

## **Nigerian Politics and Igbo Migration in the Post-Civil War Era**

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### **Abstract**

Social and economic challenges have fervently triggered unprecedented migration across the globe with an attendant search for survival and fulfillment in life. In this regard, migration is an essential part of human life. There are indeed a number of factors that influence and increase the rate of migration across the globe. In Nigeria, however, the 'post war politics' is unarguably the major push factor propelling migration of the Igbo ethnic group out of Nigeria. Scholars have neglected this area of studies. This paper covered the gap and examined the nexus between politics and migration. It also analyzed how politics cum migration have been affecting development in Nigeria with the view to finding solution to the challenge. As a result of the continued falling standard of living among Nigerians, Nigerians are by the day losing faith in Nigeria. Therefore, this fact has resulted in endless migration among the youthful population. Some of these youths perish in the course of their journey in the Atlantic Ocean and Sahara desert, while some end up settling for an unfulfilled life in different foreign countries. As a result of the socio-economic challenges that characterized post war era in Nigeria, the Igbo are found all over Nigeria outside their ancestral home of Southern Nigeria. Both primary and secondary sources were employed for the research. The nature of Nigerian politics encourages massive migration of Nigerians which has its consequences on Nigeria and its people.

**Keywords:** Migration, Nigeria, Africa, Igbo, Politics, Nigerian civil war

### **Introduction**

The movement of population across international borders in recent years, especially from developing to developed countries and between developed countries, is having a significant impact on international

relations.<sup>1</sup> Migration has become one of the most fervent social activities of human society stemmed from daily interaction of people. It has over the years, therefore, led to the integration of people across the globe. With the increasing needs of humans occasioned by socio-economic challenges of different countries, migration for varied reasons has become inevitable.<sup>2</sup> Such desperate human needs are attributed to some of the factors that propelled explorations of certain parts of the world by historians, geographers, traders and other category of persons. In other words, migration as it were has shaped the entire world in different forms through the movement of people from one end to another. In the same vein, Nigeria as a nation has had its fair share of the impact of migration. As a matter of fact, Nigeria was conceived through the influence of migration. It should be noted therefore that Nigeria was founded by the imperial forces, ably represented by the British since 1914 up to 1960.<sup>3</sup>

In 1960 when Nigeria gained her political independence, the nation emerged as a promising nation in Africa with the potentials and capabilities of leading Africa out of the shackles of poverty, economic backwardness and the status of 'Third World'.<sup>4</sup> However, the perceived dream of greatness identified with Nigeria has never been realized due to the nature and pattern of politics executed in Nigeria.<sup>5</sup> It is argued in some quarters that the imperial forces are responsible for the failures of Nigeria, while some are of the view that Nigerian leaders are to be held responsible for the state of Nigeria. Nigeria has over the years remained a source of concern due to the escalating rate of division among different ethnic nationalities and other vices such as; poverty, terrorism, nepotism, corruption, unemployment and so on.<sup>6</sup> Given the state of Nigeria which has negatively affected every facet of the nation, the Igbo people have rather chosen the pathway of steady migration

to different continents of the world since the end of the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970. Migration has become one of the most preferred options for the majority of youthful population in Nigerians. Nevertheless, the Igbo have recorded more number in terms of those that have migrated to different parts of the globe including poorer countries in Africa. The nature of Nigerian politics since the end of the Nigerian civil war has consistently sidelined the Igbo with attendant economic and political disadvantages on their people and region. On a whole, the state of Nigeria is indeed one of the push factors causing millions of Nigerians to migrate to different parts of the world at the expense of building Nigeria.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Igbo Ethnic Group: The Identity of Igbo in Nigeria and Africa**

The Igbo are one of the ethnic groups in Nigeria, conservatively estimated to number about 20 million, with potentially up to 100 million members worldwide, united by a common language and culture with local variations in custom and dialects. Igboland is among the most densely populated in Africa, with intense agricultural productivity and several large urban centres. The Igbo people are regarded as a nation, located in several states within the modern nation-states of Nigeria.<sup>8</sup> The Igbo people are well known for their identity of industry, entrepreneurial engagement, high skill in technology, courage, brevity, patriotism and excellence. During the period of nationalism and pan-Africanism movements in Africa, a good number of Igbo prominent sons and daughters prominently took part in those movements.<sup>9</sup>

