

THE 'UPPER IWEKA' PARADIGM IN POST-1970 IGBO SPHERE OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Definite in identity and location, though lucidly and denigratively referred to contemptuously within and outside Nigeria, the coinage 'Upper Iweka' has continued to attract and evoke caution, awe and timely comfort to various diverse peoples. Fearfully pungent or viably attractive as the case may be, dating from 1970, this eponym has consistently evolved into a two – pronged hybrid formula; a spectacular philosophical conceptual package and a contextual 'Bermuda Triangle' of Igbo land, spanning and spurting incidents relatively larger than life. Though domiciled in Onitsha, Anambra state within an advantageous focal city-wide central location, proximity-wise, it has remained unavoidable to those who would have preferred to evade passing through it. Possessing and exhibiting a patented cultural pattern and peculiarity exhibited through thought sequence, orientation and outlook on life, this social package has not only remained a trending referral within and even beyond the Nigerian borders as a reliable survival option, but a burgeoning concept, fast appealing to, and appeasing a great number of upcoming Nigerian youths who are survival-challenged. The paper argues that, since unfolding scenario in all sectors in Nigeria presently appear to be glorifying anarchy and chaos, resort to and the practice of the 'Upper Iweka' concept, present an alluring reliance, hence one could remark and conclude thus – 'oburo soso na Onicha ka opa iweka di' (upper Iweka is not only in Onitsha). Sequel to the enormous acknowledged short comings of interrogating this syndrome merely through the ambit of social theories, an eclectic



methodology, driven by environmental history and psycho-historical developments, were adopted and deployed as relevant decoders in this research. The paper submits that, mere removal or changing of the locational name of 'Upper Iweka' from the Onitsha enclave may not readily solve the evident and emergent issues of human tragedy there, more so the much more contextual problem of the overbearing machinations of psychopaths who roam the strategic contours of that axis. Reflective of encultured and accultured traits, supported by an absurd tradition of managerial derelictory direction, this octopus thrives.

Key words: Psychopath, Cultural pattern, Traits, Anarchy, Youths, Axis.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps, Onitsha, the metropolitan and commercial hub of Anambra state, Nigeria could pass as the most popular city within the West African sub region, with the exception of Lagos as a state enclave. Mere mention of Onitsha to the informed outside the Nigerian borders, not only provides a clear location; but possibly support the credibility of an already confirmed business centre. The place of Onitsha *vis a vis* commercial status is not the focus of this study, but that of the Upper Iweka paradigm which by implication not only originated from one of its designated spaces, but prevalent and traceable from there. Good or bad, exemplary or rebuffing, the idea is not to demonize either Upper Iweka as an entity, or denigrate any part of Igbo land, but to create an awareness exposé on the recalcitrant, systemic, factorial and unethical baptism administered there both in context and concept. Undoubtedly, to copy or emulate, most especially acts and character classified as negative sometimes appear easy. This is evident, considering the ubiquitous criminality infectively taking place in Upper Iweka axis. Added to this is the putative dimensional exportation, replication and explication of these unethical sequence beyond the borders of even Anambra state. In its classic nature, Upper Iweka mentality has turned to a brand, a strategic survival behavioural package exhibited, copied and usually adopted here and there, as the case maybe.



Within this paradigm, lies the positive and negative attributes of Upper Iweka as a place, and the accompanying psychopathic traits manifest in mundane issues and circumstances. Proven to defy sustained orderly Administrations or regimes of the various Anambra State Governments over the years, Upper Iweka's notoriety stands tall and exceptional in criminality, perennial accidents, classical touting, jungle justice, uniformed personnel extortion and brutality, traffic lock-jam among others. Be that as it may, the pertinent question is – how and why did all these attendant negative extremes congest within this axis, thereby according it not only a monstrous capability, but an equally demeaning status. The world over, one of the emergent encumbrances of urbanization and development is criminal sophistry and assymetricism, unleashed in city dark spots, sustained by the daily gainful economic propensity of businesses and productivity. Such is the fate of Onitsha with overt and sprouting business engagements and prowling marauders, priding and boastful most often to attract respect and reverence. However, a little descent into the immediate past may provide important onus to some of these nagging questions.

