

**THE IGBO IDENTITY AND ITS INTERPRETATION IN
WEST CAMEROON, 1970 – 1997**

Nwoke, Joseph Okechukwu

&

Emejulu, Ify Henrieta

Department of History and International Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

ABSTRACT

The Igbo people have always been on the move. They migrated to West Cameroon before and after independence. From the 1970s to the 1990s, they were found in Kumba, Mamfe, Tiko, Victoria and Buea working as truck pushers and being involved in trading and religious activities, especially in the growth and sustenance of the Anglican Church. Truck pushing and trading were the major occupations of the Igbo ethnic group in West Cameroon. The Igbo through their hard work were able to break even, but were misconstrued to be siphoning the wealth of Cameroon to Nigeria. This shows that they were not welcomed in the country. They were labelled lovers of money, cannibals and 'Biafra'. The Cameroonians used the word 'Biafra' derogatorily. This paper argues that though some Igbo were lovers of money by their actions in West Cameroon, but it was wrong to refer to them as cannibals. It goes further to argue that if not for the Igbo, the Anglican Communion might not have been in existent in Cameroon. This paper looks at the economic and religious activities the Igbo were known for (Igbo identity) and the various name tags they were addressed, as it adopts the social identity theory. It makes use of primary and secondary sources. Findings show that as the Igbo were going about their activities, they suffered abuse in form of derogatory remarks from the Cameroonians, which were hallmarks of Igbophobia. Recommendations are presented on how to put a stop to the verbal assaults suffered by the Igbo in West Cameroon.



Key words: Igbo Identity, West Cameroon, Occupation, Biafra, Anglican Church

INTRODUCTION

Before the Nigeria-Biafra war the Igbo had been moving to Cameroon. Victor Bong Amazee acknowledges that the Igbo had been migrating into Cameroon since the 1920s and estimated that there were about 10,000 Nigerians in Southern British Cameroons, most being Igbo or Ibibio by 1955¹. In his view the immigration was possible because the British ruled Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda Division as part of South Eastern Nigeria. This view is in conformity with the IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) Report on Cameroon - Nigerian trade, that states that the Igbo's influence in Cameroon was because West Cameroon formerly known as Southern Cameroons was ruled as part of Nigeria². The Nigeria-Biafra war forced more Igbo migrants to leave their homeland for Cameroon. After the war they stayed behind and settled mainly in towns like Tiko, Kumba, Mamfe, Victoria and Buea. Some were also in rural areas like Ekondo Titi, Mbonge, Missellelle, Ekona etc³. The Igbo became established in their settlements. By 1997, the hike in the resident permit levy which was also renewable paid by foreigners compelled some of the Igbo to leave West Cameroon for their homeland.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, the Igbo were mainly involved in occupations like truck pushing and trading in Tiko, Mamfe, Buea, Kumba and Victoria in West Cameroon. They helped to sustain the Anglican Communion. As a result of their zeal to succeed in business they were labelled lovers of money and swindlers. ⁴ A writer during the Nigeria-Biafra war had this to say "Ibo aggressiveness and ambition in commerce, public utilities and the civil service made them hated people"⁵. They were equally called cannibals and 'Biafra'. There were other ethnic groups like Efik, Ibibio, Ijaw etc, once part of defunct Biafra in Cameroon, but were never addressed as Biafra in Cameroon. It is against this



backdrop that this paper discusses the occupation, religious activities and various descriptions of the Igbo in West Cameroon.