At the inception of independent Nigeria, from 1960, the first president of Nigeria was Nnamdi Azikiwe. It is on record also that Philip Odumegwu Ojukwu lent Nigeria his personal Rolls Royce for conveying the Queen of England when she visited Nigeria before her independence. The Igbo are found all over the world plying their trade as professionals in different fields and human endeavours.<sup>10</sup> As a result of the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970, Biafra's children (which majority of

them were Igbo) were airlifted to Gabon and Cote d'Ivoire to protect them from the conflict. Some of the children were not brought back to Nigeria at the end of the conflict. There is no part of Africa and other continents of the world where the Igbo are not found as migrants.<sup>11</sup>

### **Nigeria, Politics And Migration**

Since 1914 when the Northern and Southern Nigeria Protectorates were amalgamated by the British, more political engagements began to take place between both regions, leading to movements of people from one region to another. By the late 1950s the British were rapidly accepting the inevitability of independence coming to one of their major colonies, Nigeria. Officers began to retire and return to England, vacating their position in Nigeria's colonial government. They left in droves, quietly and at night. The British clearly had a well-thought-out exit strategy, with handover plans in place long before Nigerians noticed. When Britain decided to hand over power to Nigeria, they also decided to change the governor general. They brought a new governor general from the Sudan, Sir James Robertson, to take the reins in Nigeria. Sir James Robertson played an important role in overseeing the elections (or lack therefore) at independence, throwing his weight behind Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who had been tapped to become Nigeria's first prime minister. It should be recalled at this juncture that Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was from the Northern Nigeria. The Northern Nigerians were considered as the friends of the British as they were easily manipulated according to their wishes.<sup>12</sup>

Later it was discovered that a courageous English junior civil servant named Harold Smith had been selected by no other than Sir James Robertson to oversee the rigging of Nigeria's first election 'so that its compliant friends in (Northern Nigeria) would win power, dominate the country, and serve British interests after independence'. Despite the enticements of riches and bribes (even a

knighthood), Smith refused to be part of this elaborate hoax to fix Nigeria's elections, and swiftly became one of the casualties of this mischief. Smith's decision was a bold choice that cost him his job, career, and reputation (at least until recently). In a sense, Nigerian independence came with a British governor general in command, and, one might say, popular faith in genuine democracy was compromised from its birth.<sup>13</sup>

Since the independence of Nigeria in 1960, the union has not experienced a steady stability for a number of reasons.<sup>14</sup> It is therefore the nature of the foundation of Nigeria that often times create situations that propel migration of people out of the shores of Nigeria. Nevertheless, the migration of Nigerians had begun even before their encounter with the Europeans. Such migrations were most times borne out of people's desire to relocate to new environment for social and economic reasons. However, in the post-colonial Nigeria as seen in this study, the migrations are largely triggered by political dynamics that affect the entire well-being of the people. This is the case of the Igbo who have been politically alienated in Nigeria to some degree since the end of the Nigerian civil war. Therefore, suffice it to say that migration had taken place since the pre-colonial era when people occupying areas currently known as Nigeria were crossing borderlands and rivers for the purposes of trade and other social activities. Be that as it may, the post-colonial migration considered here is obviously a product of politics birthed by the British and ably sustained by the political class of Nigeria.<sup>15</sup>

The two effects of the 'British-Nigerian' politics is that it rendered Nigeria dysfunctional, creating an atmosphere of intense disharmony and chaos which has not given room for good governance, void of ethnic tension and hostility. Again, it was this factor (ethnic politics) that became one of the remote causes of the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970. Consequently, after the war, the Igbo, considered as one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria were sidelined in the realm of national politics which has since then bred

disharmony and national distrust. Put differently, the discourse or debate with regards to the unprecedented migration of youthful population in recent times could be traced to the politics of the British at independence which unduly empowered the Northern oligarchy at the expense of the rest of Nigeria.