Post 1970, Onitsha just like many other Igbo cosmopolitan entities, lay in ruins, utter destruction and pillage stepping from the Nigeria – Biafra war. Largely denied of government promised assistance at reconstruction and rehabilitation, a good number of the business inclined who survived the war, streamed into Onitsha to either savour what was left of their enterprise, or to seek and try out any other form of survival engagement apparent. Congestion and over population assisted and complicated the emergent criminality and other social distresses, though armed robbery destroyed as many as it attracted. Within Onitsha, certain roads, locations and spots evolved into fearful contours and designations based on the categories of crimes prevalent there.

Amongst the many hotels, spots, joints and roads, Eze-Iweka Road stood out exceptional, and even in that manner today remains obsequiously at the service of all and sundry, commuters and those on wheels. At this juncture, it must be stated that perhaps the massive Eze-Iweka Road which empties into the

banks of River Niger in a straight formular, extending initially from Akuora Market in Obosi wouldn't have become a monumental historical reality if not for the unrivalled industry and the imperialistic – rebuffing dynamism of Eze Iweka I of Obosi, who though officially unrecognized by the British colonial government, not only gave a good account of himself indigenously, but left significant imprints on the sands of time, before his death in 1932, all at the detriment of his personal pocket. He accomplished this feat including Moore Street, between 1912 and 1924.¹

Succumbing to the dictates of development post 1970, Eze-Iweka Road created and hosted necessary offshoots and diversionary contours in the Onitsha enclave, hence leading to its structural and strategic distortion. This led to the eventual origin of the section known as Upper Iweka, extending from a little beyond the Enamel-ware industry/Peoples Club Headquarters complex in Owerri Road, not beyond the precinct of the famed Ibru fish limited towards Ochanja Market on the opposite angle; by the ABC Bus Terminus, towards the River Niger, and from the MCC Pedestrian Bridge on the opposite. By this development, Upper Iweka, evolving later to poses the first flyover bridge in Onitsha, took up an important commanding height within the city. Clustered within the Upper Iweka axis are numerous government – controlled space reserves, privately owned entrepreneurial businesses, multi-transport companies, the Relief Market, Tools

Market and the Toronto Hospital, among others. That Onitsha is commercially heavy and stable is steadily sustained by the subsistence and services of the Onitsha Main Market, the Bridge-head, Iron and wood markets, the Electronics market, the Ogboefere and Drug Markets, the Plastic, Ochanja, the New Motor spare- parts and *Mgbuka*-Obosi Markets, to mention but a few. Accessing these places, including exiting or coming into the city, Upper Iweka provides easier and broad – spaced accessibility, hence its revered and acclaimed strategic importance. The numerous transport companies equally operating within this location provide veritable travelling and courier services inter-connecting the West African sub-region.



Such important strategic positioning and the alluring Onitsha commercial synthesis have consistently sustained a multiplier attraction demographically, with its attendant consequences spewing and resonating beyond the Igbo country. For commuters, traders and investors, local or foreign, for one to successfully survive an encounter with Onitsha, especially if one is not completely sure of his location or bearing, the easiest and surest resort is simply accessing Upper Iweka area first. It may be observed that Upper Iweka as a notable axis did not emerge as an intentional creative product of either any individual or state government, rather a cumulative overtime sequel to the continuous pressures of population growth and its attendant needs and developmental services in a commercial Onitsha *vis a vis* interconnectivity to other major national commercial centres. At the service of over 1,482,971 residents of Onitsha and its numerous adjacent suburban areas², Upper Iweka axis has continued to not only oil the arteries of communication in the area, but actively provide a resonating habitat, relatively providential to the poor and determined, spawning an ecology formatting audacious psychopaths and criminality which continues to pose a challenge to the rationally – acceptable etiquettes of orderliness and domestic security management.