Igbo identity refers to the connection to the Igbo ethnic group, in comparison to other ethnic groups. This connection has to do with the tradition, heritage, language, ancestry, aesthetics, thinking patterns and social structure of the Igbo people. The Igbo people with this connection are found in today's five core Igbo speaking states (Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Abia and Ebonyi), including Igbo speaking parts of Delta State. Igbo identity will be treated here as those things that made the Igbo stand out from other ethnic groups. From the 1970s to the 1990s, the identity of the Igbo in Cameroon was defined in the areas of trading, truck pushing and religious activities, especially the rise and sustenance of the Anglican Communion ⁶

The central hypothesis of Social Identity Theory as propounded by Tayfel is that members of an in-group look for negative aspects of an out-group, thus boosting self image⁷ Tayfel and Turner propose three mental processes involved in the theory viz categorisation, social identification and social comparison. In juxtaposing this theory with our study, one could say that under categorization, the Cameroonians differentiated the Igbo from other ethnic groups through the Igbo language. The society is divided into 'us' and 'them'. The 'us' which is the in-group refers to the Cameroonians while the 'them', the out group refers to the Igbo. Under the second stage, the Igbo had to identify with other Igbo. In the last stage, there was comparison between the Igbo and the Cameroonians by Cameroonians. The Igbo were labelled lovers of money, cannibals and Biafra.

Few scholars have written on the activities of the Igbo in Cameroon. Blaise-Jaques Nkene affirms that the Nigerian immigrants living in Douala were a sine qua non for the cohesion of the social and economic life despite not being trusted⁸. According to A B Atabong, Nigerian immigrants have traditionally operated key markets in towns in Southern Cameroon⁹. Piet Konnings posits that Nigerian immigrants in English speaking Cameroon have benefitted from formal and informal cross border



trade for a lengthy period¹⁰. The Nigerian immigrants these writers refer to are the Igbo. Eyongetah and Brain observe that the Igbo owned market stalls and took their wares into remote areas of Cameroon during the colonial era¹¹. Some of these scholars mentioned the hatred (xenophobia) the Igbo went through. Consequent upon this Victor Bong Amazee wrote a piece titled the 'Igbo Scare'¹². These scholars focused more on trading activities of the Igbo ignoring the detailed aspects of their truck pushing activity and sustenance of the Anglican Communion in Cameroon. This is the gap this study seeks to fill in. They also did not elaborate on the various labels placed on the Igbo which this paper is bound to expatiate. Hence, this paper is split into two major sections namely occupations/religious activities of the Igbo in Cameroon, description of the Igbo by Cameroonians and conclusion.

Occupations/Religious Activities of the Igbo in Cameroon

The major occupations of the Igbo in West Cameroon during the period under study were trading and truck pushing. In the sphere of religion, they sustained the establishment of the Anglican Church.

Igbo as Truck Pushers and Porters

From the 1970s to the 1990s, human portage and truck pushing were the major means of transporting goods mostly within short distances. This was because of the shortage of motorable roads and it was cheaper. The Igbo worked as porters carrying people's goods from place to place. Money saved by Igbo migrant porters were put to proper use; most Igbo porters purchased their trucks from such savings.¹³ The truck pushers did carry goods from the Tiko Market to Custom Beach, a distance of about two kilometres. Truck pushers could carry goods from Tiko to Likomba, a distance of about four kilometres. In other towns such as Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe, Buea and Bamenda; the Igbo did this menial job in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Only few Cameroonians were involved in



this menial job. Out of every ten truck pushers, seven were of Igbo origin¹⁴.

These truck pushers after some years would set up shops and still continued in the activity of truck pushing. From their work as truck pushers, the Igbo saved enough, they met their family obligations in Cameroon, sent some remittances home; and some even built their residential houses in their home towns.¹⁵ In the mid 1980s there was influx of young men of Igbo origin as truck pushers. Most of the boys were brought into the country by veteran truck pushers. When these new truck pushers must have settled and gained ground after some years, they would in turn bring in their own relatives. By the 1980s, it would not be far from the truth to say that the Igbo had the largest population in Tiko town. This could be because Tiko town did not have original inhabitants. The Bakweri ethnic group of Buea laid claims to it because it was contiguous to their territory. Victor Bong Amazee buttresses the high Igbo population in Cameroon by stating that the Igbo began to move in very large numbers by the 1920s and by the 1950s, the population of the Igbo and Ibibio was about ten thousand in West Cameroon.¹⁶

Truck pushers in the local parlance were known as "bambay" in West Cameroon. Some of the notable truck pushers as at 1970s and 1980s included Messrs Philip, Nnanna, Felix, Samuel etc all based in Tiko ¹⁷. Nwankwo T Nwaezeigwe attests to the industrious nature of the Igbo thus: the Igbo have been characteristically compared to the Jews and Irish as well as the Kikuyu of Kenya, the Chagga of Tanzania, the Ewe of Ghana and Togo and the Bamileke of Cameroon ¹⁸ Robert Levine described these groups as the examples of groups noted for their opportunism and industry in response to new situation created by western institution in this century¹⁹.