The Nigerian civil war cost Nigeria enormous damages. Over three million persons perished in the course of the war. The negative politics of the British ('divide and rule') rooted in her colonial policies adversely affected Nigeria such that her people treat themselves as strangers living together by compulsion till date. This national feeling has made average Nigerians to see the idea of 'one Nigeria' as a mere façade. Most times, it is the ruling class and the ethnic group in possession of political power that see Nigeria as a realistic dream. Since the inception of Nigeria, even prominent patriots have affirmed that Nigeria is not one and have expressed their fear of its possible collapse. Without doubt, the only force binding Nigeria together is the military, while sports (particularly, Nigerian national football team, Super Eagles) gives them a momentary patriotism during international competitions. Given the foundation of Nigeria created by the British, Nigeria as an entity has not in reality transformed into a nation. With the political situation which has affected every aspect of Nigeria's national life, Nigerians constantly live in mystery and fear. The end products of the Nigerian brand of politics are injustice, insecurity, conflicts, ethnic loyalty, terrorism, bad leadership, tattered poverty and a host of other ugly vices.<sup>16</sup>

Poverty is a dominant factor in the rising trend of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. Poverty, which is manifested in both unemployment and deterioration of social infrastructure, provides the bedrock for ethnic conflicts. Many people are not employed. Many functional factories are not working to full capacity, leading to retrenchment of workers and an increase in the unemployment rates. Those who escape retrenchment and are still in the unemployment find it increasingly difficult to collect their salaries, as some

employers sometimes owes their workers' salaries amounting to many months or a times years. Most families, therefore, find it difficult to feed themselves or cater for other essential needs like shelter, clothing and healthcare. Due to this pathetic situation, family norms and values have collapsed across the country, as most parents can no longer adequately control their children, kith and kin. Thus, these socio-economic situations created by leadership problem in Nigeria have made Nigerians to see migration as the easiest escape route to all their hellish socio-economic challenges.

One of the products of the British politics in Nigeria before and after their departure at the expiration of colonialism is the systemic skewing of the political system in favour of the Northern Nigerians. As a result of this fundamental injustice, Nigeria has never enjoyed enduring peace and harmony since the departure of their colonial masters. Till the present moment, there has been a call for 'restructuring' the country in order to re-shape the governmental and fiscal structure of the country whereby every section of the country would be treated as equal partner in the federation in terms of what they benefit. For all of these reasons, the growth process of Nigeria is adversely affected which also crumbles its economy, thereby exposing the people to varied social ills as buttressed earlier on this section.

The Igbo who are part of southern Nigeria are unarguably most affected by the nature of Nigerian politics, especially after the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970. Apart from the fact that they are systematically alienated from strategic positions of the national government of Nigeria, their region also remains the less developed in terms of infrastructure and other government's investments. Also, due to the massive dispersal of the Igbo which is being attributed to their alienation from the commonwealth of the Nigeria, they became the second largest ethnic group in population in all the cities and town of Nigeria after the natives of the area. This implies, therefore, that in a bid to eke out a living, they have to leave their region and move into different nooks and crannies of Nigeria in search of

better standard of living. This is believed that their dispersal is as a result of the nature of Nigerian politics that has denied them national opportunities such that their region are left with little federal government's presence. Given this fact, a good number of Igbo people believe their interest cannot be secured in Nigeria and this explains why they have large number in diaspora across different nations of the world, including very poor countries in Africa. The very important point to underscore here is that the Nigerian politics encourages and promotes migration at the expense of nation -building.<sup>17</sup>

Ironically, however, while the southerners are craving for migration out of Nigeria, other foreign nationals from neighbouring countries are massively migrating into Nigeria with little or no restriction. Most of these countries share border with northern Nigeria and their inhabitants are siblings to the Hausa and Fulani people of Nigeria. Some of them share the same language with the foreigners flooding Nigeria. In 2015 during the general election of Nigeria, Muhammmad Buhari who later became the President of Nigeria reaffirmed that Niger Republic are the same with Northern Nigeria, of which he has not hidden his sentiment by investing in Niger Republic at the expense of the southern Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> Generally, with the growing bad economy of Nigeria, one of the biggest industries in the southern Nigeria among the youthful population is migration. The most educated and talented who are often from the southern Nigeria are obsessed with the idea of escaping from the nightmarish entity called Nigeria. The growing rate of youth migrating out of Nigeria is rather alarming. The youths in their prime are often times fixated with the idea of migration without any concrete plan of what to do on reaching those countries they migrate to.