‘Upper Iweka Mentality’: A Palpable Psycopathic Concept

Upper Iweka, as an extremely important axis within Onitsha metropolis has come to stay, while continuously unleashing its variegated impacts near and far. The modification of human character oscillates on several indices which include enculturation, acculturation, genetic predisposition and environmental factors, among others. The mentality that is easily referred to as Upper Iweka (UI), as has been stated within the introductory part of this study, could be traced from 1970, at the end of the Nigeria-Biafra war, with its severe attendant hardship on the Igbo survivors who grossly tramped into Onitsha hoping to eke out a living. Unsettled as Onitsha was after this genocidal mayhem, hardship and starvation served as the conveyor base which goaded people of all sorts into hibernating at several locations with potential signs and



sources of livelihood. Eze-Iweka Road among the few, projected and presented that propensity. Since almost every Biafran survivor in one way or the other, participated in that war, by inference, much of the first that resided within this road, were more of war veterans who were still fresh with their fearful attributes and experiences. The ‘survival of the fittest syndrome’, unfortunately appeared to very well explain the survival instinct that was Onitsha.

The cumulative metamorphosis that overtime structurally compacted and impacted UI to the enclave’s limelight, appears not to have overlooked the behavioural attributes of the residents, because just as some continued residing elsewhere, their preferred business joints operated from Upper Iweka. From the 90’s, across the millennial landmark and into the 2020s, a UI patented culture involving language terminologies, forms and peculiarity, thought pattern, orientation to and outlook on life, including behavior, imposingly emerged. Its existential nomenclature is ‘for the moment’, hence highly fluid stoics, operational strike groups knitted by acts of criminality and visionless future evolved to remain in control of the axis. That Upper Iweka has been classified and factored as ‘an axis of evil’ and perhaps ‘the Bermuda Triangle’ of Igbo land is not meant to intentionally and unequivocally demonize any part of the Igbo country, but to expose intentionally the very depth of the unethical baptism grounded in the philosophical pleasurable carnality and amorphous acts sustained there in.

Conscripted by unemployment, hunger and frustration, the emergent innate brute in man, remains constantly out-layed through psychopathic manifestations. Undoubtedly, psychopathy appears to provide a veritable prism through which the retrospective Upper Iweka mentality could be succinctly analysed and understood. Steadily attracting and recruiting elements sequel to its difficulty to circumvent location, Upper Iweka’s traffic accident recors appears classical. Emphasis at the rate and devastating effects of these accidents at this juncture is not the major issue, rather the supprising air of accommodating acceptance of these misharps by those engaged in that space as



necessary dotted incidents merely helping to conjure, nurture and sustain the 'Upper Iweka charm'. Unfortunately, one may not be wrong to observe not only the quick fixes attendant to such accidents, and their apparent disregard, manifested through the random utter disregard to even ordinary basic traffic caution by occupants that include – the highly fluid highway hawkers and petty traders, motor park touts, barrow pushers, commuter operators, traffic warders, security personnel, among others.

To ensure an intrusive understanding of the mentality that hibernates and resonates in Upper Iweka, this study relies on the appropriateness of the application of the multidimensional trajectories of psychopathy (biological behavioural processes otherwise referred as sociopathic), and potentiated by environmental/development influences. Originating in the early 19th century as a psychiatric clinical term, psychopathy was first comprehensively described in Cleckley's seminal book – *The Mask of Sanity*, paving way to its extensive use in clinical, legal and forensic settings³. Often described as an untreatable personality disorder consisting of an apparent absence of empathy and remorse, along with superficial charm, shallow relationships and rational cold-blooded gratification which often occurs at the expense of others⁴. Psychopathy is equally strongly indicative through violent and criminal offenses. Social cognition deficits which appear to be associated with psychopathic traits onwards to interpersonal dysfunction, relatively place such individual at risk of criminality, mental illness, substance-dependence and psychosocial dysfunction⁵. Largely manifest in callous/unemotional personality traits, narcissism and impulsivity⁶, other psychopathic manifestations could come in the form of numerous comorbid mental health problems, gambling, suicidality, anxiety disorders, aggression and violence towards others⁷.

