi, owners of the land, who gave the first land they settled upon to the Nris. Later on, the Nris expanded by buying more land for themselves. From the time they lived at Ugbene, Nriifikwuanim and his followers were referred to as “Ndu bun a Agu Ukwu Ugbene” — dwellers in Agu Ukwu land of the Ugbenes). From this reference to their locality the name “Agu Ukwu” identified
Nriifikwuanim and his people, and even when they had left Ugborne town, they were still known as “Agu Ukwu” people. So, when they came to live near Oka to work, the community of Nriifikwuanim was known as Agu Ukwu, and their place of habitation Agukwu town. In modern times, the name has been changed to Nri town, after the name of their ancestor – Nri ifikwuanim. But the Ikolo drums of the Nris still call them: “Agu Ukwu Ugbe Ukwu Ugbene Ukwu!”

And so on and on....!

Unfortunately, the article didn’t bother talking about the UmuNri clan relationships but more of trying to promote Awka town unlike Agukwu.

7th Historical Account

Writing on the most popular origin of Enugwu-Ukwu and UmuNri as narrated by ancient custodians of UmuNri tradition and cultural heritage; Egbuna & Nwune (2014:1) in their book Conflict Resolution in Enugwu-Ukwu, revealed that;

Nri Ifikunam was the progenitor of UmuNri clan. He was the second son of Eri and moved from his father’s original abode at Aguleri looking for a place to settle. He found such a place around Mkpume Onyilienyi in the present Osili village in Enugwu-Ukwu. It was here that he had five sons who were Okpalanakana Ukabia (the ancestral father of Enugwu-Ukwu), Okpalaram (the ancestral father of Nawfia), Menri (the ancestral father of
Agukwu and Akamkpisi), Aguiyi (the ancestral father of Enugwu-Agidi) and Nwora Oruora, in that order of seniority.

This means that the father of Enugwu-Ukwu was the first son of Nri Ifukanim. By tradition, therefore, Enugwu-Ukwu was supposed to be the ‘Ofo’ Nri, the symbol of authority in UmuNri clan.

**THE IMPLICATIONS**

In kick-starting his argument on the globally acknowledged statement ‘Nri bu isi Igbo’ in his essay - Nwaezeigwe (2013) critically looked at the controversy surrounding the name itself which this researcher felt should come in at this point of the discussion on UmuNri and Enugwu-Ukwu: the Connection.

Nwaezeigwe wrote:

*In concept, the term “Nri” is a title-name which is accorded to whoever assumes the Eze–Nri title (Nri Priest-Kingship). The term “Agukwu”-Nri” was therefore coined in reference to the abode of most past Eze-Nri in difference to the others . . . However, it is worthy of note that “Nri” as the name of the present amalgamated communities of Agukwu and Akamkpisi, took effect only in 1940, precisely on December, 30th, during the Annual General Meeting of Nri Co-operative Society (NCS).

This action to adopt Nri as their official name did not go down well with other Umunri towns, such as Enugu-Ukwu, Enugwu-Agidi and Nawfia. In his reaction, Chief S.O.N. Okafor of Enugwu-Agidi stated quite emotionally thus:

“It is important to mention for the historians to note that Nri is not a name of a particular town in Umunri clan. I consider it in this wise, that Enugwu-
Agidi, Enugwu-Ukwu, Nawfia and Agukwu town could, if decided, be called Enugwu-Agidi Nri, Enugwu Ukwu Nri, Nawfia Nri, as Agukwu town has abandoned her name Agukwu and registered Nri. May be, this is just a way of changing the history of Umunri or there is political motive behind the change.”

With political independence, growth of nationalism and cultural consciousness, there is a growing tendency among Igbo elites to reestablish their Nri cultural root as Igbo people. Though the five towns mentioned above are said to belong to UmuNri Clan, some researchers argue that they are not direct descendants of Nri Ifikuanim. Oral tradition has it that their father was OKPALANAKA. This account notwithstanding, majority of oral traditional accounts from aged citizens of UmuNri pointed at Enugwu-Ukwu as the first son of Nri.