### **The Paradox of Nigerian Politics and Igbo Migration in the Post War Era**

The Igbo people of Nigeria are no doubt one of the most dispersed African ethnic groups across the globe. Their displacement

through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade depleted their population as millions of their able men and women were shipped to South America and Europe throughout the dark days of the human trade. In other words, the dispersal of the Igbo had begun way before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This accounts for their presence till date in places like Haiti and Cuba even before the formation of Nigeria. However, the biggest push factor that led to the continued migration of the Igbo out of the shores of Nigeria was the event of the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970 and the attendant Nigerian brand of ethnic politics.<sup>19</sup>

Since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970 the political firmament of Nigeria assumed a dimension that has tactically disempowered the Igbo through a deliberate systematic measure. On January 12, 1970, General Philip Effiong, who took over the realms of Government from Ojukwu, led Sir Louis Mbanefo, Chief Justice of the defunct Republic of Biafra, M.T. Mbu, Col. Ogunewu, and a host of others to the Dodan Barracks to formally surrender to the Supreme Military Council headed by General Yakubu Gowon. Gowon made his famous conciliatory statement of “no victor, no vanquished”. But the actions of the federal government and developments in the country after the war belied the assertion.<sup>20</sup> The paradox of Nigerian politics is that instead of being an instrument of integration and forging Nigeria as one nation bound by trust and unity, sadly, the same is used for suppression. This, therefore, could be identified as the root cause of the endless migration of the Igbo as it were.

One of the most pernicious measures, which the federal government took after the Nigerian civil war, was to declare the Biafran currency illegal after the war. The government reluctantly decided after five months of the war for all holders of Biafran money to return it to the Central Bank in exchange for just twenty pounds, irrespective of the amount one deposited. In many families, that amount was the only money available to feed and fend for them. It made life very difficult for many Igbo people coming back from the war. Another measure, “The Public Officers (Special

Provisions) Decree” No. 46 of 1970 certainly contradicted the amnesty proclaimed by General Gowon at the end of the war. The decree stipulated that public officers involved in hostile or subversive activities during the war were to lose their jobs. The decree also applied to private establishments or companies such as Shell BP. Those who were reluctantly and grudgingly re-absorbed were treated as second-class citizens in the perception of the Igbo people.<sup>21</sup>

Equally offensive for the Igbo, was the “Abandoned Property” saga. As part of the strategy to whittle down the influence and extent of the projected Republic of Biafra, General Gowon, in May 1967, created three states out of the Eastern Region, namely, East Central State (present Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States), Cross River State (Cross River and Awka Ibom states). The Igbo of East Central State were in large numbers in those two other states and had a lot of landed property there, especially in Port Harcourt, before the war. The Igbo and other easterners fleeing other parts of the country naturally left those immovable properties in those towns. During the war, Gowon's government, perhaps in good faith, created “Abandoned Properties Committees” in different states of the Federation. Those committees were to look after the properties and keep the rents collected for the rightful owners.<sup>22</sup>

At the end of the war, Igbo people found it difficult, at times impossible, to repossess their properties or collect the accumulated rents. All sorts of excuses were given, especially in Port Harcourt, why the Igbo could not take possession of their properties in the country they had been forced back to belong. The federal military government virtually did nothing to call the erring states to order. The indifference of the government at the centre to the plight of the Igbo in this regard was in contrast to the Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation proclaimed by the Gowon regime. Where rents were ever just paltry sums unrelated to the appropriate value of the properties. Col. Anthony Anthony Ochefu, as Military

