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## **Post-Nigerian Civil War Igbo Reintegration in Zaria, 1970-1983**

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### **Abstract**

The Igbo community is one of the vibrant migrant groups in Zaria. The history of their migration to Zaria dates to the early British colonial period. Colonial rule in Zaria came with a lot of infrastructures in form of improved transportation, establishment of colonial institutions, and European companies. The paper examines the fate of the Igbo community in Zaria after the Nigerian Civil War. How they were able to be reintegrated into the wider Zaria society after their brutal experiences in the 1966 Crises and the Civil War that followed in 1967. Relying on primary and secondary data in form of historical

methodology, the paper argued that, the Igbo people in Zaria, despite what they went through in most northern cities before the Nigerian Civil War, returned to Zaria to pursue their dreams. Findings from the paper revealed that, the reintegration process was a difficult process not only in Zaria but also in the different cities where the Igbo returned. The government, despite its declaration of the policy of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation, did not follow through with the implementation of the policy. The paper concludes that the reintegration of the Igbo community in Zaria after the Civil War was gradual, as many of the Igbo were able to recover their abandoned properties and also started life afresh despite the prevailing social and economic challenges.

**Keywords:** *Civil War, Igbo, Reintegration, and Zaria*

## **Introduction**

Zaria is one of the ancient cities in the Northern part of Nigeria. The city was strategically located on the trans-Saharan trade routes in the precolonial period. Its strategic location was very significant in attracting different migrant groups to the area. Zaria is predominated by the Hausa ethnic group. Its open door policy over the years encouraged the migration of people from different backgrounds. Zaria was regarded as a home to visitors. The incorporation of Zaria into the British colonial system added impetus to the surge of migrants into the area especially the construction of railway line which linked Southern Nigeria with the Northern Nigeria. Southern migrants from different ethnic groups, the Igbo inclusive took advantage of the opportunities available in Zaria to seek for greener pastures. They were employed in different European firms like Unilever, Paterson and Zochonis (P.Z), United African Company (UAC) and other private firms that were in operation in Zaria. The British colonial government established a separate settlement for southern migrants outside Zaria city, which was referred to as Sabon-Gari (strangers' quarters).<sup>1</sup> The Igbo lived mostly in Sabon Gari alongside other ethnic groups from the southern part of Nigeria. At a point in the history of Sabon-Gari Zaria, the Igbo became one of the dominant ethnic groups. Their population outnumbered that of any

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Vulkie Dhliwayo "A History of Sabon Gari Zaria, 1911-1950: A Study of Colonial Urban Administration" (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1986), 48

other ethnic groups in Zaria.<sup>2</sup> They lived peacefully with their host until the sad event of 1966 that interrupted the peaceful coexistence between the Igbo and their host community, which was predominantly Hausa. The crises of 1966 and the Nigerian Civil War, that followed in 1967 led to the exodus of Igbo to the Eastern part of Nigeria. Most cities where the Igbo were domiciled were deserted. The paper therefore examines the return of Igbo to Zaria after the war ended in 1970 and the reintegration of the Igbo people in Zaria. The paper is divided into four parts; introduction, background to Igbo Community in Zaria, the integration of Igbo people in Zaria and conclusion.

### **A Background to Igbo Community in Zaria**

The Igbo community in Zaria has a long history dating back to over a century. The history of their migration to Zaria is strongly tied to the developments of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The British colonial administration in Zaria opened up Zaria to the influx of migrant groups from southern parts of Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that, there were no migrants from the southern part of Nigeria in Zaria before the advent of the British colonial rule. A study by Mary Afolabi has shown that there was already an established Yoruba community in the city walls of Zaria before the coming of the British but it is difficult to say how long they have lived in Zaria.<sup>4</sup> According to Bala Inuwa, the Yoruba community has lived in Zaria for over 400 years.<sup>5</sup> The advent of the British colonial rule only intensified the influx of southern migrants into Zaria, and this brought a lot of transformation to the city.

Many factors account for the influx of migrant groups into Zaria in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars have classified these factors into the pull and push factors. According to Charles Elegalam, the pull factors consist of the opportunities available in the destination of the migrants that served

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<sup>2</sup> Victor Akran and Nathaniel John Odoh, "The Influx of Igbo Migrants and Intergroup Relations in Zaria, 1900-1965" in *African Indigenous Knowledges in a Postcolonial World: Essays in Honour of Toyin Falola*, ed. Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso, Ngozi Nwogwugwu and Gift Ntiwunka (London: Routledge, 2021) 237.

