

The place of ndi igbo in nigeria social economic development essay sample

[Finance](#), [Market](#)



The advent of European colonialism radically altered the Igbo consciousness and compelled them to draw upon opportunities of the 'new order' to meet social and economic demands. The twentieth century was a period when the Nigerian people had to come to terms with the 'new order' introduced by their forceful integration into the global capitalist system. New music had been introduced; new dance steps were required.

This study examines how the Igbo, in response to and in spite of, these dynamics carved a distinct place for themselves in Nigeria's social and economic development. Indeed, the nature of the place of the Igbo vis-à-vis the country's socio-economic evolution provokes intellectual fermentation. Are they taking their place in the sun or are they hewers of wood and fetchers of water in the Nigerian super structure? What factors have shaped their development? To what extent have external dynamics shaped the Igbo socio-economic factor? What are the omens for the future?

Introduction

The Igbo economy was dominated by agriculture, trade and local manufactures. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Aro people (whose historical origins are influenced by Ibibio and other riverine links) developments nearly became an economic hegemony over Igboland. This is significant because the Igbo, unlike many other ethnic groups that make up Nigeria, were never wielded into a large empire or state. (http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/Aro_people)[1] The Aro were both priests and clever traders and traveled and traded extensively in Igbo and Ibibio lands. Consequently, various Aro settlements were established and

dominated the local markets. They also specialized in buying and selling of slaves, whereas the coast communities received slaves and other commodities for their vital export trade. Their trade routes in the hinterland that the Aro controlled and monitored radiated in all directions; however, Aro's domination did not accumulate to a comprehensive political control. (Anene 1979)[2] Following the British destruction of the Ibinu Ukpabi, (the Aro's central instrument of religious practices and business domination) the process that forcefully brought the Igbo nation into Nigeria commenced. Today, Igbos dominates the South-Eastern Nigeria states of Imo, Abia, Anambra, Enugu, and Ebonyi. These Igbo communities also form sizeable minorities in Delta State that is located west of the River Niger and the semi-coastal of River State.

Igbo Entrepreneurship in the Colonial Period

Pre-colonial Igbo economy had basically three foundations: agriculture, trade and manufactures. Agriculture was the mainstay of the country's economy. It was largely subsistence in nature and everyone, irrespective of gender, fully participated. Yam was the stable crop. Initially emphasizes on agriculture supersede that of trade. Ecological differences and varied vegetation were the major factors behind the development of local and regional trade amongst the Igbo. The inhabitants of northern and central Igboland, whose soils were over-farmed, resorted to trade. The discovery of iron ore in Awka, salt in Uburu and Okposi, and lead in Abakaliki encouraged mineral exploitation and the growth of crafts and manufactures such as the famous blacksmithing forges in Awka (Anene 1979)[3]. There were commercial links

between the Igbo and their Benin, Igalla, Idoma, Ibibio and Ijaw neighbors during the pre-Colonial Era. The Aro extended their commercial links far and wide and thereby subsumed into Aro economic hegemony.

It is a fact that the coastal demand for slaves whetted Aro's greed and did not work successfully with the earlier trade links. During the period of the nineteenth century, the new developments that shaped Igbo social and economic evolution were outlined and projected for the next century.

Although the Aro successfully kept much of Igboland under its control with its dreaded Ibinu Ukpabi and renowned Abam mercenary-warriors, they could not withstand the forerunners of British colonial rule. Olutayo highlights these developments: The major crisis of the Aro oligarchy began with the persistent expansion of European influence. . . Christianity became established on the Niger. From the late 1830s, the British began to sign slave trade treaties with various communities. The establishment of British consuls, first, at the Bights of Benin and Biafra, and later, at the Oil Rivers, after being made a protectorate under the United African Company, and so on, all contributed to weaken the religious and economic supremacy of the Aro. The people started to jettison the traditional religion and beliefs. The establishment of consular agents also assisted the British in abolishing human scarifies, especially through the establishment of Native Courts under MacDonald's administration in 1891.

The building of roads did not follow the old trade routes, and the administrative headquarters gradually moved trade away from the Aro trade route network. (Olutayo 1999)[4] Coastal traders and some pro-British

groups among the Igbo saw economic advantages and helped the British abolish the Aro oligarchy. This new situation gave the Igbo hinterland producers of palm oil and allied products direct access to coastal traders who had dealt with the Aro middlemen. Some of these coastal traders were also Igbo. It also gave the Igbo access from the areas adjacent to the North, and more coastal-bound compatriots, direct access to the Europeans. Over time, the Northern Igbo became more favorably disposed towards trade and alliances with the Europeans to the detriment of their Southern counterparts (Olutayo 1999).[5]

These were just a few of the dynamics to proclaim Igbo entrepreneurship during the colonial period. In most economies, the agrarian foundations were made up of Nigerian entities and stopped the mercantilist industrial capitalism of the colonialists. Undoubtedly, the colonial master was motivated by self-interest but the building of modern infrastructure, the development of modern communication, the encouragement of growth of cash crop production, introduction of portable currency, western education, urbanization and other hallmarks of integration into a capitalist and monetized system implied that opportunities and challenges stood before the Nigerian people. The Igbo communities, in comparison to the Yoruba, had a relatively late start in taking advantages of these opportunities. This is primarily because of latter's earlier contact with Europeans, Brazilians and other non-African factors. However, with a dynamism that characterizes the innate Igbo flexibility, they came to terms with the new world demands.