The Agukwu historical version came from a speech made by Igwe Onyeso, Nri Enwelana II, during his Igu Aro ceremony in 2004 where he traced the origin of Nri Kingdom to 900AD by the progenitor Eri, the son of Gad. The traditional ruler gave some Biblical narration from the time of Jacob to Exodus by Israelites via their settlements in Africa, then parts of Nigeria and the final arrival of Eri at the confluence of the Rivers Niger and Anambara known as “Ezu-na-Omambala”, settled there and embarked on procreations which brought about children whereby the first child Nrifikwuanim-Menri begot Agukwu Nri, Enugwu-Ukwu, Enugwu-Agidi, Nawfia and Amawbia, while his
brother Ogbodudu who later became Nrinaoke N’Ogbodudu had founded the Diodo dynasty, while his brother Ezikannebo founded Akamkpisi and Amanuke; among others. According to Nri Oral tradition recently substantiated by archaeological findings of Oraeri/Igbo-ukwu objects, the unification of Agukwu, Diodo and Akamkpisi was enacted constitutionally during the reign of Nribuife (AD1159-1252) who was the first Eze Nri to observe the Igu-Aro Festival as pan-Igbo affair in 1160AD (Onwuejeogwu, 2003; Egbuna & Nwune, 2014). From all the accounts, it is certain that the people of the current UmuNri clan are from the same progenitor and have no choice than to see themselves as such.

So where is the twist?

Since the father of Enugwu-Ukwu was the first son of Nri Ifukanim; by tradition, Enugwu-Ukwu was supposed to be the ‘Ofo’ Nri, the symbol of authority in UmuNri clan, argued Egbuna & Nwune (2014). The historians disclosed that this position was seriously being challenged by Agukwu, such that it was said that in 1960, the Senior Administrative Officer in charge of Awka division set up a Commission of Inquiry to find out the truth. Egbuna & Nwune further revealed that the leaders of all the communities that constitute UmuNri clan were invited to a meeting. Enugwu-Agidi and Akampisi supported the claim by Enugwu-Ukwu while Nawfia supported Agukwu. It was therefore ruled that Enugwu-Ukwu was indeed the first son of Nri Ifikuanim and was
therefore the head of UmuNri clan. From that period to date, the traditional title of Igwe Enugwu-Ukwu became Eze Enugwu-Ukwu and Igwe UmuNri.

*This valuable information goes on to justify and vindicate the historical narrations of the 96-years old Oba Nwachukwu Arinze.* Enugwu-Ukwu was indeed the first son of Nri Ifikuanim and was therefore the head of UmuNri clan.

**The Spread of Umunri Clan**

Nri clan dispersed to 140 towns in Southeast Nigeria; for instance, in some parts of Awka, Nibo, Nise and other related areas have Nri links. In Ibusa community, Delta state, where we have the Ogboli Ibusa which has Nri lineage. The Ogwashiuku and Isele Uku communities have Nri background.

During the researcher’s trip around UmuNri clan, it was His Royal Majesty (HRM) Igwe Sir Ralph Ekpeh, Eze Enugwu-Ukwu and Igwe Umunri boldly granted an interview on the theme; and the royal father stressed thus;

“Historically, Enugwu-Ukwu is the first son amongst UmuNri and so many offspring of Enugwu-Ukwu are scattered around many communities outside the town.” Some of these communities were highlighted as follows by the Igwe Ekpeh.

- Enugu Ezike people are from Uruekwo village in Enugwu-Ukwu. They were located in a place known as Ofia Ezike before they relocated years
back to their present abode in Enugu State known as Enugu Ezike. They have come on several occasions to pay homage to Eze Enugwu Ukwu during traditional events.

In Nsukka area, we have the Akiyi Umulokpa community who came from Akiyi village while greater parts of Amabia town are natives of Enugwu-Ukwu from Uruorji village. Furthermore, when you go to Adazi Enu, the village known as Enugwu Adazi came from Enu Abomimi village in Enugwu-Ukwu (Personal Communication: HRM Igwe Sir Ralph Ekpeh, December 12, 2014).