<sup>3</sup> Dhliwayo, 179.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Aderonke Afolabi, "The Evolution and Development of Yoruba Migrants in Zaria, 1900-2000" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Ibadan, 2007) 61.

<sup>5</sup> Bala Inuwa, 80 years, Civil Servant, Interviewed at Zaria, August 12, 2023.

as magnetic forces in their migration.<sup>6</sup> These opportunities include; jobs, trade, fertile agricultural lands, religion, and safety. These opportunities identified by Elegalam were available in Zaria in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The push factors on the other hand, consisted of centrifugal forces which pushed the Igbo to distant lands to explore better opportunities. Some of the push factors identified by Elegalam include; inadequate job opportunities in the south, scarcity of land and the burden of taxation.<sup>7</sup> Scholars are divided on scarcity of land as one of the push factors in Igbo migration to the North. Available colonial documents suggested that scarcity of land in some parts of Igbo land contributed to the outward migration of Igbo migrants to other parts of Nigeria. The Headmaster of Government School, Awka in one of his visits to the Northern Region expressed satisfaction with what he saw in Samaru-Zaria and he wrote a letter to the Assistant Director of Agriculture Zaria on the need to encourage southerners to move to the north for farm work. In his words:

It seems to me that the difficulty in the south of acquiring land for planting purposes may be overcome if the Government can encourage the southerners to move to and settle at the north to do farm work. Already in Onitsha Province the communal land is insufficient for the demand.<sup>8</sup>

The land tenure system in the South as expressed by Ibeziako created bottlenecks for farmers who needed vast land for cultivation. Besides, there was insufficient land for farming activities. While stressing the push and pull factors in Igbo migration to the North, it is important, to point to the fact that by the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, British colonial rule in Zaria had already been consolidated. This manifested in the establishment of colonial institutions and infrastructure in Zaria. To exploit the vast mineral resources in Nigeria, the British colonial administration considered it a matter of urgency to open up the northern part of Nigeria by linking it to other parts of Nigeria.<sup>9</sup> Shehu Yusuf observed that the construction of railway line linking the Southern part

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Chibuikem Elegalam, *The Causes and the Consequences of Igbo Migration to Northern Nigeria, 1900-1966* (Washington: Howard University, 1988), 24.

<sup>7</sup> Elegalam, *The Causes and the Consequences*, 26.

<sup>8</sup> NAK/SNP. 17/31199/ Overpopulation in the Eastern Provinces ii Migration of Ibo to the North 1939.

<sup>9</sup> Elegalam, *The Causes and the Consequences*, 26.

of Nigeria to the North was instrumental in the influx of southern migrants to the north.<sup>10</sup>

Tandu posits that what brought the Igbo to Zaria to the best of his knowledge was the construction of the railway line with its operational headquarters in Sabon Gari. Many of the early Igbo migrants who came to Zaria were staff of the Railway Station.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently, many of them began to migrate from the East to Zaria for other opportunities that became available in Zaria. The British colonialists established many companies in Zaria such as John Holt, Peterson and Zochonis (PZ), Unilever, United African Company (UAC) and other foreign firms that needed the services of southern migrants.<sup>12</sup> The southern migrants were preferred to the indigenes for some positions because of their early exposure to Western education. This was expected because positions such as office assistant, secretary, typists, messengers etcetera, required some level of Western education.<sup>13</sup> British colonial institutions like schools, research and health centres were also in place to accommodate southern migrants. There was also opportunity for migrants to set up private businesses for themselves, of which many Igbo migrants took advantage. They were into both retail and wholesale businesses. Those with expertise in craftsmanship and artisanship such as; mechanic, carpentry, masonry, electricians and other skills were not left out. They established workshops in different parts of Zaria which attracted clients and apprentices who learnt skills under them.

The Igbo were concentrated in the Sabon-Gari area of Zaria. This was a settlement established by the British colonialists specifically for southern migrants. Many reasons have been advanced for the establishment of Sabon-Gari as settlers' quarters. One of the main reasons according to Mahmud Tukur, was to keep the different categories of people in Zaria apart, which was in line with the divide and rule tactics of the British.<sup>14</sup> There was also the concentration of Igbo

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<sup>10</sup> Shehu Tijjani Yusuf, "Trapped" in the North: Southern Migrants in Northern Nigeria, 1908-1970s" in Akinyinka Akinyoade and Jan-Bart Gewald (eds.) *African Roads to Prosperity*, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2015), 60

<sup>11</sup> Yusuf Tandu 101 years, retired businessman, interviewed at Zaria City, on 23 August, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Victor S. Akran and Nathaniel John Odoh, "The Influx of Igbo Migrants , 237.