The political economy of the Igbo had been self-motivated Nigerians moved from the pre-colonial economy into the slave trade era (an epoch that extended into the colonial economy). One major contribution that cannot be disputed by Africanists is the fact that colonial capitalism subordinated the pre-existing social structure within, which many people participated. Unlike in the northern part of Nigeria where, according to Shenton, merchant capitalism did not subordinate the existing social structure well enough (Shenton 1986).[6] Eastern Nigeria witnessed appreciable transformation of its social structure. It was within the eastern region, unlike in the other parts of Nigeria that capitalism had a free hand, to do whatever it wanted. The colonial government catalyzed this process immensely (Olutayo 1999).[7] Colonialism boosted the so-called legitimate trade in its own interest. The Igbo communities gained relative free access to the trade in palm produce because of the British destruction of Aro and associated interest especially with the coastal ones. The twentieth century gave the gleam of opportunity to the Igbo entrepreneur.

Nonetheless, this process increased the number of people participating in trade, which a majority of these participants were peasants, producing and trading on a small scale since they had little or no access to loans and interest whereas the Aros and other coastal traders had possessed (Olutayo 1999).[8] This situation facilitated the imposition of colonial rule and the subsequent development of infrastructure to boost European commercial activity. In this new dispensation, the Europeans needed indigenous agents who could neither on their own export commodities nor import foreign

goods. With wholesale discrimination against Nigerian entrepreneurs by the banks and effective European combinations to muscle out new entrants into the market, it was obvious that the Igbo were not going to find things easy in the new socio-economic dispensation. However, the new Western way of life has become the primary hope of survival and achievement for the younger Igbo, and for all Nigerians.

Trade replaced agriculture and manufacturing and became the preferred profession alongside civil service for Nigerians and was noted as the quickest avenue of integrating into the monetized economy. In the 1920s, 1930s and even beyond, foreign companies like the Royal Niger Company, Miller Brothers, John Holt, United African Company, G. B. Ollivants, and other businesses subjugated large-scale commercial activities. As early as 1931, a few rich Igbo individuals gained foothold in the palm oil trade as agents of major European firms (Nzimiro 1972).[9] The quest for survival and success would not allow the Igbo to accept the pecking order that was consigned in this new dispensation. The great population density, the overworked soil, the ineffective communal mode of production and the rewards and glamour of the new capitalist system, encouraged massive migration by the Igbo to the cities created in the wake of colonial rule.

Though this was not peculiar to the Igbo. Pax Britannica and the demands of the new economy compelled previously home-bound people to seek new frontiers. Igbo were probably the most adversely affected by poor natural and economic conditions at home, and became remarkably footloose, in comparison to the Hausa-Fulani. Nnoli points out: By 1952 about 99, 000

Igbo residents lived in the Midwest and Lagos. They constituted 8 percent the total urban population of these areas of 1.2 million, and 51 percent of the non-indigenous population. In Lagos, Benin, Kano and Kaduna, they constituted over 30 percent of the non-indigenous residents. Therefore, unlike the more materially-developed Hausa and Yoruba linguistic peoples, the Igbo were more impelled to move (Okwudiba 1978).[10]

However, as the Igbo gained access in the bureaucracy, other professions, and commerce, there was competition with other nationalities. Against the background of the agitation for self-government between the 1930s and 1950s, this trend was occasioned by many factors. First was the depression of the 1930s, which led to fall in the prices of export cash crops. The small African producer or trader was adversely affected and struggled fiercely against his fellow African for economic success. It was not until the advent of World War II that increasingly rose in the global demand for African raw materials and changed the previous equation. Yet, other challenges still remained. The increasing attraction of politics was open opportunities to the good life; however, independence worsened its friction between the Nigerian nationalities. Not to be underestimated was the strategic economic head start of the Yoruba as manifested in the location of Lagos. Olutayo succinctly sums up the situation: The location of Lagos and its nearness to Yoruba societies coupled with the earliest involvement in colonial administration and multinational corporations - in large proportion - gave them headway in establishing their own entrepreneurial outfits. The Igbo were visible in

trading second-hand materials, including motor spare parts (Olutayo 1999).

[11]

This trade only became lucrative with their migration to Lagos, Port Harcourt, and the North through transportation on the roads and railways provided by the colonial government. Given that the emerging indigenous elite within this era were also seeking for control of the economy, particularly in the Eastern and Western parts of Nigeria, since the entire British colonial structure was weakening and willing to shift their practices to regain power. Foreign companies channeled their resources to large-scale manufacturing, and as from 1957, they moved to more technologically advanced trades. Interestingly, the various regional governments, probably in recognition of their economic weakness, set up development boards and corporations that encouraged foreign industries with tax reliefs and other measures. These regional industries partnered with foreign firms that inhibited the formation of private Nigerian capital and deprived the Nigeria entrepreneur of full commercial access.

The Igbo and the Challenges of Social and Economic Development in the Colonial Era Despite its obvious flaws and continued foreign domination, the socio-economic situation in the period of quest for self-rule had some opportunities that the Igbo could turn to their advantage. The Nigeria economy, under British capitalist monopoly, faced stiff competition from new traders because of the massive growth demand occasioned by rapid increase in peasant agricultural export earnings. Demand for imported goods rose from twenty million pounds in 1946 to sixty-two million in 1950. By 1954, it

was one hundred and fourteen million pounds and one hundred and sixty-six million in 1958. Barriers to new sellers greatly reduced as merchant firms, manufacturers, sales agencies, and Nigerian traders, made great in-roads into a commerce that was monopolized by British and Indian companies (Kilby 1975).[12] To adapt to the times, since their age-old commercial, agrarian and manufacturing practices could not earn them success even when their integration into the monetized economy could not help, the Igbo turned to their famed communal civic spirit. This spirit of ofu obi and onye aghala nwanne ya,[13] became the basis of Igbo entrepreneurial success and the apprenticeship system that vitalizes commercial achievement.