**Enugwu-Ukwu: 1st Son & Paternal Head - Okpala Nri Okpalanakana Ukabia**

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ENUGWU-UKWU, the clan head of Umunri is located on the big hills within the Central Senatorial District of Anambra State (Vanguardngr, 2013). Enugwu-Ukwu is a unique area; unarguably, one of the most popular towns in Nigeria, East of the Niger (Egbuna and Nwune, 2014); sometimes described as the “Igbo Heart Land”. Basically, Enugwu-Ukwu town is geographically situated on a hilly terrain; thus it is named after its geographical topography. Enugwu-Ukwu in Igbo literally means: "on top of a high hill".

It is predominantly occupied by the Igbo ethnic group of Anambra State. Most of its inhabitants are Christians, and the town is located in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State. A look at the map of the Igbo Cultural areas shows Enugwu-Ukwu right in the center; surrounded by neighbouring towns comprising Nawfia, Nise, Agukwu-Nri, Nimo, Abagana and Enugwu-Agidi. The estimated population as at 2009 is 448,000 (en.wikipedia, 2014; NIPOST, 2009). Additionally, sons and daughters of Enugwu-Ukwu community are well known for their industrious nature.

**The Enugwuerian Brotherhood**

The Enugwu-Ukwu people (home and abroad) have unique, self-assured and great self-esteem with spiritual traits of brotherhood no matter where they
reside in the world. The people of Enugwu-Ukwu refer to one another as ‘Nwa-Nnaa’, meaning brother, or if translated literally, son of the father. Egbuna & Nwune (2014) explained that this expression was used especially in the Diaspora and it was an endearing way of introducing an **Enugwuerian** to another. When two indigenes of Enugwu-Ukwu meet anywhere, it was enough to simply call each other ‘Nwa-Nnaa’ before exchanging pleasantries. It would appear that the rest of Igboland has now copied such expression of brotherhood.

**Villages**

The social structure of Enugwu-Ukwu is like a typical confederated or federated Igbo village groups; and these villages hold the principal *Ofo ana and Ofo obu*; holds the mantle of political leadership, power and authority, physically and mystically. A typical leader is located in a foundation patrilineage whereby leadership is inherited from father to son, or rotated within patrilineages of same founding patriclan (Onwuejeogwu, 1975); among other traditional processes. Enugwu-Ukwu is made up of patrilineages of different levels, minimal, minor, and maximal. Maximal patrilineages are grouped into villages, and villages grouped into village-groups.

Village-groups are named and grouped into *Ifite and Akaezi, and Ifite is grouped into Ifite enu and Ifite ana*. These terms, as Onwuejeogwu (2007) explained,
have two connotations derived from geo-territorial and chronological formations. The earliest villages in terms of time formation are generally lumped as Ifite. The Ifite enu are the first to be formed. They also occupy the higher ground while the Ifite ana are the next to emerge and occupy the lower ground.

Onwuejeogwu (2007) further explained that the Akaezi group is the last to be formed and the last to settle; and they occupy the lowest ground. After this initial formation, inter-village migrations and alliances generated by other factors such as kinship, land pressure, and division of labour began and caused changes in places of residence of individuals of some members of a segment of the lineages. These later movements complicated the initial residential pattern. Enugwu-Ukwu settlement and its residential pattern are not static but very dynamic. The dynamism is reflected in the historical antecedent of each lineage, village and village-groups.

There exists a dual and quarter structure organization of the community which is a reflection of Enugwu-Ukwu social spatial geography, genealogical space, seniority structure, leadership role, and group ritualization. These dual structures, as Onwuejeogwu argued are based on the indisputable and unwritten constitution and custom and tradition of Enugwu-Ukwu.

For example, wherever there is something for the whole of Enugwu-Ukwu to share, it is divided into two parts:
Ifite chooses one half first and Akaezi takes the second half. By this act, Ifite exercises its seniority and leadership role over Akaezi. The bounty is further shared according to the villages which fall under Ifite and Akaezi patrilineages.