<sup>13</sup> Yusuf, "Trapped", 64.

<sup>14</sup> M.M. Tukur, "The Imposition of British Colonial Domination on the Sokoto Caliphate, Borno and Neighbouring States 1897-1914" (Ph.D. Thesis, A.B.U. Zaria, 1984), 81.

population in some of the suburbs of Zaria. Samaru, for example, had a handful of Igbo population because of the location of research institutes and the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU). The growth of Samaru which was hitherto a rural settlement was as a result of the establishment of the University. The Igbo settled in the community because of the economic opportunities that were available in Samaru, Tudun Wada, Kongo, Muchia, and Dan Magaji. Gyellesu had a handful of Igbo population but on the whole, the Igbo were more concentrated in Sabon Gari and Samaru. With the increase in their population in Zaria, they formed the Igbo Union to advance their welfare and also to serve as an umbrella body for all the Igbo in the town. The Union was instrumental in strengthening relationship between the Igbo in Zaria and their ancestral homes. It also helped to regulate the relationship between the Igbo and their host community which was cordial until the developments after the collapse of First Republic in 1966.<sup>15</sup> The crises resulted in the loss of lives and properties of Igbo living in Zaria and for that reason many of them left for the Eastern Region.

### **The Reintegration of Igbo in Zaria after the 1966 Crises and Nigerian Civil War**

The 1966 Crisis and the Nigerian Civil War was a sad episode in the history of the Igbo community in Zaria. There was mass exodus of the Igbo from Zaria as a result of the disturbances of 1966 that engulfed most parts of the country. Northerners residing in the defunct Eastern Region also found their way back to the North for the safety of their lives.<sup>16</sup> According to Anthony Douglas, areas with concentration of Igbo population became empty of settlers except for those who disguised themselves as Hausa and Igbo women who were married to the Hausa people.<sup>17</sup> Thus, it is clear that the Igbo community in Zaria suffered a setback during the civil war. The paper will not delve into the full details of the events of 1966 crises and the Nigerian Civil War as it has been documented extensively in literature on the Nigerian civil war as they have been documented extensively in existing literature on the National

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<sup>15</sup> Frederick Forsyth, *The making of an African Legend: The Biafran Story*, (Great Britain: Cox and Wyman Ltd, 1969), 65.

<sup>16</sup> NAK/MSWC/30: Political Disturbances in Nigeria, 1966.

<sup>17</sup> Anthony A. Douglas, *Poison and Medicine: Ethnicity, Power, and Violence in a Nigeria City, 1966 to 1986* (England: Boydell & Brewer, Limited, 2002), 46-48.

tragedy.<sup>18</sup> It is important to note that the Igbo community in Zaria lost their lives and many of their properties during the national crises. It was estimated that over 30, 000 Igbo people lost their lives during the crises that preceded the war and a huge problem of refugees was created in the Eastern Region. A staggering number of 1.6 million people became displaced in their homeland. Majority of them were victims of the turmoil of 1966 crises in other parts of Nigeria especially from the far north which housed large population of Igbo. According to Ifeanyi Uzodinma, many of the refugees had never been to the East as they were born outside the region. In the case of his family, they had no house of their own when they returned home as a result of the crisis in Zaria. They were accommodated by his father's younger brother. Unfortunately, they could not stay long with their uncle because of disagreement and bickering. His father constructed a makeshift accommodation which they managed until the war ended and they returned to Zaria.<sup>19</sup> During the crises period in Zaria some Hausa extended kind to their Igbo neighbours by hiding them in their houses from hoodlums who were after the lives of the Igbo. They were on a revenge mission to avenge the killings of Northern leaders during the January, 1966 military coup and the perceived Igbo domination.<sup>20</sup> Many Igbo families in Zaria, recounted their experiences in the hands of their indigenous neighbours who hid them in their houses until it was safe for them to return to the East. Some of the examples included the families of Duru and Uzodinma who were protected by their Hausa neighbours until it was safe for them to return to the East. According to Ezekiel Duru, one Alhaji Wada, their closest neighbour hid their father among sacks of pepper in one of the rooms in his house when hoodlums came to attack their house. He noted that, many of the people who lost their