Igbo as Traders in Cameroon

A trader is that person who buys and sells things as a job.²⁰ Trade can be local or international. Local or domestic trade is carried out within a country. International or foreign trade is the trade



between one country and the other. It was V. C Uchendu who described farming as 'the Igbo staff of life' as quoted by Afigbo. He writes that to remind an Igbo that he is *ori mgbe ahia loro* that is. 'one who eats only when the market holds' is to look down on him. His interpretation of this statement indicates that the Igbo regard farming 'as their chief occupation and not that traders are looked down upon'²¹. Uchendu goes further to say trading is a 'subsidiary' and not replacement for farming. The above view of Uchendu was only feasible during pre-colonial and early part of the colonial era. In the later part of the colonial and post-colonial era, the Igbo did not and still do not see farming as their staff of life and chief occupation. Trading was now seen as the chief occupation of the Igbo and no more a subsidiary. Farming had been relegated to the background. It had been left for the aged in the rural areas in Igboland. The Igbo were involved more in trading activities in Cameroon. As at 1990s, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development avers that more than 85 percent and 75 percent of the business men and women in Tiko and Kumba markets respectively were of Igbo origin.²² The Igbo had been involved in international and local trade. Fredrick Forsyth displayed the character of an Igbo trader thus;

...rather than work for a boss on a salaried wage scale, the young Igbo school leaver will prefer to save for years, then buy his own shop. This he will keep open all hours of the day and night so long as there is a chance of a customer. Having profited he will plough the money back into the enterprise, buy a brick shop, then a store, then a chain of shops.²³

The above view shows that the profession the average Igbo man or woman cherished most was trade. This was why many of them went into trade. Every ethnic group or country is known for a particular life style. The Igbo were known for business or trading activities anywhere they found themselves in Cameroon²⁴ It is not farfetched if one gives the full meaning of IGBO as "I Grab Business Opportunities". This full meaning of the word 'IGBO'



must have been following the Igbo wherever they went. They were retailers and wholesalers. The Igbo man could go as far as setting up shops in the remotest area. Nwankwo T. Nwaezeigwe notes thus

*not only are they evidently present in the highly urbanised areas of Nigeria, there appears to be no remote community the Igbo can hardly not be seen. As the Igbo themselves normally say, no land exists without the lizard. In the same vein, it is becoming evident that there is no land without the Igbo*²⁵

In the local trade in West Cameroon, they ran provision shops, bookshops, fabric shops, food item shops etc. Those who sold non-perishable goods in Tiko, Buea, Kumba and other towns in South West and North West Provinces went to Douala, the commercial capital of Cameroon to purchase the goods. Ships with goods coming from Europe, Asia and America anchored at the Douala Seaport. These goods were sold at cheaper prices in Douala because they were bought from wholesalers and importers. Some prominent business men who dealt in provisions between the 1960s and 1990s were Messrs Apolos Amadi, Julius Akpaka, Alphonsus Akpaka (son to Julius Akpaka), Ruben Nwogu, Celestine Nwogu (son to Ruben Nwogu), Christian Ekezie, Boniface Osuala, Augustine Eke and Justice Isiuku all based in Tiko.²⁶ They were also into the sale of motor parts, like Joe Nweze. From the 1950s to the 1970s in Mamfe, Mr Livinus Nwanyanwu was a popular patent medicine dealer and there was another businessman whose business name was 'Watch and Pray'.²⁷In Buea, Victoria, Kumba and other towns there were equally prominent Igbo business men. In international trade, the Igbo imported items such as garri; detergents, such as omo, lux, premier soap; Benson cigarettes and even petrol (known as fe'derale in Cameroon) from Nigeria. Goods and commodities exported from Cameroon to Nigeria included vehicle tyres, foreign rice, foreign flour, *okazi* and snail (popularly called *nyamangoro*).²⁸ These exports and imports were the most common from the 70s to the 90s. The Igbo found themselves in other



