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**ABSTRACT**

The controversies bedeviling the question of uniqueness, identity and assimilation of people of Africa, which are borne out of the consequences of humanity’s quest for survival that have sparked off several noted revolutions, have given birth to the clarion call for a methodological cum systematic approach to the roots and branches of various peoples of the earth. The recent upsurge for self determination and referendum among distinct ethnic and linguistic groups need not be nipped in the bud; rather the attendant issue of showcasing genuine identities of peoples has become very relevant. In this early 21st Century, the challenges of directing and redirecting the dynamics of Igbo Civilization characterized by its autochthonous and primordial parlance of Ndiokpu na Ndiede, projected lucidly in terms of self determination/Biafra Restoration and intent motivation for Ndiigbo to exhibit an inherent urge to develop resources towards contributing their quota in the domain of Globalization and current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), spurs us to revisit some noted theories on the origin and migration of the Igbo. This paper tends to reassess the Northern Common Centre Theory; as among the most popular Schools of Thought on ground. We intend to identify some of the aberrations and most confusing statements about Igbo origin and migration that have been in vogue in some quarters. It is also an effort at appraising some honest inputs made by Scholars both indigenous and expatriates on Igbo History and authentic commitments to human existence. The fruit of this study is expected to correct anomalies among scholars who carry wrong notions about Ndiigbo to redress their steps, especially those who are at the top echelon of scholarship but are dearth of systematic and qualitative academic endeavours, less reality be wronged perennially and Igbo Civilization that has ab initio carved a niche in the global atlas might witness lamentable retardation.

Keywords: Revolution, 21st century, Ndiigbo, Migration and Theory.

**INTRODUCTION**

The 21st century is more and more extending its tentacles to other areas of scholarship. It is indeed embracing the various fields of human endeavour as tools for advancement and furtherance of its attendant motive towards achieving sustainable development goals. Thus the 21st century and the 3rd millennium could be said to be motivated by the looming challenges of interdisciplinary realities of achieving the required synergy or their lucid interface on ground. In the same vein, Linguistics as a relatively new discipline spearheaded by the Swiss born Linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), has become a science to be reckoned with as it is rapidly extending its spheres into other domains of discourse and diverse problems in relation to the unprecedented scope and applicability in language related matters and information communication technologies (ICTs). Today, the obvious phenomenal strides of migration and emigration among peoples, no doubt spurs conscientious minds to raise questions on the raison d’ etre of such movements. This is made cogent when it is undoubtable that it challenges traditional notion of aborigines, citizenship, indignity, domicile hybridization. The latent cinareo makes ethnologists,
historians, geographers and Linguists to make enquires about the survival of hostcommunities, environmental degradation and the preservation of those human-related issues such as cultural heritage, preservation of the people’s authentic histories, arts, religions, linguistic features, literatures, philosophies, or worldviews, performances and the totality of their existence. Most probably we may allege that it is as a result of negligence on the part of the individuals to tackle this problems for decades that could have led to an upsurge of agitations among races and ethnic nationalities towards the recurrent moves for self determination and revisiting the configuration in the guise of formerly identified nations and countries, since it is obvious that unexamined life is not worth living. Succinctly, the issue of Biafra Restoration that has surfaced at its peak today calls for a thorough investigation on their status quo in the global community and among the League of Nations. Maybe, it is possible that an in-depth investigation has not been made so far with regard to the puzzles surrounding the origin, migration and settlement of Ndiigbo, or that an appropriate theory or hypothesis has not been used to address some of the controversies recycling around the issue in question. The desire to pick a Modified Northern Common Centre Theory