Governor of the State, had cause to describe the abandoned properties issue as “obnoxious, fundamentally objectionable” and certainly inconsistent with one's constitutional right as a Nigerian citizen.<sup>23</sup>

In the area of rehabilitation and reconstruction of physical structures, there was very little put in place during this period in the Igbo view. Government establishments, roads, and educational institutions continued to show scar of war. The Indigenization Decree of 1972 was seen among the Igbo as a further means of keeping them down. Certain enterprises dominated by foreigners such as the Lebanese were to pass over to Nigerians. But the Igbo, barely two years after the war did not have the financial resources benefit from the measures. The Igbo notion then was that the decree was meant to favour the Yoruba. Chief Obafemi Awolowo was then the Commissioner for Finance and Vice Chairman of the Federal Executive Council.<sup>24</sup>

In the area of infrastructure –roads and bridges-the picture is dismal. Up till the January 2014, this zone had the worst network of Federal roads in the whole federation. None of the state capitals had a good road leading to it. The Enugu/Onitsha express road and that of Enugu/Port Hacourt were in a sorry state; the glowing picture painted in the Nigerian media must be completely ignored. The only major industry, the Nkalagu Cement Factory, has since been abandoned by the Federal and State governments.<sup>25</sup>

In view of the foregoing, the continued depression of the Igbo since 1967 is no doubt one of the major reasons their zone is left with the lowest Federal Government's investment. Having protested in various ways on their perceived marginalization, some groups of youths in the region have even attempted calling for secession at different times. In effect, therefore, this reality has over the years increased the rate of migration of their youths out of the shores of Nigeria. Based on observation, an average youth in the Southeast of Nigeria believes that the existence of Nigeria is a mistake or false

geared towards servicing the interest of Britain and the Northern oligarchy. Having realized the formidability of the Federal government in tackling any attempt to balkanize Nigeria, coupled with the support they gain from the Britain and other Western countries, the Igbo have in recent time considered migration as one of the escape routes from the misfortunes of Nigeria.<sup>26</sup>

### **Perceived Greener Pasture and Migration: The Ironies of Migration**

It is an established fact that humans move from one place to another in search of greener pasture. This reality is generic and has not only influenced the Igbo alone in terms of migrating to countries termed as 'greener pastures'. The Igbo people have thus far recorded highest number of immigrants from Nigeria to different parts of the world since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970. Given the configuration of Nigerian politics as examined earlier on, the Igbo found it difficult to express themselves in any field or sector controlled by the Federal Government, except in those areas where their individual skills single them out, such as sports. According to respondents from their region, this notion has become a known fact, such that families and communities pull their resources together for the sponsorship of their youths to travel out of Nigeria in search of greener pasture. Despite the dangers associated with travelling to certain countries with harsh policy for foreigners, the youths from the area rather prefer taking risk of travelling out at all cost, all in a bid to migrate out of the shores of Nigeria. Sometimes, such drive is borne out of desperation and illusion which leads to regrets in some cases.<sup>27</sup>

The Igbo are found in some certain places in the world where foreigners are hardly found. As a result of their passion for migration, some of their young men who migrated without any plans for their lives end up committing crimes in those countries. In an interaction with some of the youths from their zone, it is realized that some of them who migrated to countries without any requisite skill, mostly end up wasting years

trying to find their footings in such countries. Some of them end up being deported back to Nigeria while some of them return back to Nigeria of their own accord. In Africa for example, a good number of Igbo who travel to countries like Niger Republic, South Sudan, Chad, Burkina Faso and a host of others with weak economy end up engaging in petty trades or business. Such experiences have not augured well with those who embark on such migration. There abound stories of Igbo people who left their flourishing business or profession in Nigeria in search of a greener pasture without finding the perceived greener pastures.<sup>28</sup>