informal sectors such as restaurant business, photography, baking, tailoring, shoemaking, bicycle repairs and other forms of small enterprises.²⁹

The Anglican Church and the Igbo Community

Before the end of the first world war there was no Anglican mission in Cameroon. It was the British that introduced it in Southern Cameroons which was a British colony being ruled as a trust territory. The British erected chapels on the plantations left by the Germans. These plantation chapels did not last³⁰. Members of these chapels included civil servants, some traders from Togo, Nigeria and other nationals with very few Cameroonians. However, multinational settlers mostly the Igbo came together and established a congregation with its first service taking place at Ebenezer Baptist Church Victoria. Those who made this possible were Z.P William, Macaulay Nyairo, De Graft Rosenior and Olali. Their concerted effort with that of the Christians led to the formation of St Peter's Anglican Church, Victoria in about 1925, St Andrew's Anglican Church, Tiko in the 1940s and St Michael's Anglican Church in Douala in the 1950s. There were also the St Paul's Anglican Church, Kumba and St Matthew's Anglican Church, Buea.³¹ The Igbo were the major worshippers if not the only worshippers of this church as the years went by.

These churches were called by Cameroonians 'Igbo Church'. The simplest reason was because all the worshippers were Igbo. The Igbo Bible and Ekpere N'Abu (Ancient and Modern Hymn) were the recommended texts used for service. The Anglican Churches in Cameroon were once under the Diocese of the Niger Delta, later the Diocese on the Niger and finally the Diocese of Owerri. Marriage and baptismal certificate issued by St Andrews Anglican Church before 1975 bore the name Diocese of the Niger Delta. Late Bishop Jonathan Onyemelukwe and Benjamin Nwankiti visited the church for confirmation service in the 1970s and 1980s respectively³². Rev Livinus Njoku was the pastor of St Andrew from the 1970s to the 1990s. One of its Sunday school teachers was Mr Israel Isiuku. In the 1980s the



Cameroonian government placed a high tax on the Anglican Church in Cameroon because they were under the control of the Owerri Diocese. Another option was for the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon to coordinate the activities of these Anglican Churches. The Church in Limbe did not agree to any of these terms and was under lock and key for some months. The church at Tiko agreed to be under the Presbyterian Church in the 1980s and later became independent in 1995.³³

It should be noted that the Igbo were also worshipping in the Catholic, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches. The Anglican Church was not as popular as the three churches mentioned above. If not for the Igbo the Anglican Church in Cameroon would not have expanded to its present size. Cameroonians in the past were not initially Anglicans with the inception of colonialism. They were either Catholics, Presbyterians or Baptists. It could be argued that if not for the Igbo the Anglican Communion would have died a natural death. Through their effort the following churches came into existence and were sustained in West Cameroon before and after 1997. They included All Saints Parish, Bamenda; King of Kings Anglican Church Ndu; Anglican Church Mbengwi,; St Andrew's Parish Tiko and St Paul's Parish Kumba. Others were St Peter's Parish Limbe ;St Matthew's Church Buea and Calvary Church Tombel.³⁴