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<sup>18</sup> See the works of Akpan, N. U. *The Struggle for Secession, 1966-1970*, (London: Frank Cass Ltd 1972). Balogun, O. *The Tragic Years: Nigeria in Crisis 1966-1970*, (Benin: Ethiope Publishers, 1973) Cervenka, Z. *A History of The Nigerian War 1967-1970*, Nigeria Onibonje Press, 1972.) Fola, A. *Reluctant Rebels*, (London: Rex Collings, 1975), Forsyth, F. *The making of an African Legend: The Biafran Story*, (Great Britain: Cox and Wyman Ltd, 1969) de St. Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972). Madiebo, A. A. *The Nigerian Revolution and the Nigerian Civil War*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980). Mainasara, A. M. *The Five Majors Why they struck*, (Zaria: Hudahuda Publishers Company, 1982).

<sup>19</sup> Uzodinma Ifeanyi 63 years Businessman Interviewed at Samaru, Zaria, August 20, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Balogun, *The Tragic Years*, 17.

lives in the crises were those who wanted to secure or protect their properties during the crisis.<sup>21</sup>

However, the end of the Civil War in 1970, and the attendant period of national reconciliation opened a new chapter in the history of Igbo community in Zaria. General Yakubu Gowon was unequivocal in his quest to reintegrate the Igbo into the national fold. He did not waste time in rolling out his policy of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation (the 3R's).<sup>22</sup> The policy, despite its inadequacies as noted by scholars,<sup>23</sup> helped in the return of the Igbo to Zaria. Traditional rulers, community leaders, and religious leaders were drafted by the federal government to sensitise their followers on the need to accept the Igbo into their communities and maintain peace.<sup>24</sup> The Igbo were assured of their safety in Zaria after the war. This encouraged them to return. According to Providence Ogueri, when he and his father returned to Zaria after the war they did not witness any hostility from the Hausa community.<sup>25</sup> The nature of the return of the Igbo was such that, heads of families came back to Zaria to survey the area for safety before they finally moved their entire families back to Zaria. In their case, he and his father, were the first return to Zaria, when they were sure of their safety, his mother and siblings joined them later. Also, some families delayed other members of their families to join them in Zaria because they had to ensure that they were economically stable. This could be understood in the light of what happened to the Igbo community in Zaria. They lost their means of livelihood and had to start life afresh.

At this point we have to note that, prevailing conditions at the time necessitated the return of Igbo to not only Zaria but other major cities in parts of Nigeria especially to the north. In his seminal work, "I need to get back to Kano..." Douglas stated that there were already trickles of Igbo population in some of the northern states even before the war ended.<sup>26</sup> This can be understood in the light of the deprivation,

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<sup>21</sup> Ezekiel Duru, 64 years, Chemist, Interviewed at Samaru Zaria, 17 August, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas, *Poison and Medicine*, 67.

<sup>23</sup> Achebe Chinua, *There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*, (England: Penguin Group, 2012), 216, and Paul Obi-Ani *Post-Civil War Political and Economic Reconstruction of Igboland* (Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Ltd, 2009), 27.

<sup>24</sup> "Plea for the Spirit for Re-Union and Reconciliation to Ibos" *New Nigerian Newspaper*, 24 February, 1970, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Providence Ogueri, 57 years, Evangelist, Interviewed at Sabon Gari Zaria, 29 August 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Douglas, 67.



starvation and hardship that the Igbo suffered during the Nigerian Civil War. There were also push and pull factors in the return of the Igbo people to Zaria and other parts of the country after the war. Part of the push factors were the wanton destruction of their means of livelihood in the East. Farmlands were laid to waste as a result of air raids and landmines that were planted during the war, thus, traders lost their businesses and the pursuit of education equally witnessed a setback.<sup>27</sup> For the pull factors, there were business opportunities and white-collar jobs available not only in Zaria but also in other parts of the North. In addition, those in the civil service, as part of General Yakubu Gowon's reconciliation policy, were promised reinstatement. Those who left their properties in Zaria during the war also returned to the place to reclaim their properties.