Since the bid to gain access to the new world bred stiff inter-ethnic competition, it was necessary that the Igbo be effective to mobilize politically. Early as 1949, Nnamdi Azikiwe, the doyen of independence politics, sought to mobilize his people into a cohesive unit. He openly advocated that God had chosen the Igbo to lead Africans out of colonial bondage and reflected this stance in a quest for Igbo advancement. This stance attracted hostility from the Yoruba anti-colonial politicians (Olutayo 1999).[14] However, these efforts yielded success for the Igbo. Outside Igbo-land, the Igbo formed mutual benefit associations, credit societies, and improvement organizations that had ties with the homeland. An Igbo Union formed in 1934, its expansion became the Igbo State Union. It embraced all Igbo associations within and outside Nigeria. The progressive or improvement unions functioned as organs of local self-government and enabled the Igbo to come to terms with the challenges of the urban area.

This strategy of indigenous mobilization was unknown and unused by the Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani until years later. Consequently, the Igbo successfully bridged the social and economic gap between them and other nationalities.

The following statistics indicated the successes of the Igbo for their quest of social and economic advancements through their well-organized team efforts. By 1952, there were one hundred and fifteen Igbo students as opposed to one hundred and eighteen Yoruba students at the University College in Ibadan. By 1959, there were more pupils and teachers in Eastern Nigeria than elsewhere (despite the West's pursuit of a free education program). In the Ports Authority and the military, the Igbos occupied many of the upper-management positions. At the economic level, the Igbo through their communal associations had the highest numbers of small scale entrepreneurs: 68, 220 individuals in credit associations, as compared to 5, 776 for the West and 2, 407 for the North (Olutayo 1999).[15] The period between the 1930s and 1950s witnessed the emergence of Igbo millionaires who occupied the pride of place in the country's emerging elite and corporate power houses.

Statistically, they were few but their impacts were far-reaching. Thus Sir Louis Odumegwu Ojukwu, probably Nigeria's first millionaire, was the pioneer president of the Nigerian Stock Exchange and a director of Shell. The renowned entrepreneur, Patrick Nwokoye Okeke-Ojiudu, became Eastern Nigeria's pioneer agriculture minister and spearheaded the region's agricultural transformation under Premier Michael Okpara. Thus the colonial

era that begun on less than a cheerful note for the Igbo quest for social and economic development ended on a promisingly one. Ndi-Igbo in Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development From 1960 – 1966 The first six years of independence had far-reaching consequences for the Igbo quest for socio-economic advancement within Nigeria and developments within this period were mostly political and they had their roots in the colonial period. By 1960, the Igbo had become the significant players in the national economy. They also occupied important administrative positions and making impressive forays into other aspects of life. However, the deliberate construction of Nigeria by the colonial masters, they left political affairs in the control of their protégés from other regions.

Such control would not work well for Ndi-Igbo, which are not enamored by the British affairs and openly resisted during the Colonial Era. For example, the Aba women's uprising was perceived as threat to the new post-colonial order. This does not by any means suggest that they ignored the complex differences between the different groups in which united them into an independent Nigeria. These differences and other contradictions of the new state germinated the seed sown by British imperialism. Although the agricultural output of Eastern Nigeria has never been abundant, the region is endowed with a variety of agricultural resources. The governments of Premiers Nnamdi Azikiwe, and particularly Michael Okpara, harnessed them. The famous farm settlements and palm plantations were established. The National Crop Research Institute in Umuahia came into existence. Under the

leadership of Patrick Nwokoye Okeke-Ojiudu, important economic institutions of the region were either established or revitalized.

The Universal Insurance Company was set up; the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation and Nigerian Construction and Furniture Corporation were re-organized (Okeke-Ojiudu 2010).[16] On the national scene the Igbo were an apparent success story. By 1964, the Igbo were allegedly occupying 270 of the 431 senior posts in the Nigeria Railway Corporation. Three-quarters of staff of Nigeria's Foreign Service were of Igbo extraction, and the vice-chancellors of the Universities of Ibadan and Lagos by the same period were Igbo professors (Olutayo 1999).[17] It was inevitable that these roaring achievements would create some friction between the Igbo and their compatriots. The stiff competition in the urban areas between the rapidly expanding Igbo migrants, other migrants, and the indigenous population for scarce resources in an overwhelmingly monetized economy was expected. Consequently, this social and economic situation might not have been so potent if the struggle for political supremacy had not been present. As independence approached and party politics began, all the groups in the country came to see political power as the key to the advancement of their interests.

Each group wanted one of its leaders, its 'son' to be the head the affairs of the local government area or region it belonged to, including to control the federal government. Whoever had an upper-management position in the government, such as the regional and federal governments, one had control over the operational allocation and distribution of political and other benefits

that came with all central and regional levels within the federal polity (or known as system of rewards). The head of government had the power to determine industries locations and which areas would have pipe-borne water, electricity, and tarred roads. They also had the power to determine who would be granted loans and awarded contracts, and who would be employed in the civil service and government-owned companies (Okeke 1998).[18] Moreover, the quest for political power became a way to attain and sustain economic growth, and create more economic opportunities. The Igbo's principal political instrument between 1960 and 1966 was the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC).