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### The Dual Organization of Enugwu-Ukwu

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<th>Dual Structure</th>
<th>Village/Village Groups</th>
<th>Maximal Patrilineages</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IFITE ENU</strong></td>
<td>Osili</td>
<td>2 major lineages</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awovu</td>
<td>2 major lineages</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urukpeleke</td>
<td>2 major lineages</td>
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These village groups are known as **ISIONYE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>IFITE ANA</strong></th>
<th>Uruogbo</th>
<th>Not yet Available</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urualo</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Umuokpalaeri</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Umuatuora</td>
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<td>Umuatulu</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Umuakwu</td>
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<td>Enuagu</td>
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<td>Akiyi</td>
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These village groups are known as **EBETEGHETE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AKAEZI</strong></th>
<th>Orji (na)</th>
<th>Maximum lineages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urunnebo</td>
<td>Maximum lineages</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uruekwo (na)</td>
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<td>Avomimi</td>
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**Past Heroes**
Ekpeh (2011) proudly asserted that this historic town has produced human and material resources that played leading roles in the economic and political history of Old Eastern Region of Nigeria. For instance, a pioneer construction company, Eastern General Contractors Ltd, EGC, founded by its indigenes, the late Chiefs D. A. Nwandu and D. O. Okafor - Oba I and Whum III of Enugwu Ukwu respectively built virtually all the infrastructure in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. As the reputable contractors who played leading roles in the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens, NCNC, and devoted substantial sums of money to the party, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Dr. M. I. Okpara found them trustworthy and willing allies in the development of the Region when they served as Premier between 1954 and 1966.

Arising from these leading roles, Chief Nwandu who later became Oba I of Enugwu Ukwu was appointed the first Director of the Central Bank of Nigeria representing the Old Eastern Region of Nigeria. He was also later elected Mayor of Enugu in the First Republic. Other indigenes of the town who played leading roles in the construction industry and political life of Nigeria include Chief R. O. Nkwocha, Chief FGN Okoye, Chukwuemeka Udenze, Chief Moses Obiekwe, Chief D.O. Nkwonta, Chief Peter Okoye (all late) and R.N. Okeke, Ezuo Enugwu Ukwu na Umunri.
**Tribute to HRM Igwe Osita Agwuna III**

The greatest indigene of Enugwu Ukwu town that played unique roles in the political history of Nigeria was His Royal Majesty Igwe Osita Agwuna III, Igwe Umunri na Eze Enugwu Ukwu who passed on a few years ago. It was Igwe Agwuna who delivered the lecture titled: “A Call for Revolution” in Lagos during the struggle for Independence under the auspices of the Zikist Movement. For their roles in the Movement, himself, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Chief Mokwugo Okoye and others were arrested, tried and sent to various terms of imprisonment. It still remains a matter of deep regret that this big masquerade in the political history of Nigeria died unsung and unappreciated by the nation he gave so much to. All approaches to the Federal Government to give him a belated but richly deserved National Honour, even if posthumous, have received negative response. Yet we delight in our sing-song of the labours of our heroes past shall never be in vain (Ekpe, 2011).

**Community Development Efforts**

Enugwu Ukwu indigenes have also blazed the trail in community development projects from the old Eastern Region of Nigeria, to East Central State and the present Anambra State.

The first General Hospital in the Region built by a community was opened in 1962. Similarly Enugwu Ukwu women in the same year contributed 72,000 pounds for the construction of a water scheme, the first in the region by a
community. A few years later, about six indigenes of the town built a post office for the use of the indigenes and residents. In 1982 the Enugwu-Ukwu Civic Centre, a gigantic edifice and first of its kind in the state was opened. This complex served as the first House of Assembly for the newly created Anambra State in 1991 (Ekpe, 2011). Several Enugwu-Ukwu citizens have established Foundations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) where community services in the field of health, education, agriculture and related areas are provided to indigenes and non-indigenes.