There were two categories of Igbo migrants during their return to Zaria after the war. The old generation who were in Zaria before the war and new generation who came after the war in search of greener pastures. Those in the first category had means of livelihood in Zaria before the crisis of 1966 displaced them. Many of them came back for obvious reasons. First, to continue with their means of livelihood. It was not an easy task starting life afresh for many of the returnees. The economic policy of the Federal Military Government after the war was not favourable to the Igbo. The policy reduced whatever an individual had in the bank before the war to a paltry sum of twenty pounds, which negated the spirit of reconciliation.<sup>28</sup> This was one of the policies that have been criticized by scholars on the grounds that, the government did not live up to expectation in implementing the policy of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation. According to Ifeanyi, shortly after the war, he and his father returned to Zaria to start life afresh out of nothing. Before the war, his father had a booming hotel business known as Queens Hotel. They had stocked their store with drinks before the war, unfortunately, hoodlums looted all their goods and even emptied some of the drinks in their well.<sup>29</sup> When they returned after the war, they were lucky to reclaim two out of the three houses they had in Zaria. This gave them a base to strategize how to restart their business. Some of his father's customers who supplied him with goods before the war were

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<sup>27</sup> Obi-Ani *Post-Civil War*, 49.

<sup>28</sup> Obi-Ani *Post-Civil War*, 24.

<sup>29</sup> Uzodinma Ifeanyi 63 years Businessman Interviewed at Samaru, Zaria, August 20, 2023.

magnanimous to sell goods to him on credit. Some of his generous Hausa friends also lent his father money to continue his business. He further stated that, this was how many of them started life again, with some being able to secure loan facilities. Furthermore, those who had houses collected rents while others sold their houses to start-up businesses afresh.<sup>30</sup>

Those who were into white collar jobs came back to be reinstated by their employers. In this case, not all of them were lucky to get their jobs back because some of them had been replaced by people of other ethnic groups. For example, the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) recalled its staff and students who left before the war.<sup>31</sup> Robert Okezuoha noted that his father worked with the University before the war, but had to desert his job because of the crisis. After the war, they were asked to apply to be reabsorbed of which he did and was reabsorbed.<sup>32</sup> Aside ABU, other organisations also extended such privileges to their former staff such as the Railway Corporation, Electric Corporation of Nigeria and other private companies that still had vacancies for their old staff. Alhaji Shehu noted that one of their family friends Mr. Agu was a manager with Paterson and Zochonis (PZ) before the war but left Zaria as a result of the war. When he returned after the war, he encountered difficulties in reclaiming his position at PZ. He noted that his uncle Alhaji Salamani Giwa offered Mr. Agu a job in his company called Nasara Enterprise and also offered him an accommodation before he recovered his house in Sabon Gari.<sup>33</sup>

As more opportunities became available, more Igbo people continued to migrate to Zaria. This set of people constituted the second set of Igbo migrants in Zaria. They migrated to Zaria for different reasons which were not limited to business opportunities, skills acquisition, apprenticeship, white collar jobs, and education. Gradually, the Igbo community in Zaria picked up in different spheres of the Zaria socio-economic system. This can be attributed to their dexterity and determination to succeed. Ikechukwu Esolu gave an account of how he

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<sup>30</sup> Uzodinma Ifeanyi 63 years Businessman Interviewed at Samaru, Zaria, August 19, 2023.

<sup>31</sup> "Staff of ABU from Central Eastern State to be reinstated," *New Nigeria Newspaper*, No.1,244, 11 March, 1970, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Okezuoha, 66 years Businessman Interviewed at Sabon-Gari, Zaria, February 23, 2024.

<sup>33</sup> "Staff of ABU from Central Eastern State to be reinstated," *New Nigeria Newspaper*, No.1,244, 11 March, 1970, 6.

settled in Zaria after the Civil War. He came to Zaria in 1973 as a driver. A family friend contacted him to move members of his family to the town after the war. When he arrived Zaria, his intention was to return to the East but he was offered an appointment with ABU as a driver, courtesy of the family friend that engaged him to drive down members of his family to Zaria. This appointment marked the beginning of his settlement in Zaria, where he has been living for over forty years<sup>34</sup>. V.I. Unogu who is the paramount ruler of Igbo community in Zaria, came to Zaria in 1983 on the account of marriage. His father-in-law who was resident in Zaria was not willing to give out his daughter to him in marriage unless he decides to settle there. Luckily, he got a lecturing job with Nuhu Bamali Polytechnic, where he retired as a Chief Lecturer.<sup>35</sup> Vincent Oriah also narrated how he came to settle in Zaria. He served in Kano State as a Youth Corps member in 1987. After completing his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), he secured an appointment with the National Research Institute for Chemical Technology (NARICT) where he rose to the position of a Director.<sup>36</sup> In the case of Innocent Ejike, he came to serve his master as an apprentice in 1983. He learned the art of trading in building materials, after which he was settled by his master to set up his own business.