Theories on Origin and Migration

In systematic discourse, theorem (or theories) takes a prominent place. This is so because human knowledge is boundless and its horizon remains inexhaustible. Thus theories when viewed broadly are statements that can be proved by logical deduction from a set of axioms. Thus once proved, it can be used to prove other theories to build a system of theories. Theories can also have some levels of relatedness with hypothesis especially in scientific work, which are propositions assumed to be true but are put forward to account for and order a body of facts. However, in core scientific contexts, hypotheses are seldom capable of direct test but are tested indirectly by deducing consequences that are directly testable. When they are favorable, the topic are said to confirm the hypothesis. Logically, since hypothesis implies its consequences and since false propositions can be implied only by false propositions, a single negative instance can invalidate a hypothesis. However, since hypotheses are actually parts of systems of propositions, they are usually parts of propositions. Indeed, a theory or hypothesis can sometimes be saved by making suitable adjustments elsewhere in the system. This brings us to the issue in our discourse with regard to the use of the word "Modified". What it entails is that the Northern Common Centre Theory has been in vogue both
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universally and specifically on Igbo origin and migration. What we tend to put across here is that a theory or hypothesis can be acceptable when it does in fact explain the body fact in question or is so formulated that consequences may be logically deduced from it. It can also manifest consistency with existing well confirmed norm. At this point, the theory in question would appear more fruitful than some already exiting theories in accounting for a longerrange of facts, as well as in motivating scholars for further lines of enquiry. Hence, that upheld theory despite that it appears clearer can also be more economical than other existing theories. This economic parlance makes the facts surrounding the argument to be equally well confirmed. It is important to state that in pure and applied sciences, it is characteristic of their nature that no hypothesis is presumed to be so certain as never to be subjected to possible revision or rejection. In this sense, the whole of science is hypothetical. This is why a study can be observational and could not show conclusively that a theory or hypothesis is certain. Nevertheless, through history and language evidence has shown that there are phenomenal changes in terms of formal notation; rather, scholars are meant to come to terms with the fact that different changes in life may be deduced through in-depth investigation. Hence, the development of peoples such as Ndiigbo may be traceable through the procedural assessments, starting from the prehistoric to the present status quo.

Due to the undeniable facts about the dynamic nature of humans, effort at upholding one particular theory in isolation of other schools of thought had always made a researcher to appear myopic and would in turn yield a hazy generalization. It is undisputable that since humanity has existed from time immemorial, theories of man’s origin and migration can only be based either on archeological evidence or oral tradition; involving myths and mythologies and in some instances based on scientific findings.

Basing on this premise, some theories have been made popular in contemporary epoch while some have been debunked as appearing archaic and baseless by scientific advancement and technological breakthrough on the domain of researches and scholarship. Some noted theories include; the anthropological theory, evolution theory, Judeo-Christian theory, autochthonous theory, negro theory, and the northern common centre theory etc. Scholars of anthropology, especially since the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century have come up with the idea of the homo sapiens as an offshoot of the hominids development which has been given several names such as Australopithecus, which has been estimated to have existed for about 200 million years ago. It is held by them that the age of humans surfaced when a being emerged that was able to carry its body upright and began to walk on his two feet without holding anything or toddling again (referred to as homo erectus). This theory of origin is adopted by some evolutionary schools. It tends to pave way for man’s evolution.

There are various ideas about the place of the actual location, but recent works have come to focus on Africa for the fact that researches are revealing that species found in Africa appeared more human with bigger brain with features of language and communicative competency and even organizational acumen which enhanced coordinated abilities. The researchers predict that their approximated locations are around the areas known today as Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and other surrounding regions of the Sudanese confluence. It is believed that at this stage of development, humanity was able and ready to take control of the universe, carry out migrations into other regions, especially when circumstances called for it.
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It is this circumstances that motivated them to migrate or emigrate, while atmospheric conditions helped to the various changes of skin differences. The evolution theory tends to somehow agree to the above, but makes a slight difference by claiming that the emergence was from the ape to homo sapiens, This theory was made very popular by Charles Darwin in his book The Origin of Species. For some scholars, after about two and half million years ago it emerged with a higher level of brain structure more than that of the ape, that why was it was able to make tools for survival, undergo sophistication as challenges evolve in times. This theory with its attendant logic has been criticized by scholars who argue that if man came into being from ape class about two million years ago why haven’t man evolved into another being. The Judeo-Christian theory based on biblical data and holds that human existence is not by chance but that initially the earth was formless void but at a time the Creator God began to create, man was eventually created as a superior creature with the plan to be in control of all created things in the universe (Gen. 1:26-29). This theory has been modified in Christian history, that man’s privilege of being created in the image and likeness of God was lost through original sin, but redemption came to humanity through Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son (Mtt 1:1- 36, Lk 1:38-45). The autochthonous theory is derived from the view that humanity has been old in existence, through primitive culture, in such a way that humans no longer have clear vision of their initial stages. Thusmany claim that instead of asking of how humans migrated to be where they are, we can lay claim that human sprout at a time from no entity to continue to exist.