Nigeria's persistent developmental decadence that appears to be beyond textbook analysis has not spared the indigenous people of the East, who dedicatedly, determined and ingenious in consonance with their genetic disposition, though, are reeling and creaking under the full depredations of unemployment,

hopelessness and hunger. Unequivocally manifest in the emergent youth populations, who eager to engage in fruitful pursuits, at least to eat, hopefully stream down to Onitsha on daily basis, with the majority finding comfortable sanctuary in Upper Iwaka axis. These neophytes (youths, adolescents and young adults) stealthily reform into hawkers, motorpark touts, barrow pushers, bus drivers, adhoc vigilante/security personnel and overzealous handy apprentices/traders. Since the processes of indoctrination with the UI mentality is brief, engaging and result-oriented, moreso with the accompanying exuberance of the age group, 'aversive dissonance to empathic behavior, moral emotions'⁸ and emotional expressions of fear and distress handily result as the end. Alluding to this age bracket, and the accompanying encumbrances which the environment donates towards the finality of such personalities, Mottift opined thus:

Antisocial behaviours typically peak in late adolescence and early adulthood, with the expression of such behavior believed to increase tenfold over this time. The development of life-course persistent antisocial behavior (as opposed to the more common short-term juvenile delinquency) reflects an ongoing interaction between the developmental environment and underlying abnormalities in neuropsychological, emotional and personality factors⁹.

However, that psychopathic individuals inherit a genetic makeup which manifests in altered brain functioning, physiological reactivity along with some environmental triggers or influences¹⁰, may assist in throwing some light at the background of some players in Upper Iwaka may not be under contention; that stress levels could equally be a veritable influence is not in doubt, rather this study would like to identify and classify UI's mentality as patented, pathetic and toxic, exportably manifest as time and need arises anywhere by benefactors, hence it remains a survival amour or application. What is obtainable elsewhere across Nigeria, in such places like Ojuelegba, *Alaba market, Oshodi, Mile 2, Aria Aria* market among others, could well pass as mere



variants and manifestations of UI mentality which is distinct with three dominant characteristics – boldness with brazen and fearless dominance, meanness and disinhibition. UI mentality is a confirmed state of mind; hence Upper Iweka is rather than a place, a mentality manifest in reality. In it amorphous and amoral entrepreneurship, this mentality is better propelled by a risky smoking, snuffing and drinking regimen often classified as substance misuse. Invoking and applying it within place and time may be subject to need and not necessarily at Upper Iweka axis. From smooth, cool and covert silence, it could strategically snowball and erupt into a mob mentality with high violence quotient.

The Stubborn Reality

‘Upper Iweka, Most Dangerous Place in South eastern Nigeria’¹¹ as a concise written testament information, remains one of the undiluted seminal which dared to expose and question the impunity that has enveloped that strategic area of Onitsha commercial metropolis.

Linking the West with the rest of the Eastern hinterland, Upper Iweka provides the onward link with Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, and Abia states, hence remains equally vital in exiting this region through the River Niger gateway, pending when the inland water channels will be put in good use as an alternative to land transportation system in the economic chain. The inference of this strategic positioning is that the beehive activities in consonance with individual propensity and criminal tendency have multiplier effect on not only Anambra demography but Eastern population and their economy¹².