The NCNC's involvement at regional and federal government levels was to promote Igbo interest, even at the expense of other groups in Eastern Nigeria. They could not develop a pan regional identity for all the ethnic groups in the East because the minorities felt excluded from an Igbo-dominated government. Nonetheless, given the Igbo pressure for economic and social empowerment, the NCNC government had to meet the Igbo needs. The pressure on the NCNC partially compelled it to take political measures of which contributed to national friction and these political antics were not unusual to the NCNC. For example, in the North, the Northern People's Congress led government affairs pursued a Northernization policy that excluded non-Northerners, particularly the Igbo, out of paid employment in the region and harassed their commercial access (Okeke 1998)[19]. Yet, Igbo entrepreneurship forged ahead, partly because of the people's determination to succeed, unique institutional dynamics, and the need for

their services in a growing Nigerian economy. As different political crises challenged the young Republic, a recurring decimal became obvious.

The Igbo seemed to be against the ruling elite, even though they were part of the bourgeoisie. Inter-group relations generally were tense, exacerbated by the actions of the political class. This type of pattern indicated that with the relative emasculation of the Yoruba via the Action Group crisis of 1962, the scene was set for the politically dominant Hausa-Fulani and the economically dominant Igbo to wrestle for supremacy. Professors Dudley and O'Connell (Dudley and Connel 1966)[20] argued that though nearly at par with the Yoruba socially and economically at this time, the Igbo were deeply alienated. Their party could not meet their aspirations. Unemployment was at its highest in Igbo land. Igbos also suffered the demands of the Northernization policy. With less hope facing ethnic cohesion and solid representation in the military, they challenged the government. By no means was the January 15, 1966 coup a part of an Igbo agenda to rule the country, as every evidence available shows.

However, the reaction of Easterners and Ironsi's emergence as the Head of State showed signs of approval. With the massacres of May - September 1966 and the emergence of Yakubu Gowon as the Head of State, following Ironsi's overthrow, it became clear that the political equation excluded the Igbo. The massive and brutal disruption of their economic, social, and educational balance through the pogrom began the reversal of the Igbo socio-economic attainments of the Colonial Era. An Overview of Impacts of the Civil War on the Socio-Economic Evolution of Ndi-Igbo One major and

unique trait of the Igbo entrepreneurs is the courage, perseverance, and determination in which they carried on despite their bad experiences and losses during the Nigerian Civil war from 1967 to 1970 (Dudly 1974).[21] By the outbreak of the civil war, despite the crises that had taken place in Nigeria in 1966, the Igbo still occupied impressive heights in the social and economic spectrum. Although they had been dislodged by the pogrom of 1966 from different parts of Nigeria, except the East, Igbo entrepreneurship still thrived. The great Louis Odumegwu-Ojukwu died, yet his legacies remained vibrant and other economic titans followed such as P. N. Okeke - Ojiudu, Joe Madukwe, and so forth to maintain the façade of grand Igbo capitalism.

Displaced Igbo intellectuals, writers, diplomats and socialites still kept Igbo socio-economic life in Eastern Nigeria vibrant. However, as the national crises of 1966 traveled rapidly towards civil war, Igbo socio-economic development was bound to be adversely affected. The first major blow to Igbo economic growth during the Civil War period occurred in 1967 when the Federal Government imposed economic sanctions on the Eastern Region. These sanctions emanated from the East's response to the Federal Government interpretation of decisions reached between it and the Eastern Regional government at the 4 -5 January 1967 conference at Aburi, Ghana. Following the Federal Government's publication of Decree No. 8 as the official version of the Aburi speech, the Eastern government passed some edicts that empowered it to make use of Federal Government revenue

collected in the region. In response, the Federal Government imposed sanctions.

These measures were a massive economic blockade of the East which was enforced by the Nigerian Military (Madiebo 1980).[22] When one realizes that the heartbeat of Eastern Nigeria is commerce and that the nature of the terrain requires extensive contact with their neighbors for survival, one begins to understand how the blockade posed a stiff challenge to the region's collective economic survival. The famous Onitsha market, a commercial hub worth millions of pounds, was seriously affected. The only time the blockade was informally but not officially broken by the Eastern Nigeria was in the period between August and October 1967. This was during the war when the Eastern Nigeria, now self-declared Biafra, invaded and briefly occupied the Mid-western region. On the other hand, with the reversal of Biafra military fortunes, the blockade was re-imposed and made even more stringent (Madiebo 1974).[23] Throughout the war, the Igbo economy suffered from stagnation and retrogression. Schools were closed down; economic activities were channeled to the execution of the war and above all there was a massive destruction of infrastructure and loss of the productive manpower as casualties of war.

Night markets became the norm for the entrepreneurial people. Such markets were designed to operate at hours when the competitors were deemed unlikely to operate. In the latter stages of the war, a majority of Biafra came under federal control, and a survival-based type of trade began, known as an "ahia[24] attack". It involved daring Biafrans that entered into

Nigeria-held areas to buy all the needed necessities and then resold to their beleaguered compatriots. While the ethical foundation of such commerce was questionable, it represented the continued and determined Igbo economic ingenuity in the midst of adversity. Due to the measures of drastic changes to the currency held by the Nigerian government in 1968 and seizure of Biafra and pro-Biafra business people's assets, survival became excruciating and also compelled people to seek alternative methods of economic expression.