Part of the reconciliation and reconstruction process in Zaria and in other northern cities was the conscious and deliberate attempt by the local authorities to return the property of the Igbo to them after they returned to Zaria. Before the war ended the government put in place an Abandoned Property Committee (APC) to manage the properties left behind by the Igbo. These properties included both moveable and non-moveable properties. The moveable items comprised of household items, vehicles, bicycles and other valuables while non-moveable vehicles comprised of houses, bakeries, plots, shops, market stalls among others.<sup>37</sup> A good number of Igbo people that returned got their properties back. According to Ezekiel Duru and Ifeanyi Uzodinma, their parents got their houses back. Although, some Igbo were not lucky to get their properties back especially those who lost their lives during the war and those who

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<sup>34</sup> Ikechukwu Esolu 82 years Businessman interviewed at Samaru, Zaria, August 19, 2023.

<sup>35</sup> H.R.H. Unogu V.I. 72 years, Leader of Igbo Community in Zaria, interviewed at Graceland Zaria, August 19, 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Vincent Oriah, 64 years, Igbo Community Association President, interviewed at Igbo Union Hall, Sabon Gari, Zaria, August 18, 2023.

<sup>37</sup> NAK/MSWC/54: Houses vacated by the Easterners and their Properties, 1967.

could not prove ownership of their property.<sup>38</sup> It is important to note that, the recoveries of these houses was very vital in the reintegration of Igbo people in Zaria.

In spite of the challenges faced by the Igbo in starting life afresh after the civil war, their community in Zaria grew significantly that by 1983 they had decided to form the Igbo Community Association. It is important to note that, the Association was formed out the defunct Igbo Union that was banned by Aguiyi Ironsi regime in 1966. The Union was revived with a new name after the civil war in different cities of Nigeria at different dates. In Zaria, it was revived in 1983. Among its founding fathers were T.K. Okpu Robert Okezhoua, and V.I. Unogu. They played distinctive roles in providing leadership and direction to the newly formed Association.

The membership of the association was opened to all Igbo sons and daughters resident in Zaria. Blessing Obiesie noted that the association was established to promote the welfare of Igbo people living in the town and to provide them with a united front in pursuing matters that affect their wellbeing.<sup>39</sup> Membership of the association was not made compulsory but members were encouraged to join. Some of the founding members of the association included: T.K. Okpu and Samuel Omelogu. Okpu donated his building to the association after the Civil War. The building was converted to community hall which was used for their monthly meetings.<sup>40</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The paper examined the factors in the migration and evolution of Igbo community in Zaria. It observed that the British colonial administration was instrumental to the influx of Igbo migrants in Zaria. British colonial rule despite some of its negative effects provided some benefits in the form of establishment of colonial infrastructures. The construction of the various railway lines across Nigeria speeded up the integration of the country into the wider capitalist system. One of the attendant effects of

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<sup>38</sup> Uzodinma Ifeanyi 63 years Businessman Interviewed at Samaru, Zaria, August 19, 2023 and Ezekiel Duru, 64 years, Chemist, Interviewed at Samaru Zaria, 17 August, 2023.

<sup>39</sup> Blessing Obiesie, 63 years, Secretary General Igbo Community Association Zaria, interviewed at Sabon Gari, Zaria, August 12, 2023.

<sup>40</sup> Blessing Obiesie, 63 years, Secretary General Igbo Community Association Zaria, interviewed at Sabon Gari, Zaria, August 12, 2023.

this integration was the increased migration of Nigerians to areas where they hitherto had not been to in search of greener pastures of which Zaria was a destination. The paper demonstrated that the crises of 1966 and the ensuing Nigerian civil war was a clog in the harmonious relationship that existed between the Igbo and their hosts in Zaria. There was massive exodus of Igbo in Zaria as a result of the crisis. Their reintegration in Zaria after the civil war ended in 1970 was gradual. They were accepted into the Zaria community through the effort of traditional rulers who advocated for peaceful coexistence. Many of the Igbo people in Zaria were able to recover their properties and they key into the opportunities that were available in Zaria to start life afresh. This facilitated the reintegration of the Igbo in Zaria.

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