By implication, this axis welcomes both local and foreign visitors and investors. The stark reality is that the present Upper Iweka axis is the condensed sanguine representation of the ‘I must survive syndrome’, starring pickpockets, snatch and run groups,



daylight armed robbers, '419ners', the one-chance shuttle bus criminals, the daring tricycle gangsters, the uniformed and un-uniformed 'government' touts, tax-hunters, extortive armed vigilante groups and police details (uniformed and plain clothed), the military among others. With the litany of transport companies spanning their retinue of adhoc staff engaged in hunting for passengers (or at least maintaining visibility there), amidst the swift engagements and activities of the many psychopathic bus conductors, barrow pushers and head-haulers who are bent on exploiting any available situation; even the most careful and cautious most often end up being swindled as victims, not to talk of the untutored or first time visitors. There is a diversity in Upper Iweka sustained by a diffused ethnic, cultural and linguistic element pan-Nigeria, conscripted by hunger and later web-linked by the many social fallouts of the deranged and derelict Nigerian human society. As the acclaimed highest fearful melting pot within the Eastern area, the demographic gender variables showcasing lots of petty trading and hawking carried out by the females may portend wrong signals to those who may be comfortable with the idea that males are more untrustworthy. Attracting and hosting a bazaar of the human population from 11am to 7pm on daily basis as the rhythm maybe, practically, every single space within this axis is intelligently and economically managed and put in viable use. A daily hallmark is the staccato of sound formed by the many simultaneous streaming loud noises from the public address systems of herbal drug sellers, overzealous proselytizing evangelists, transport companies, among others. Upper Iweka noise level simply surpasses normal healthy decibel, hence a nagging stressor element.

The cumulative activities and designate policies of the different government administrations in Anambra state to sanitize Upper Iweka, lacking in complementary will and consistency, have rather helped in balkanizing and institutionalizing the challenges, even within the whole Onitsha commercial zone. Available records grant proofs of the mesmerizing desperadoes within the 1980s of the *Otondos*, *Khaki no be leather*, *Little-wizard*, among others ending that interregnum with the 'Boys Oyee' response from the



public; the legitimization of murder and torture under the Bakassi political vigilantism and the infamous *Chiejina and Derico Nwamama* period; all through these depredations, Upper Iweka contributed in no small measure, in one way or the other, to both their nurturing, operationalisation and eventual liquidation. Rising from a random Upper Iweka urchin to a notorious height where whether day or night, cries of *Derico* would either evacuate sleep in people's eyes at night or during daytime, cause people and traders alike to scamper for both their safety and goods, Okwudili Ndiwe, the 22 year old in his legacies successfully robbed the most secure banks, carting away millions of naira and leaving dead bodies in his trail.

Good at robbing interstate luxury buses and boasting of his invincibility, it was estimated that he killed over 100 people, including police officers. On one occasion in December, 2000, Derico and his gang in possession of an expansive cache of weapons ambushed a 59 – seater bus at the popular Upper Iweka. After robbing the passengers, they decided to kill all of them, though only four survived¹³.

Be that as it may, an expository historical analysis of Upper Iweka would remain incomplete without the mention of the 'Okada phase', which saw riders and patrons through elusive unemployment, anger and bitterness, attracted teenagers through sensuous touches meandered without office, through mob righteousness and mentality to broken bodies and bashed heads¹⁴. By July 1st, 2018 when the Anambra state government placed an implicit ban on the use of commercial motorcycles in Onitsha and Awka metropolitan areas, myriads of account with heart-wrenching accidents of mangled bones and incapacitating accidents had been the Upper Iweka okada imprint. The symbolic seal was their unyielding and unapologetic irrationality exhibited at any slimmest issue, relying on the ever-ready recrudescence of their colleagues. Today, that has become the trademark of the tricycle operators and the shuttle bus drivers within that axis, understandably since the same bunch laid off by the government



strategic 'okada ban', simply migrated into tricycle and shuttle bus services.