It is referred in Igbo as mfunala or mpunalu, without the pretence of pinning human origin and existence to any historical date or associating him to any evolution processes. This theory has been criticized by historians and scientists as a product of mere fabrication; borne out of the lost of historical exigencies [1, 2, 3]. The Negro theory establishes the point that before the 20th century, due to the domination of the domain of scholarship by Western colonization, there were no mention of Africa or the black world as the cradle of humanity nay civilization, stories about man’s origin was virtually intertwined with the Judeo-Christian idea of man’s origin, with no effort at founding who Adam and Eve were or where they first existed. However, the idea held today in some academic cycle that man’s evolution is associated with Negro (Africa) or black race or dark skinned is a later development which seems to appraise most of the theories and hypotheses on human origin [4]. According to this view, the Negro species stand primordial in the chronicles of human evolution, in such a way that facts have come to substantiate that the Negro evolution produced the oldest human creature. This theory awaits more evidence to convince scholars.

The Northern Common Centre Theory has been held by various scholars, some who claim this hypothesis are likening the human origin and migration to the Judeo-Christian theory, while others call it the Hellenistic theory, and some identify with the Hamito-Semitic hypothesis. For these schools of thought, their views tend to base on the origin of man to the Northern hemisphere, but for some there are serious allusion to the Biblical creation story that makes mention of Tygres and Euphrates rivers as popular geographical features of the time. Thus human then moved from the North towards other dispersals. [5], [6] etc lay claim that this is the major route-passage of the human person, and they claim that the Igbo race and others followed this track to be associated with the people of Israel of the Bible or Jewish history and the Hebrew descendant. However, having examined this theory, we tend to establish that their allusion to the northern routes of origin and migration appears banal and thus calls for a modification. This brings us to the issue of our discourse, that the Modified Northern Common Centre Theory:
An attendant issue on the origin and migration of Ndiigbo in the 21st century seems to be a better panacea, coming with some linguistic evidence. Attendant Issues on the Igbo origin, Migration and Settlement Studies show that paleontologists ponder over their fossils; archeologists turn over ancient stones whereas scholars of linguistics dig deeper into the search for human origin with a systematic assessment of the roots of the known peoples and their languages. As already indicated above, of all the theories x-rayed, we seem likely to come up with a modification of the Northern common Centre Theory. This theory does not dispute about the existence of man but tends to incorporate the afore mentioned theories (maybe with no credence to the Darwinian school of thought on “chance”). The question before them is that man has always moved downwards through the Northern axis, and as such Ndiigbo must have equally adopted the same pattern. But the divergence comes from the point of associating Igbo origin and migration grill from the Hamito-Semitic hypothesis of the lost tribe of Israel [7], [8], [9]. Such claimant affiliating the origin and migration of Ndiigbo as from Egypt or East should be ready to delineate what is meant by these terms. The question of whom the Igbo are and where they came from has been an ongoing discussion among scholars, especially because of the preliterate culture of Ndiigbo and likewise others too. The state of Igbo studies has advanced to the extent where the origin of the Igbo people should be sought within and not outside Africa. To state our facts, we come up with a view that the Northern common centre theory has come to a point when it needed to be clearly stated. Thus, the Igbo are a major brand of the Negro race which we refer to as “ndi gbo” whose progenitors’ emergence are traceable to areas along the latitude of Asselar regions on the Northern fringe of the Savanna. What it means then is that where the Negro race originated from as identified as the autochthonous species, is equally where Ndiigbo existed, and that holds water and the
filled through linguistic evidence that could eventually give the puzzles on the origin and migration of Ndiigbo a lasting and concrete clarification. This postulation is fully supported by our discussion in this study, with a linguistic touch.