The Dawn of Modern Igbo Industry

In the pre-colonial economy of Ndi-Igbo, manufacturing and indigenous industry were corollary of farming and trade. However, certain areas of Igboland became famous for specific manufactures (e. g. the blacksmiths of Awka and the weavers of Akwete). Colonial monetization of the economy made these indigenous manufactures unattractive. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Igbo people's traditional technological ingenuity was rejuvenated. As discussed in the previous pages, the colonial and early post-colonial period had witnessed Ndi-Igbo pulling themselves and focused on the pinnacle of educational and economic achievement. Now, they capitalized on them. It can be argued that these were desperate measures caused by desperate times, and not a concerted effort at industrialization, until one realizes that some of their essential components come from the basis of contemporary Igbo industrial process. It must be acknowledged that modern Igbo industrialization process commenced during the war. To solve its military and industrial needs in the wake of the blockade, the Biafran

government constituted some of its best scientists and technicians into the Research and Production Board (RAP). According to Madiebo, RAP worked with the belief that no problem was impossible to solve (Madiebo 1974). [25] Working with local resources and content, they delved into virtually all areas of production, from the building of refineries to the production of home grown wine. The local arms industry developed by RAP was specifically for the situation and was unsophisticated compared to contemporary standards. Nevertheless, the Biafra hand-made grenades, ogbunigwes, [26] rockets, and guns kept Biafra steady long after they lost access to official external sources. It should not be assumed that the war-time industrial efforts of the Igbo implied that the blueprint for the industrialization of Igboland began during this period. If such an agenda existed in the secessionist enclave, the demands of survival and the raging war precluded it. The significant fact is that the war-time technological efforts laid the basis for the Igbo innovations that came years after the war. Since the Civil War the Igbo have moved from trade to industry, this was beginning the next phase of the Igbo quest for economic advancement.

The 3Rs and the Post Civil War Igbo Condition

The ideas of reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation have essential common features. In general parlance, reconstruction connotes the process of changing or improving the condition of something or the way it works; the process of putting something into the state it was before; the activity of building again something that has been damaged or destroyed.

Rehabilitation connotes the process of helping someone to have a normal,

useful life again after he/she has been deprived for a long time; to begin to consider that someone is good or acceptable, after a long period during which he/she was considered bad or unacceptable; to return a building to its previous good condition. Reconciliation represents an end to a disagreement and the start of a good relationship again, the process of making it possible for two ideas, facts, etc. to exist together without being opposed to each other. Dokun Oyeshola (Oyeshola 2005),[27] presents that reconciliation as a conflict handling mechanism entails the following core elements namely:

1. Honest acknowledgement of human injury each party has inflicted on the other.
2. Sincere regrets and remorse for the injury done.
3. Readiness to apologize for one's role in inflicting the injury.
4. Readiness of the conflicting parties to 'let go' of the anger and bitterness caused by the conflict and the injury.
5. Commitment by the offender not to repeat the injury.
6. Sincere effort to redress past grievances that caused the conflict and compensate the damage caused to the extent possible.
7. Entering into a new mutually enriching relationship.

The consequence of the above processes leading to a new relationship is referred to as reconciliation and one of its byproducts is the mending of deep emotional wounds generated by the conflict. Scholars have documented post-war Nigerian economic development, to dominantly involve infrastructural reconstruction and construction of oil related industrial structures. There is evidence that whereas government was overwhelmed in

the development of the oil and allied industries, no effort was directed at reconciling the fundamental contending issues for which the civil war was fought. All further agitations have reflected a repetition of the fundamental differences. Although Okechuku Okeke observed that ' at the end of the civil war' in January 1970, the Federal Military Government remained moderate in such a victory: it proclaimed a ' No Victor, No Vanquished' policy and granted general amnesty to the people of the defeated side in the war.[28]

This was to a large extent of mere lip service because the above Dokuns's proposed mechanism was never put in place. While it could be true that General Yakubu Gowon, the Nigerian Head of State, meant well towards the defeated Biafrans, the nature of official policy towards them spelt something different. Therefore, the 3R-programme of the Gowon government aimed for reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the war-ravaged region, but its economic and social repercussion for Ndi-Igbo who constituted the majority of the defeated people was across-the-board. Before the war ended, (around 1969) the Nigerian government introduced a new revenue allocation formula that became binding on the East-Central state (i. e. the defeated Igbo heartland as they reintegrate into Nigeria). The policy was based on the outcome of the work of the Interim Revenue Allocation Review Committee led by I. O. Dina. The committee was mandated by the government to make changes in the existing revenue allocation system and suggested new ways of revenue generation for both the federal and state governments (Okeke 1998).[29]

The committee's suggestion that derivation cease for revenue allocation was not fully accepted by the federal and state commissioners of finance. The federal government, beginning in early 1970, implemented most of the committee's recommendations. The federal government reduced the weight of derivation and increased the sources of funds payable into the Distributive Pool Allocation (DPA). The East-Central state got massive grants earmarked for reconstruction projects. Indeed, with the rise in Nigeria's oil revenues in 1973-74, the East-Central state's statutory allocation of N58. 3 million was the second highest to Mid-Western and Rivers states (Okeke 1998).[30] What did these sums translate into for the rehabilitation of Ndi-Igbo into the mainstream of Nigeria's economy? Regardless of this background, the searchlight inevitably beams on the post-Civil War economic programs of the Nigerian government and what was implied for Ndi-Igbo. From all indications the Economic Indigenization Program spearheaded by the Gowon government was a far-reaching, bold measure aimed at ensuring indigenous control of the economy.