Upper Iweka sanctuary hosts several gangs and groups whose operational modicum are highly motile, reflexive, evasive, territorial in location and behavior, deeply purposeful and objectively determined in their asymmetricism. Abhorring fear and appearing to be in organized complicity with the Police, and sometimes officially under the government revenue employ, they often exhibit impunity and audacity usually larger than life. Robustly proactive, parallel cluster gangs deeply streamlined by rules and interests, greatly dictated by several landmark head points, inform and transact through certain coded terminologies and slangs that may sound unintelligible to the uninitiated and unprivileged. Complementary to one another at few occasions, and aggressively fencing off perceived intruders of like minds, 'they are known to sustain congregational points at unsuspecting places like filling station offices, business stalls of some women, gas depots and the old Peoples Club Headquarters along Owerri Road', where they met on daily basis to aggregate their account and equally share their accrued loot. Deeply unforgiven and retributive, one engaging in any action knowingly or unknowingly antagonistic to their objective, most especially if one is easily traceable within the Upper Iweka confines is utterly dangerous¹⁶. By the same token, Anthony Igwemba, a luxury bus driver cautioned thus, 'woe betide you engaging yourself in argument or disagreement of any form within Upper Iweka axis against any of these noted persons or groups. They easily reel out irrational vituperations, invective and demeaning, ever ready to even resort to physical attack¹⁷. On the other hand, according to one of the experienced touts operating at the Owerri road angle, 'some traffic jams and go-slows are instigated by these groups in dubious ways, especially during rush hours so as to aid their operations, even when they pretend to be decongesting the traffic'¹⁸.

Since this study posits the mentality that is Upper Iweka as that of construct validation traceable to heterogeneity, depression, anxiety, stress, unemployment, risky alcohol drinking habits and substance abuse, the gene-environment interaction appears to

suffice in the unfolding antisocial behavior, which is nowadays profoundly and intentionally manifested even beyond the physical Upper Iweka confines, to the consternation of the unexpecting. Apart from marijuana which is openly smoked and even used in commercial cooking within the Upper Iweka area, overriding fingers continue to point at the drug-methamphetamine Hydrochloride, popularly known as '*mkpuru mmiri*' in Igboland, as the principal addiction element trending within this space, with devastating consequences. In crystal shiny blue-white rocks, the street name is either 'glass' or 'ice'; this drug is a highly addictive and lethal opioid¹⁹. The substance abuse impact factor in this study may not totally dwell on the health hazard accruing from its use, but the stimulant that it is, including the disorientation and stress that it enhances, masking fear and enhancing irrationality and thought sequence. When drugs are abused randomly, especially prescription-guided ones, moreso in a psychopathic-prone population and environment, both the neurocognitive and neuropsychological functionalities are unleashed.

It may be proper to state that the following array of drugs and substances remain grossly used and abused within the confines of Upper Iweka axis – alcohol, stimulants, tobacco, sedatives/tranquilisers/alkaloids/analgesic/anaesthetic (narcotic painkillers), cannabis, cocaine, volatile agents and hallucinogens. Unfortunately, according to Peter Nweke, a tyre vulcanizer operating at the end-angle of Upper Iweka as the tarred road empties into Owerri Road, 'many younger people have migrated from dependency on Tramadol due to its cumulative resultant bad effect of convulsion, preferring to take Elephant grass water, snuff or inhale deeply from pit toilets, so as to achieve their desired mental elation²⁰'.

Based on conclusive analogy drawn from a bazaar of corresponding information derived in the course of this research, this study posits that the wide spread use and consumption of these substances and drugs is dictated by curiosity, group conformity, emotional instability, experimentation and mission, including physiological reasons. Most often, effective and



proactive gangsterism demands the primary beclouding of vision, evaluation and fear. Depending on the substance and volume taken, insight maybe sharpened hence alertness, anxiety and fear dulled, potentiating the excessive manifestation of some manic excesses. Audacious daylight crimes and armed robbery have for long remained the hallmark of Upper Iweka axis, a nagging challenge which consequently resulted and reverberated to the nefarious 'burning by tire and fire;' an accustomed resortful extrajudicial mob response, since policing and the Nigeria Criminal justice and penal system appear inept.

TRENDING MOTIFS

Robbers collecting all valuables from us on a holdup in a busy road with huge pedestrians, hawkers watching, roadside stalls and shop owners watching, none came to our rescue. None tried alerting the policemen some meters away. All other vehicles on the holdup wind up their windows and locked their car doors. They all watched as we were stripped of everything we had on us in our car around 5:30pm yesterday at Upper Iweka²¹.