Enugwu-Ukwu continues to play leadership roles in national development and political terrain of Anambra state, with the 2013 election of the APGA party duo of His Excellency, Chief Willie Obiano - the executive Governor of Anambra State and Dr. Nkem Okeke (son of Enugwu-Ukwu from Uruekwo village) as the Deputy Governor. The Enugwu-Ukwu Community Development Union (ECDU) have been in the forefront of mobilizing the citizens for self-help projects, maintaining peace and creation of opportunities for community growth.

**Enugwu Ukwu Kingship & Traditional Heritage Stool in Nri Kingdom: Facts not Fiction**

It is a known fact among ancient Ndi Igbo that “Eze Enugwu-Ukwu na Igwe Umunri” has been proved to have wielded control over the ritual, political and economic activities of older Igbo settlements (Ekpe, 2011). The traditional authority adopts the kingship title of Eze Enugwu-Ukwu na Igwe Umunri.
The immediate past traditional ruler of the town was His Majesty, Igwe Osita Agwuna III. The current traditional ruler is His Majesty, Igwe Ralph Obumnemeh Ekpeh (Okpalanakana-Ukabia Nri IV)

Global Implications: Igbo race, the people, Anambra state, and Nigeria

In spite of the fact that urban style of life and development are rapidly surging into the villages; the typical Igbo villages remain the reservoir of their hoary culture; there much of their original beliefs, customs, world-view and values are to be found. The physical features of these villages are changing fast in the face of modern infrastructures. But in the realm of belief and ideas, the changes are not very rapid (Okafor, 1992). Admittedly, Western civilisation has made a considerably impact on some Igbo institutions. A few Igbo institutions have fallen under the weight of their Western counter-parts. Others have remained intact and without a Western rival while a few others are surviving vis a vis their Western opposite numbers. This observation has also been made by Njaka (1974) when he wrote that:

“There is a recognised coexistence of Igbo and alien political systems in Igbo land.”

It is known and accepted that migrants from Eri civilizations in the north-west of Anambra area moved southwards through Osili of Enugwu Ukwu into the forest zone to a place named Agukwu and Dido, and then spread into different parts of the present Igboland where they developed the Nri civilization
and hegemony. The Eri and Nri saga cannot be complete without mentioning Enugwu Ukwu which appeared often in Nri oral tradition as a corridor and settlement through which the first Eze Nri founded and passed to establish Agukwu-Nri (Onwuejeogwu, 2007).

Writing on Vanguard news online, Ekpeh (2011) took a closer look at Enugwu Ukwu town, and presents a clear picture of a people who, in their strong belief that nothing in the nature of manna falls from heaven, have made giant strides in the development of the area. In spite of ecological problems bordering on erosion menace, which is the lot of the government, infrastructural facilities and other basic amenities which abound, are easily traceable to self-help development efforts of the people, more so, when it is realized that government alone cannot provide all the needs of the people. These projects include roads, electricity, educational and health facilities, markets and industrial establishments.

Furthermore, Ekpeh (2011) lamented that the late traditional ruler of the town, HRH Igwe Osita Agwuna III, Eze Enugwu-Ukwu na Igwe Umunri, a former Nationalist who was hounded by the colonial authorities for delivering a lecture titled “A Call for Revolution” passed on eight years ago. It is one of the ironies of Nigerian history and commitment of the nation’s leadership to give honour to whom it is due that this *Titan of the Independence Struggle* is yet to be honoured in any form in Nigeria. No national honour was given to him before he died and even posthumously till date. All our attempts at giving Nigerian
national honours will continue to be a child’s play and mockery of the real essence of the exercise until the contributions of icons like Osita Agwuna to the Nigerian independence struggle are recognized and appreciated.

CONCLUSION

The presenter does not expect everyone to agree with his submissions in this paper because it is becoming increasingly difficult, in the light of today’s level of enlightenment, to agree with one historical account of UmuNri clan – based on their different migrations and traditional activities but the interesting aspect of most of all these accounts is the mention of Enugwu-Ukwu as the first son, paternal head and revered holder of the Ofo Nri.

A lay person may be wondering why the fuss on our history and traditional links?