It is apt to note the aim of the decree was to give birth to the economic indigenization program. On February 23, 1972, the Federal Military Government promulgated a new law called the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree and established an Institution called the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Board, whose main Function was to advance and develop the promotion of enterprises where the citizens of Nigeria will participate fully and play a dominant role (Federal Republic of Nigeria, Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree, Official Gazette 1972).[31] The

Indigenization decree classified enterprises and levels of participation for Nigerians and non-Nigerians. While the scope of this work could not include an in-depth analysis of the decree it only focused on the schedules and enterprises that were drawn up in the law:

Schedule 1: This contained 22 enterprises only Nigerians could invest in, control, and operate. The only foreigners allowed to participate in Schedule 1 were citizens of African countries that their governments allowed Nigerians to do similar businesses within the countries.

Schedule 2: This included 33 enterprises or 'types of activity' (according to the decree) that allowed foreign involvement due to major financial and technological demands. The small ones among them had a paid-up share capital of less than 200, 000 pounds or an annual turn-over of less than 500, 000 pounds each that were reserved exclusively for Nigerians. Those enterprises under Schedule 2 that had paid-up share capital or annual turn-over exceeded these limits were open to foreign participation. Exception to foreign participation in these enterprises was not in its entirety, Nigerians required to have at least 40 percent equity participation in them (Federal Republic of Nigeria, Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree, Official Gazette 1972).[32] One may ask: were Ndi-Igbo capable of participating in this revolutionary economic blueprint that was a cardinal component of the country's Second National Development Plan? Ostensibly, the answer is no. Historically, the matters were more complex. It was not just that the Igbo were unequipped in any way to adapt to the new economic order.

It was that official policy, despite the claims deprived the Igbo to succeed by the new indigenous economic summit. Under the guidance of Obafemi Awolowo, the Federal Commissioner of Finance under Gowon, a policy was introduced and all inhabitants of the war-ravaged area were entitled to the sum of 20 pounds, irrespective of the sum already in banks or elsewhere within Nigeria. The policy was clearly aimed at emasculating Ndi-Igbo financially. Additionally, the Nigerian economy needed additional funds after its war-time financial overstretch. This policy incapacitated the Igbo from full-scale involvement in Indigenization or other lofty economic programs of the government. The lopsidedness of the spatial distribution of the indigenized enterprises and a widespread belief that the various parts of the country did not have equal access to the shares sold by the indigenized enterprises made some critics from some sections of the country condemn the program and its authors.

For instance, many opinion leaders in Igboland claimed that since the program was launched barely two years after the Civil War (when Ndi-Igbo were not financially stable). At this time, the Yoruba were more solvent and dominated the federal civil service, where they were able to buy a large amount of the shares that was sold to Nigerians through alien enterprises that were affected by the indigenization laws (Olutayo 1999).[33] In order to survive and flourish the Igbo accepted the new dispensation. Shortly after the war, mass migration to other parts of Nigeria and even outside the country began with the Igbo. In the minority areas of Southern Nigeria, especially present-day Rivers and Bayelsa states, there were flashpoints of

hostility over controversies surrounding properties abandoned by the Igbo during the war. Nevertheless, economic and social interaction between the Igbo and other Nigerians continued alongside the pre-Civil War patterns. Igbo technological advances during the war were survival-oriented.

Overall, peace was geared towards the basics of industrial processes. This process involved sending equipment manufactured in Europe to some of the Asian countries such as Taiwan, Japan, and China for duplication that were imported back into Nigeria.[34] It was in the 1970s and early 1980s that Igboland began to be known for rudimentary, copy-cat industrialization. Towns like Aba and Nnewi gained fame in this regard, although they had been reputed as entrepôts before this period. The new dynamics of inter-group relations in post-Civil War, Nigeria determined how far the Igbo would be involved in the new dispensation. The 1970s and 1980s: A Period of Mixed Blessings for Ndi-Igbo Nearly two decades after the war, the Igbo regained their socio-economic equilibrium. This was partly because the Igbo were no longer a decisive factor in the country's political structure. Notwithstanding the tokens of reintegration, the age-old competition resurfaced and the 'system of rewards' was practiced again. Successive military governments from 1970 to 1979 experienced economic dynamics, political and administrative incompetency, and other challenges that reflected on the economy.

It is noteworthy that industrialization within Igboland during this period was privately driven. The restoration of civilian rule in 1979 was not disastrous for Igbo socio-economic development. An Igbo held a federal government

position as the Vice-President, numerous Igbos held prestigious positions too. Proposed industrial sites were intended for all states in Nigeria, but did not include Imo and Anambra that are also Igbo states during this period. The proposals made to develop the power sources at Oji near Enugu remained illusionary. The allocations made by the Shagari-led federal government to River Basin Development authorities in Nigeria in 1983 gave the Igbo states one of the lowest allocations. Unlike some other areas with low allocations, the Igbos faced the challenge of a high population density and a relatively infertile terrain. Below are the figures: (Okeke 1998)[35]

River Basin Authority	Region	Amount Allocated
Anambra/Imo	South	N20, 470, 276
Benin/Owena	South	N20, 449, 484
Chad Basin Upper	North	N32, 010, 606
Cross River	South	N14, 523, 723
Hadeja/Jamare	Upper North	N83, 733, 186
Lower Benue	Middle Belt	N22, 398, 409
Niger Delta	South	N18, 795, 420
Niger River	Middle Belt	N46, 229, 448
Ogun/Oshun	South	N27, 852, 638
Sokoto/Rima	Upper North	N102, 392, 691
Upper Benue	Middle Belt	N38, 425, 063