Upper Iweka has taken time to reach and attain the importance and notoriety that it is basking in. Just as one may not easily erase the 'Big Ben' from London's history and the Eiffel Tower from Paris, its always advised that if one happens to get lost in either Onitsha or in the Eastern part of Nigeria, just manage to find your way to Upper Iweka; getting a bus to Singapore would be easy from there. Perhaps, the landspace and location tagged Upper Iweka is not as offensive and infective as its manifest mentality, nevertheless, it showcases an array of business density and ever busy traffic challenges, complicated by the several extortive fluid Police checkpoints, which lucratively increase in number towards evenings to herald the closure time of the array of market that is



Onitsha, hence abundant human traffic (traders with good daily financial gains and buyers with choice goods who must face extortion on account of those goods, or face delay or even the forfeiture of such goods in Police stations). Apart from the Relief market and Tools market including the many transport companies, dotted here and there, are a retinue of bizarre and esoteric churches, clinics and hideouts providing operational covers for the several gangs ravaging the axis. Prided as one of the best, if not the best information collection and dissemination/update base, it remains a veritable advertisement platform for almost all businesses. As a reliable game changer in intelligence harboring, intelligent investigating security experts have always found Upper Iweka axis highly relevant towards bursting challenging criminal syndicates and enigmatic operations within Nigeria's South East. Apart from foodstuffs that could be gotten cheaper from that axis, courtesy of the Relief Market and the Food Market (varieties) at Akunna Street and Ibru Fish Angle (towards Ochanja Market), 'Upper Iweka has resiliently remained a good recruitment centre for the patriotic Igbo country. Easy volunteers are always available for adhoc engagement and operations to any place in Nigeria to showcase brotherliness and help', afterall, the continued random destruction, marginalization and balkanisation of Igbo interests and properties in Nigeria have been individual, ethnic and government based. Such volunteers equally provide veritable recruitment base for effective professional mercenary, hired assassins, killer squads and forces deployed and used as the case may be during electoral operations and intercommunal conflicts mostly within the Igbo country.

In Upper Iweka, amongst the categories of people honoured, respected and revered are notable rich touts and drivers who have riskily served and risen through the ranks over the years, hence part of the 'land lords' that enjoy the many illegal levies and rentage payments running on daily basis. Enjoying full bourgeoisification, they have full access to drugs, food and women of choice, hence though breathing in strength, power and blood, addiction, sexually transmitted diseases and the Human Immune Virus (HIV) most often appear to be their accompanying partners.



One may have to mention that credible research has for a long time shown that many hospitals, health establishments and Blood banks within and outside Onitsha metropolitan enclave, have continue to coax, patronize and rely on these people for cheap, easy and fast sourcing of blood²². Though everybody may not have been infected, the circumstantial accruing danger is simply ominous.

Hardly a week goes without the Upper Iweka axis recording at least one fatal accident, hence the area apart from fortifying criminality, could be described simply as ‘an accident waiting to happen’. The road going to Upper Iweka from Army barracks, Onitsha is downhill, a development that often results in drivers of articulated vehicles losing control of their vehicles due to speed and ending up killing passersby, commuters or traders, who do business in the heavily congested area²³. Sometimes, this is simply due to the manifestation of obtrusive ‘Jehovah mentality’ by the drivers, and the drop zone is always from the MCC Pedestrian Crossing to under the Upper Iweka Flyover Bridge. Since some of these vehicles sometimes are laden with inflammable goods, fire outbreak, usually of deadly dimension is witnessed.