Permit me to borrow the long analysis of Nwaezeigwe (2013) where he stressed that:

The history of a people is like the stream of life from which the character, form and structure of their identity, their backwardness and progress are drawn. It affords a people the platform on which to predict their future. Thus, just as every stream has a source, so every group of people has a beginning, the course of a stream, the course of their history and the mouth, the end of an era.

No nation or people who toys with the knowledge of their past expects a future built on a strong foundation of unity, identify, pride and sustainable development. In other words, the past is what gives the present the legitimacy of existence and the present, the platform to launch into the future. The carpenter hammering his wood is a graphic example of the
importance of history as an impetus to human development. He has to pull
his hammer backwards in order to push the nail into the wood, and the
extent to which he pulls the hammer backwards often determines the force
with which the nail is driven into the wood.

Every group of people who desire progress must therefore look back into
their past, their source, their course, and their successes and failures at a
particular epoch, in order to inspire progress. The evidence is obvious with
the cases of the world’s most developed nations – the United States of
America, Britain and other European nations, Japan, China, South Korea
and India. Every scientific and technological advancement made by these
people was based on the foundation of their pasts and studded with a
pride of identity and cultural exclusiveness.

The question then is, to what extent have the Igbo shown commitment to
the knowledge of and preservation of their historical heritage as compared
to their Edo, Hausa, Fulani and Yoruba counterparts in the Nigerian
project. Ironically while the Edo and Yoruba who had contacts with Europe
and Christianity many decades before the Igbo, are elevating their
historical and cultural heritages, particularly their deities, traditional
music, sports, feasts and festivals to international status, the Igbo are
busy destroying their time-honoured sacred grooves, like the case of the
people of some ‘towns’, raining curses on their deities, divesting the ritual
sacredness of Ozo title-taking initiation process, de-solemnizing the
emotional spirituality of their life-cycle – the rituals of birth, marriage,
death and mourning, in the name of trying to be holier than the Pope in the
business of Christianity.

Christianity must be married to the people’s historical and cultural
settings, and not vice versa. The way a man presents his identity to his
visitor determines the visitor’s conception of his personality.

**UmuNri/Enugwu-Ukwu Kinship: Way Forward**
The presenter is re-echoing the call made in early 2014 during the Igu Aro at Enugwu-Ukwu by Eze Enugwu-Ukwu na Igwe Umunri, His Majesty Ralph Obumneme Ekpeh, for a summit of the Nri Clan to discuss the issues that have tended to stultify the solidarity of the clan in the cultural affairs of Igboland. Obu Umunri Palace is critical of a situation where Agukwu (Nri) appropriated the clan name (Nri) to itself by renaming Agukwu to Nri in 1972 unlike in other clans around the country like Okotu, Ngwa, Mbaise, Ogbaru, Mbano, Ijaw, Edo, Ashanti, Urhobo, Itsheki and Ayamelum, just to mention a few, where none of the component towns or communities usurped the clan name. The usurping of a clan name suddenly, without discussion, could be interpreted more or less to be to acquire influence and status and lord it over other towns within the clan. In a way this is alienation (Okoye, 2014).

"For purposes of clarifications", Igwe Ralph Ekpeh went on, "it is a well known fact that all four core towns of Enugwu-Ukwu, Nawfia, Enugwu-Agidi and Agukwu are of common ancestry Umunri, today referred to as Umunri clan." He said that as a clan name appropriation and crisis of confidence thus created, Nri as a prodigy is no longer prominent in the cultural/social history of Igboland and beyond because of this exclusive myopic and selfish behaviour of Umunri people.

"Nobody should exclude the other or few more important within the Nri
Clan. Nobody should seize the name 'Nri' and exclude the others. The four towns accepted by ethnographers and anthropologists to be direct descendants of 'Nri' are those mentioned above".

Finally, the presenter calls on the reigning monarchs should fix this issue in UmuNri clan. The presenter also applauds the courage of HRM Igwe Ralph Ekpeh in taking the initiative to see that UmuNri unite as one, to enjoy the entire rich cultural heritage and other dividends accruing to her clan when the unity is forged.

“Enugwu eekenee mu unu!”

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