Following the intense campaign for the restoration of Sovereign State of Biafra since 2015 by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the Southeast region has been under stiff security surveillance by the Federal Government of Nigeria leading to the migration of Igbo to different parts of the world. In recent time, however, there have been numerous stories and pictures of stranded Igbo men and women in various social media platforms seeking for assistance towards their return to their ancestral homeland in Igboland. Most of these people are those who travelled out for decades without the requisite credentials or skills to enable them make a living in those countries as immigrants. Having been exposed to fend for themselves without any communal support or any reliable source of income, their standard of living drop, coupled with some emotional related challenges worsened by loneliness.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, it is apt therefore to state that Igboland is characterized by communal living wherein every individual member of the society is seen as *nwa nna* or *nwa nne* (meaning brethren). Just like traditional African society, the sense of communal living is highly entrenched in Igboland such that hardly would anyone go hungry. In contrast, this is not so with the Western countries where people live with a deep sense of individualism with little or no interaction. In other words, this cultural difference is part of the challenge being faced by Igbo migrants who may not

have anyone to run to for help in their early days as migrants, or in any case they are unable to find meaningful source of livelihood. These categories of immigrants live at the mercy of government's welfare in those countries, and in some cases lack shelter. According to a respondent in Southeastern Nigeria, some Igbo communities in recent times have mobilized their town unions in diaspora to help stranded member of their communities in foreign lands. Some of these town unions have paid for the flight tickets of their kinsmen in such condition as described here.<sup>30</sup>

### **Effects of Nigerian Politics and Igbo Migration on National Development**

Nigeria is without doubt destined to be great. Apart from her human resources and the resilience of her people, the nation is highly endowed with natural resources across all sections of the country. This particularly is the reason Western powers have demonstrated unwavering interest in the affairs of the nation far more than any country in the continent.<sup>31</sup> It has been said since 1960 that Nigeria has the capacity to emerge as one of the leading nations in the world based on her potentials in various areas. However, it is sad to note that Nigeria since 1960 has not lived up to her potentials largely because of the nature of politics being practiced by her leadership. The trouble with Nigeria is simple and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmarks of true leadership. The leadership of Nigeria has been the problem of Nigeria considering the nature of politics being played which has adverse effects on the nation. In other words, the pattern of politics of Nigeria characterized by "winner takes all" has rather made the Igbo victims since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970.<sup>32</sup>

The post Nigerian civil war politics took a newer dimension of ethnic politics wherein the sense of nationalism was lost to ethnic patronage. The Igbo as the victim of Nigerian civil war were technically sidelined from the national leadership and other key positions of the nation. Be that as it may, the Igbo have been described as the Jews and Chinese of Africa given their industrious and enterprising acumen. In the developed climes, the success of an ethnic group as industrious as the Igbo would stimulate healthy competition and a renaissance of learning and achievement.<sup>33</sup> In Nigeria, however, it bred deep resentment and both subtle and overt attempts to dismantle the structures in place for meritocracy in favour of mediocrity, under the cloak of a need for “federal character”- a morally bankrupt and deeply corrupt Nigerian form of the far more successful affirmative action in the United States.<sup>34</sup> The denial of merits is a form of social injustice that can hurt not only the individual directly concerned but ultimately the entire society. The motive for the original denial may be tribal discrimination, but it may also come from sexism, from political, religious, or some other partisan consideration, or from corruption and bribery. It is unnecessary to examine these various motive separately, it is sufficient to state that whenever merit is set aside by prejudice of whatever origin, individual citizens as well as the nation itself are victimized.<sup>35</sup>

With the political climate of Nigeria at the post Nigerian civil war, the migration of the Igbo to different parts of the globe has been multiplying. Since the end of the war till date also, the Igbo have been complaining of marginalization far more than any ethnic group in Nigeria. In reality, the condition of social amenities and the investment of the Federal Government in their zone are far less compared with other zones in Nigeria. The surge in the migration of the Igbo, especially amongst their youths, has been in the increase. This upward surge in the migration of the Igbo has increasingly affected the process of national development of Nigeria as a nation. As earlier asserted, the Igbo are most

industrious and innovative. This is the reason; the Chinese have built trade relations with the Igbo in the Southeastern Nigeria. In the same vein, the Igbo in the recent times have built large Igbo community in China. Apart from China, the Igbo population is fast increasing in other countries in Asia. At this juncture, however, it is apt to establish that the major reasons for the increasing rate of the Igbo's migration out of Nigeria are their perceived marginalization and hopelessness in Nigeria. This notion is the reason behind various agitations for the establishment of Sovereign State of Biafra since the end of Nigerian civil war in 1970. In order words, this atmosphere leading to migration of the Igbo as it were does not help in nation building and national development.