Upper Iweka flyover, finely spurn, though short in dimension, today remains the central eponym of this study. The crime rate on top and below this facility both day and night remains classical and novel, regardless of both Army and Police lively presence there. Snatching of phones, stabbing and shooting of passersby, raping and throwing down of victims from the flyover top at night by these hoodlums have remained a painful trajectory accompanying the story that is Onitsha, and make Upper Iweka dreadful. Prone and conditioned to many paradoxical variables, the axis thrives in the midst of a highly volatile awesome mentality, cherished by some, and abhorred by others.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Within this study, both the mentality and the viscera that is Upper Iweka have elaborately received attention, including the impactful influence which a psychopathic, under stressful or challenged



status could obtain within the exponential environment that is Upper Iweka. Intrinsically, and moreso within the present security dilemma and abnormal societal social harmony that Nigeria is embroidered in, unnecessary hysteric responses triggered by sometimes, unfounded fear tend to deter and marginalize peoples' freedoms. Since further structural modifications may not actually exorcise that sanctuary of its amorality, all hands must be on deck (both private and government officials) towards the implementation of policies which would drastically reduce youth unemployment. On the other hand, containing the carnage within that axis elicit not only mounting aggressive signposts indicating speed limits, but equally putting up multiple speed breakers from the Borromeo/Army Barracks point, down to the end of Upper Iweka, towards Okpoko junction. Again, sincere efforts should be directed to clear the Upper Iweka four-based axis of the flood of petty traders and hawkers, barrow pushers, tricycle and shuttle bus operators and touts who have turned those points to loading bazaars. From available indications, that disorderliness, chaos and congestion has recalcitrantly remained the symbolic mark of Upper Iweka, the Anambra state government is not only indicted wholesomely, but remains deeply complicit. Amidst the presence of many motor parks, heavy human traffic, an evergrowing retinue of hawkers and petty traders stationed and obstructing both human and vehicular movements, including a highly mobile array of government-backed market duty collectors, added to the ubiquitous bus conductors, touts and drivers who delight in ever 'driving one way, against an oncoming traffic, even on the flyover bridge', criminality of various dimensions continues to register. Better witnessed than imagined, may it attract a lasting proactive solution.



END NOTES

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 15. Extract of interview conducted on Mr Daniel Kanu, who hails from Abia state. Employed as auto-service attaché in one of the filling stations along Owerri Road Onitsha, for more than 10years. Interview date, 6th May, 2021



16. Extract of interview conducted on Mrs. Ndidi Njoku, who hails from Imo state. Stationed along Owerri Road as a fruit seller, she appears well tutored in the Upper iweka terrain interview date, 6th May, 2021
17. Extract of interview conducted on Mr Anthony Ugwumba (Big Daddy) an experienced Luxury Bus driver with one of the big transport companies operating a viable terminus within Upper Iweka. Resident in his town Ogidi, Anambra State, he was cautiously cooperative in helping with information about Upper Iweka. Interview date, 6th May, 2021
18. Extract of interview conducted on a member of one of the functional gangs operating within Upper Iweka axis. Known as Odeluga Odekwo, he appeared to be under the influence of an unknown substance, hence he was tipsy. Daring, boastful and unlettered, he looked grossly unkept with scars almost all over his body. He hails from Ogbe-ndida, Onitsha. Interview date, 6th May, 2021
19. <https://ng.opera.news/mkpuru-mmiri>. Accessed 30/6/2021
20. Extract of interview conducted on Mr Peter Nweke, who hails from Nibo, aged 38yrs, a vulcanizer who has operated his trade in Upper Iweka for 8years. Date of interview 10/2/2021
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22. Factually, many health outfits operating within and outside Onitsha enclave, rely on Upper Iweka elements for sourcing blood easily and cheaply. While working at Borrromeo Hospital sometime ago; it was the routine to do this especially faced with immediate shortage due to major accident victims or gunshot wounds. Based on a Ratio sampling analysis that was conducted by a team sourcing blood for hospital use from St Charles Borrromeo Hospital,



Onitsha, which I happen to belong to, through the preliminary tests conducted on blood donors randomly picked from Upper Iweka axis, it was noticed that out of every 5 males, 2 tested positive for HIV. Date of survey, 1996 to 1998.

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