The oil glut of the 1980s and the food crisis in the country within this period encouraged a massive food importation exercise by the Shagari government. There was no account of this program as a basis for agricultural, let alone, industrial advancement. However, in the peculiar Nigerian milieu, this created a class of millionaires who had access to rice importation licenses because of their political affinity. From 1982 to 1983, when this importation bazaar was supreme, Igbo businessmen were largely eclipsed from the upper echelon, only a few people associated with the ruling National Party of

Nigeria. If Igbo bourgeoisie profited, it was at lower levels as agents and middlemen. The Babangida regime (1985-93) instituted policies that had far-reaching implications for Igbo mercantilist capitalism. In the usual fierce inter-ethnic competition that characterizes group relations among Nigerians other groups also sought benefits from the regime's policies. In 1986 when the global price for oil fell as low as 12 dollars per barrel, the Babangida regime adopted the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). By its nature, SAP was laissez-faire; it encouraged open markets, foreign investments, trade liberalization and deregulation of government involvement in business. This was a boom for Igbo entrepreneurs who had been stifled by the indigenization program.

The Igbo needed only little opportunity to find their feet economically. The liberalization policies of the Babangida regime enabled Igbo businessmen access previously 'closed' businesses. However, the deregulation of the naira, continued public sector inadequacies and the removal of subsidies seriously affected the emerging Igbo enterprises. Therefore in the Babangida years, a new class of Igbo millionaires began to emerge. A sufficient number of agents were involved in foreign capital and government cronies. Very few stood out for their entrepreneurial vision and shortly after the Babangida years, things moved into new dimensions. Igbo Quest for Socio-Economic Advancement in the Abacha Years (1993-1998) I will adopt Olutayo's observation that 'with little or no government assistance, the Igbo have moved from trade to industry since the end of the civil war' (Olutayo 1999),

[36] as the background for analyzing the Igbo quest for socio-economic advancement in the Abacha years (1993-1998).

There is statistical evidence to support the claim that in terms of private contribution to national wealth, the Igbos all over the country account for a far greater percentage of the non-oil Gross National Product than any other ethnic group.[37] It would be a good test of this claim to have all Igbo-owned businesses in Nigeria close shop for a day and see what becomes of the national economy. At the level of management of resources, Igboland contains the highest percentage of persons who typify the classical capitalist myth of rags to riches in Nigeria. They have the ability to convert hopeless adversity to astounding wealth within a very short time without depending on government patronage and handouts. There is no refuting the fact that Igbo enterprise drew little or no breath from a formal government welfare plan. Clearly, the Igbo have prospered without it, with minimal limitations. Like all good capitalists, what an average Igbo have always sought after are favorable political conditions for their mercantile interests without getting unduly involved in the power game. On account of its human rights excesses and anti-democratic credentials, the Abacha regime faced stiff economic sanctions from the West.

The government promptly tilted its foreign policy to meet the requirements in the East. Countries like China became significant players in Nigeria's economy. China's economic and technological prominence needs no expatiation. The Nigeria-Chinese relation is a fairly recent phenomenon. For the entrepreneurial Igbo, commercial contact with Asia dated back to the

late nineteenth century (Nwaozichi 2000).[38] Countries like China and Taiwan were instrumental to the industrial evolution of Igbo towns like Nnewi. With the imprimatur of the Abacha government, Igbo-Asian mercantile soared. Asian countries' electronic goods, clothing, vehicle spare parts, etc. flooded Igbo entréports. Igbo manufacturers duplicated their partners' designs and gave them " more acceptable" labels. Auto spare parts production companies in Igboland sourced components from their Asian partners. Chinese companies were ready to partner with Igbo businessmen whose market knowledge was unsurpassed. Thus by the post-Abacha years and the return of civilian rule in 1999, the ' Asian Tigers' (China, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, etc.) had gained a strong foothold in the contemporary Igbo economy. However, Igbo renaissance in these contemporary times was a complex phenomenon shaped by various factors.

Igbo Renaissance and the One-Man-Show Syndrome

Between the end of the Civil War and the contemporary period, the Igbo have experienced tremendous change. Although this change has been negative and rooted in the region's loss of socio-economic foundation laid before the war, some intellectuals argue that there have been other developments that may be tagged a sign of renaissance. Igbo entrepreneurship and industry within this era is a success story. They (the Igbo) engage in all sorts of activities, especially trade, in order to achieve the aim of survival and status mobility. While trying to be successful in all endeavors, they have been faced with enormous impediments which, with dogged courage, determination, and perseverance, they attempt to prevail.

The successes attained in these endeavors have been remarkable.

Innovation is a cardinal aspect of the new wave of Igbo industrialization.

Companies like Cutix Plc and Adswitch Plc (both quoted in the second-tier securities market of the Nigerian Stock Exchange) is renowned for the manufacturing of electric cables and electric switchgear.

Respectively, Ebuso manufactures process equipment, John White manufactures fan belts, Uru Industries manufactures brake cables, Edison manufactures brake pads, shoes and linings, and OCE Filters manufactures oil filters while Godwin-Kris specializes in rubber auto parts, Coscharis Group of Companies manufactures timing and roller chains, and Niger Auto Industries manufactures motor parts. The numbers of industries in this category are numerous; all are championed by Igbo individuals without any input from the government. The assembling of motorcycles in Nnewi with local brand names is no longer a news item. What is now in vogue is motor vehicle manufacturing. Before now, Anambra Motor Manufacturing Company (ANAMCO) was the only vehicle assembling plant in the whole of South East. ANAMCO was conceived in the 1970s as a joint venture between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and Daimler-Benz AG ("Daimler") of Germany to import and assemble Completely Knocked Down (CKD) units of Mercedes Benz trucks and buses in Nigeria (Anamco 2010),[39] and was being managed by foreigners.