The Question of Linguistic Factor

The evidence supplied through the various schools of thought as mentioned above, as having been diluted the migration grill of the Igbo; which could also be categorized under initial beginning (origin), primary migration traceable to the Negro primordial instant, below the belt lying along the latitude of Asselar (Northwest Timbuktu) and Khartoum, to the secondary migration through the Eluugwu (Nsuka axis) and then the tertiary migration/movements that are on-going. There is need for a linguist’s contribution to respond to the above academic humility that has been manifested by the above mentioned scholars who have the benign regards for the vitality of Igbo studies and the better placement of Ndiigbo in the context of global development and the emancipation of the Igbo today. The question the two nomenclatures of “ndi” and “gboo” raise form the terminological arrow head of the Igbo drive from their original autochthonous home land of the Afro-Niger-Congo and Nile Basins [15]. This initial people or the ancient people “Ndigboo”, were the same with the paleo-Igbo, the Etheopus (Black race). Agypotos (Brown skin), and Sudanic people. [16], claims that: the name Sudan means “black people”. [17] a German Linguist and an anthropologist who did series of works on Linguistic classifications of the world between 1911-1927, supports the Sudanic confluence, through classifying Igbo language as a major point of the Sudanic language families, although he makes allusion to the Bantu languages, which equally is an offshoot of the Igbo language stretching towards the Kamoroun river. This position was supported and concretized by [19], establishing the existence of the Igbo among the “Kwa” sub-language family which started dispersing about 6000 to 5000 years before the common era (CE). In their separate works, [2] and [3] equally buttressed the fact of linguistic evidence that the “Kwa” classification by [12] portrayed the primordial extant of the Igbo pointing out the digging of artifacts at Ugwu Nsuka and the result of the Carbon 14 confirmed that the material (dating about 2555 BC) portrayed Ndiigbo to have a distinct linguistic presence of about six thousand years ago. [4], [5] and [8] are in agreement that linguistic and archeological evidence could give a very substantial information on the aborigine and the initial movement of Ndiigbo via the Northern axis or the Sudanic confluence. Indeed, one of the outstanding positions we have come to hold today that the Hamitico-semitic hypothesis could take another dimension by presenting that out of the same autochthonous people “Ndigboo” sprout the ancestors of the Hebrew [2]. It should be of note that up to date no precise etymological realization has been accorded the name Hebrew. [8], commented on the widely accepted view that the Semitic speaking people arrived in the Horn of Africa at the end of the first millennium BC. Hence, crossing the red sea, after having left their homeland on the Arabian Peninsula they migrated into the area of today’s Ethiopia and Eritrea. There they underwent an extensive linguistic and extra linguistic influence with the Cushite speaking people. They argued that, this should be on the opposite direction. [9] is in line with the view that Ndiigbo are among the aborigines. The work lays claim to scientific reports on the origin of human species, and suggests that it should help to put an end to the speculation over the bizarre ancestry of man. The account of one oldest civilization that existed
known as Moe civilization is associated with the land of the black people, which equivalently substantiates the affinity of Ndiigbo to the cradles of man’s civilization. Ohiri-Anichie (2004 a and b) express view that Igbo language plays a substantial role in identifying who the Igbo are and where they started and where they are today. The works emphasize on the phonologization of most of the languages of the Benue-Congo confluence of the existence of similar shifting of lenis consonants to their non-lenis counterparts in most lects across language groups. Thus, establishing with linguistic features genetic relationships among African languages especially those that have not been so much affected by the incursion of the Arabs along the Benue-Congo sub-family [5]. Again [5] through wider scope in the field of historical and comparative linguistics affirms that linguistic evidence gives credibility to Ndiigbo sharing a common Negro African ancestry with some other language groups of the Benue-Congo sub-family, positing a common genetic relationship across the West and Southern African languages. She affirms that the term Ndiigbo, which with both terms “Ndì” and “Igbo” can be traced to the “Kwa” roots. Also with a substantial amount of similarity of lexis on the basic vocabulary across Igbo and some other languages of the new Benue-Congo sub-family, that evidence abounds for the claim that the speakers of the above languages must have had a common ancestry. [7], reports that

Oral tradition and the legendary of the origin of peoples remain disputable by scholars, but the fact remains that the question of origin and migration and the attendant theories and hypotheses are itching for confirmation. The question of upholding the Northern common centre theory is based on the fact that it seems to carry along all phenomenal indices with regard to human origin without appearing banal or superficial. However the modification that we deemed necessary comes from our

Longinus and Onuora an experiment was carried out in the 15th century AD by James IV of Scotland, after which he explained that his specimen spoke Hebrew. Here there is need to come to task with philological and diachronic linguistics. There is need to enquire more about the understanding of what the investigator saw that led to the view of naming the specimen to the Hebrew. Thus with some latest developmental indices, in the field of historical and comparative linguistics, the possibility of looking towards the Igbo language as a protolanguage of an autochthonous people Ndigbo, there is need to hold that the result of the investigation tilts towards the Igbo language being a better answer for the search for a primordial language nay proto Igbo, [8]. The Igbo-Ukwu excavation has some inscriptions that backed up the relatedness of the written records of the Sumerians, and Hebrews, with the proto Igbo, showing that the Igbo Language was the mother language. It is an established fact in the domains of Historical and Comparative Linguistics that when words from two or more separate languages share similarities in sound and meaning, it is a sign of borrowing or common origin [2]. Basing on this fact, we have found out that several languages of the globe share similar sounds and semantic closeness with those of the Igbo language. Indeed, there is evidence that languages retain through thousands of years some affinity, traces of culture and historical experiences they have lived in the course of millennia.