The Igbo themselves have argued that they are not needed in the union given their continued relegation in the national affairs of Nigeria. In the real sense, the process of national development should involve everybody and offers every member of the society a sense of belonging. There is no nation that can make headway without building confidence of its citizens. Thus, the continued migration of the Igbo out of Nigeria has severely affected the contribution of the Igbo to national development as the large number of them that migrate to different parts of the globe end up building their host countries. Interestingly, the Igbo are clearly noted in Nigeria as the greatest contributor to national development in view of their investments in all parts of Nigeria. Among all the ethnic groups in Nigeria, they are regarded as the most industrious and ambitious who create wealth out of little resources. It is for this reason some Nigerians are of the belief that an Igbo can turn around the economy of Nigeria into a world class economy if given the opportunity of becoming the president of Nigeria.

As established in this paper, the Igbo are found in different parts of the world. Based on this reality, they are one of the largest African ethnic groups in diaspora. The Igbo as also established, are full of industry and

innovation. Due to this perception about Nigeria, the Igbo have rather contributed in no small measure to those countries they are found as migrants. With the state of Nigeria, almost everybody, irrespective of religion and ethnic affiliation, seems to see migration as the last hope. Nevertheless, it has been identified that the Igbo people are more entrenched on the euphoria of migration out of Nigeria.

The attitude of the Igbo on migration and diaspora living is quite different from other ethnic groups in Nigeria. For example, the Hausa people of Nigeria do not see migration as their last hope or an opportunity to stay back abroad. For this reason, therefore, the Hausa always look forward to returning back from abroad after their study or any engagement while the Igbo tend to see abroad as their new home where they could live forever and visit Nigeria from time to time. Since the end of the Nigerian civil war, family members of the Igbo have consistently kept on inviting their relatives to join them in abroad. Since the end of the war, this trend has been on the increase such that some of them have completely taken their entire house hold from Nigeria to various countries they are living, especially those in the advanced countries of the world. Such tendencies have rather weakened their confidence and spirit as the national politics of Nigeria seems not to be in their favour.

### Conclusion

The Igbo are industrious and adventurous like the Jews or Chinese wherever they found themselves or ply their trade. Be that as it may, the rate of their increased migration since the end of the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970 is quite alarming.<sup>36</sup> Thus, this action is no doubt influenced by the state of Nigeria as well as the 'ethnic politics' being practiced in Nigeria. The Igbo people being the 'victims' of the Nigerian civil wars have been paying the price of 'victims' since the war ended in 1970. The politics of the post war directly affects the Igbo and their zone in a negative way. Nevertheless, their resilience and doggedness are felt all over Nigeria, leading to their accumulation of wealth across the length and

breadth of Nigeria. It is, therefore, believed that the Igbo have the capacity of building the fortunes of Nigeria by turning it to a developed country provided they have the right atmosphere void of ethnic politics. It is true that other nationals like the Jews and Chinese do migrate to other parts of the globe. They, however, do so with a deep sense of nationalism as their emotion and hearts are deeply connected to their nations such that they return to their countries for value additions geared towards national development. In other words, they way and manner the Igbo migrate out of Nigeria is an indication of the political complexity and challenges crippling development in Nigeria.<sup>37</sup>

The Igbo migration to different parts of the globe since the end of the Nigerian civil war has its consequence on the human resources of Nigeria as most of them who migrate are most resourceful. It is true that the Igbo in diaspora contribute to the economy of Nigeria through their remittance to their loved ones in Nigeria. However, their lack of trust on the Nigerian system as well as their disposition on the insincerity of the government over the years has really affected the process of nation building in Nigeria.

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