In March 2007, FGN through the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) sold 24% out of its 35% interest in ANAMCO to G. U. Okeke & Sons Limited (GUO), a company owned by Chief Godfrey Ubaka Okeke (an Igbo

transporter/industrialist). GUO also acquired 3% of ANAMMCO's equity from Leventis Ltd. and another 0.5% from Hon. Nnamdi Njoku, another shareholder, thereby making GUO a major shareholder of ANAMCO (Anamco 2010).[40] Today, ANAMCO is allegedly accused for fraud because of mismanagement done by the shareholders and directors. As a result of these managerial hiccups, patronage has faded away and customers have decided to buy directly from countries like Brazil, China instead of ANAMCO.

Therefore, this company is no longer in business. There are several other Igbo owned industries that also closed shops due to the result of internal squabbles, unfavorable government policies, and managerial incompetency. One of the valid reasons for most Igbo businesses closures were fashioned towards the 'Okoli and Sons Enterprises' inclination, where the individual and close relatives owned and operated everything.

This model served Nigerians well when the emphasis was on developing and servicing the local markets in Nigeria and neighboring countries. To be able to function and become competitive at the next level, to surpass the ability, and to leverage the capital market, international strategic alliances will make the difference to adopt the prerequisite corporate culture that governs contemporary global business relationships. Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company represents the new face of Igbo industrialization. It is noteworthy that this company, unlike many of its contemporaries, locally designs and manufactures motorcycles, tricycles and motor vehicles - save the engine blocks that are sourced from their foreign partners.[41]

All indicators show that it will release a fully built made-in-Nigeria car within a few years. Assembling of vehicles by Innoson and similar high-powered companies within Igboland is based on effective harnessing of foreign technology adapted to local conditions. Consequently, Innoson stands out as probably Nigeria's first indigenous vehicle manufacturing company. What marks out this industrialization process is that it combines the very best of indigenous ingenuity and modern capabilities. Although vast and still expanding, the new Igbo industrial enterprise is ironically constrained by 'Okoli and Sons Enterprises' tendency. Innoson is not excluded from the trend. It restricts access to foreign investment from those who may be uncomfortable with potentials of nepotism. The limited access to the capital market, banks, and other growth outlets by the Igbo entrepreneurial class may be partly blamed on this trend. Granted, every business partner is secure with qualified and trusted hands. But in today's high-tech world, entrepreneurial risk is much more than a necessity; it is a fundamental requirement.

Conclusion

From the dawn of colonialism to the contemporary era, the Igbo have contended against great odds to attain social and economic advancement in Igboland and beyond. To a great extent, they have grappled with the challenges of each period. The post-war era, especially during the 1990s and 2000s has provided a lot of prospects for the Igbo renaissance. Yet this development requires informed men and women who understand the dynamics of the Information Age. It is a tragedy that in recent years there

has been a major educational decline among Igbo youths, particularly the males. The quest to learn a trade and get rich quick is a chimera that needs to be corrected by Igbo scholars in the Diaspora. Typically, it is not peculiar to Ndi-Igbo, yet other than any other ethnic group in Nigeria they stand less likely to succeed if not addressed. Due to a substantial exclusion from Nigeria's power structure; they must find other ways to get with the system of things. It is also important for our corporate elites to 'think about their home effort' when investing and for the Igbo state governments to create suitable conditions for these investors.

Tax relief can be given to Igbos entrepreneurs in Igboland to veer more toward industrialization rather than trade. Igbo industrialists should gradually move away from the solo mentality if they must thrive in the new world. Like the Nnewi motorcycle dealers, those who participated in building materials and automotive spare parts businesses – especially those in Auto Spare and Machinery Dealers Association ASPMDA, Trade Fair Complex in Lagos State, should strategize on how to bring the home depots and technology gurus of businesses to Nigeria as partners. This way they can also take advantage of the large consumer market and many under-developed economies. Industrial clusters should be modeled after the Brazilian Shoe Cluster of Sinos Valley in Brazil, Siatkot Surgical Instrument Industrial Clusters in Pakistan and others, for the resultant forward and backward linkages rewards. Our survival in these competitive markets must be sought through alternative means through de-emphasized reliance on upper-managerial employers at the Aso

Rock. We must, as a necessity, re-focus our goals to build for the future, through our spirited pursuit of creating new wealth in the private sector.

The extent of Igbo involvement in commerce - clothing, automobiles and their service parts, cosmetics, transportation, real sector, oil and gas, entertainment, etc., throughout the length and breadth of Nigeria and beyond, places them at a unique position to elevate the economy to a new height by inculcating the best practices of global industrial development and trade. We should plan and implement a new approach in the private sector to replace the present corrupt and inefficient economic management methods that steadily impoverishes the average citizen everyday. The first task is to re-ignite our characteristic of an entrepreneurial spirit that gives preeminence to discipline, hard work and calculated risk taking for the purposes of new wealth creation and resultant enhancement in societal development for the welfare of all. Ndi-Igbo, as a group, are noted for their experiences and track records that qualify them as team players to having a prominent role in the private sector in less than a decade. Keep in mind that the theory of Unity of History states that ' the past determines the present and the present determines the future and these events occurring at any particular time are dependent on the result of what has happened before and these things as they are today will follow into future generations - the unvarying law of cause and effect.

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