An Appraisal

outright rejection of enthusiastic allusions to subjecting the origin and migration grill to what we tag “Nriology”, thereby turning the question of the relationship between Ndiigbo and the Hebrews ancestors upside down and claiming that the Igbo are the lost tribe of Israel or the descendant of Eri [12],[7]. We vehemently criticize this as sensational statements that hold no water only aligning oneself to the idea of Jewish affinity of Jesus Christ. As we have pointed out
Longinus and Onuora

scholars of Igbo studies and civilization have debunked this hypothesis. The allusion is viewed as fabricated mythical concoction spearheaded by the Nri people who through the Nri hegemony super impose patrilineal stories and came up with the assumption that lack appropriate evidence and the idea appears to be basing on insufficient data and hazy generalization. The modification undertaken in our discourse on the origin and migration issues on the Igbo may serve as a likely panacea to the puzzles of the initial existence of Ndigbo and the subsequent migrations and movements and even dispersal with their primary point of call. In the Northern Igbo fringes and confluence areas, prior to other migration as a result of the pressures of “push” and “pull” of population which according to [5] are migration phenomena. [2] bemoans the attitude of slashing the geographical and linguistic horizons of Ndiigbo that have led to many people being constantly demerged from their Igbo family ties. This kind of attitude has been regarded as a dangerous move towards the balkanization of the Igbo geo-political areas. This incident has become recurrent that those who are aware of history are endemic of the consequences. The attendant depopulation antics of those who are bent on the marginalization of the Igbo people need much to be desired. Because of their inordinate desire to ensure subjugation and disunification of Igbo lands they apply the method of disintegration of the Igbo people. Today the enemies of the region are using all the available means, such as; pretentious imported religions through which some Igbo names are mutilated or through the artificial creations and mutilation of the region, and even fiery distinct and mutual antagonism propelled by the enemies of the Igbo people. The balkanization and the denationalization policy especially before and after the Biafra/Nigeria war have remained inimical to the growth and peaceful coexistence of the aboriginals in their own lands which for ages has been known as Biafra land [2]. Today, one begins to draw attention to the looming calls by most indigenous peoples for their self determination; the Kurds in the Middle East, the Ambazonia from the Cameroons, the Catalonians from Spain the Scottish from United Kingdom (Britain) and others that are warming up. This upsurge can attract the attention of historians to go back to the drawing board and reexamine the histories that are documented on the building of nations in Europe beginning from the 11th century onwards. Again, the various partitioning of African peoples by the European nations borne of the Brussels agreement of the Berlin conference between 1884-1886, and the subsequent struggles on the parts of the indigenous peoples of Africa to liberate themselves from the subjugation of their colonial masters, call for reassessment. The lucid unprecedented marginalization and other inhuman treatments the Igbo people are experiencing currently seem to have sparked off the hue and cry to fast track the Restoration of Biafra as an Indigenous People that have existed even before the emergence of the British Protectorates and eventual amalgamation of 1914 by Fredrick Lord Lugard.

CONCLUSION

The interpretations of history and other related issues ought not to be viewed as meaningless chance but a rational process. Again it amounts to error against humanity’s progressive dynamics when there is an effort at isolating the essence of the authenticity of peoples and races and establishing their place in a developmental dialectics. However, the identified theories in our discourse can only be justified when we come to terms with the incessant phenomenon of migration. What appears humanly is that circumstances compel people to move. We came up with the view that there is need to state properly how the Northern common centre theory appears more convincing for the establishment of how
the Igbo came to be where they are today. The modification we presented calls for more scholarly inputs by some other researchers. There is need to debunk those blanket and sensational theories that often appear superficial but fail to hold water on the genuineness of the Igbo and their systematic history and other interdisciplinary pursuits. There is urgent need to establish facts that would help to ameliorate those frivolous myths and fabricated sweet sounding theories that are devoid of real scholarly contributions but go on to compound issues about the real facts on origin and migration of Ndiigbo. There is need again to posit that any attempt to go on and on to align with abnormal ideological framework would not lead to reasonable output, thereby instigating confusion whose fruit only amounts to setting civilization and developmental strides at a tight corner. We observe that why it is necessary to nip in the bud those discreditable theories with regards to the nature and reality of Ndiigbo, good stands could be drawn from the view point that echoes of the drumbeats arising from various corners of the world, could lead to unrestricted reassessment of racial autonomy and the resurgence of the call for self determination. This at some point could lead to redesigning and refashioning of nation states and peoples of the various unique identities. This would positively and practically reduce acrimonies among humans who might even agree to path ways and still agree to be good neighbours to their former amalgamated groups [2].

REFERENCES