Description of the Igbo by Cameroonians

Lovers of money: It was Fredrick Forsyth who traced the hatred of the Igbo from Nigeria their home country. This is as a result of their success and hard work, he writes. He goes further to say that their detractors claim "they are pushful, uppity and aggressive while their supporters say they are " ambitious and energetic" He uses these various adjectives to describe the Igbo as claimed by people of other tribes - money loving, mercenary, canny, thrifty, clannish and unscrupulous. He adumbrates thus:

they are money loving and mercenary says one school of thought; canny and thrifty, says the other, Clannish and unscrupulous in grabbing advantage, say some,



and quick to realize the advantages of education, say others.³⁵

Edwin Ardener in 1960 stated that the Igbo in Cameroon were industrious, cheerful, gregarious, argumentative and in trading activities. The Cameroonians interpreted these qualities to be conceit, brashness and untrustworthiness.³⁶ Forsyth wrote of the Igbo in Nigeria while Ardener wrote of the Igbo in Cameroon. There are similar features in the view of these writers. This implies that they were saying these things based on the impression the Cameroonians and other Nigerians had about the Igbo. The average Cameroonian saw the Igbo as lovers of money and unscrupulous. The Cameroonians averred that the first set of Igbo traders that migrated into Cameroon were unscrupulous. Rather than sell a pair of shoes for the normal price, the Igbo trader would sell one of the pair for the price of the complete pair of shoes.³⁷ The Igbo who were in Cameroon in the 1950s said that was what they heard but never witnessed. If this really took place it might have been before the 1950s, they said.³⁸ The major reason the Cameroonians believed that the Igbo loved money could be because of their trading activities. Up to the 1990s, Cameroonians did not have the flair for trade. To them the Igbo man could go any length to make profit. They trekked to the interior to sell their goods in conditions that Cameroonians were not ready to undergo.³⁹

The Cameroonians claimed it was this love for money that pushed them into adulteration of products like medicines and drinks, even drug pushing and smuggling. The Chief of National Security in Buea on 20th December 1973 wrote a comprehensive memo captioned 'catalogue of recent incidents at the border'. He stated crimes of scamming, unlawful crossing and bribery⁴⁰. The Igbo were believed to be the largest masterminds. The Ministry of External Relations in a 1990 memo told the Foreign Ministry in Nigeria that Mr Uche Ezikike, a Nigerian was intercepted in Sangmelima and prosecuted for illegal immigration and traffic in adolescents.⁴¹ They also believed an Igbo man would join a secret



cult known in local parlance as nyongo and would sacrifice his family members for money ritual. They would mention names of those he had used for sacrifices. Often times, an Igbo man with a small shop would be seen erecting a mansion and the belief of the Cameroonians was that the Igbo man had joined 'nyongo'⁴² This allegation by Cameroonians could not be substantiated.

The Igbo were equally blamed for adulterating fuel in the 1980s. By this period the petrol sold in Cameroon was more expensive than the one coming from Nigeria. They were accused of mixing petrol with another substance to be sold as petrol. Also, when garri was exported from Nigeria to Cameroon in the 1980s, they were accused of being the brain behind selling substandard garri.⁴³ Pyrated text books sold were believed to come from Nigeria and was the handiwork of the Igbo. They were blamed for fake drugs and substandard shoes being sold in the country, even circulation of counterfeit currency. Generally, fake products were traced to the Igbo. They were seen as smugglers.⁴⁴

The accusation levelled against the Igbo for their love for money was true because some of them did illegal things to be wealthy overnight. In Cameroon, there were Yoruba, Ijaw, Efik and Ibibio and none of these ethnic groups was being accused of this act. It was true that an average Igbo man would want to be successful and independent in life. But the way and manner some of them went about it called for concern. It is true that money makes life more comfortable and it should be sought for genuinely. The Holy Bible states that money is the answer to all things and goes further to say that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil,⁴⁵ implying that restrain should be the watchword here.

Cannibals

These are people who eat human flesh (cannibalism).⁴⁶ Cannibalism is derived from the word 'carib', a West Indies tribe prominently known for human flesh eating. This was a common practice in early human history. This practice was witnessed in parts of Africa, Fiji, New Zealand, Polynesia and different parts of North and South America.⁴⁷ Feasting on some vital organs was



believed to be a medium of obtaining witchcraft power. To reduce the power of vengeance from their victims, head hunters eat human flesh. The Aztecs imbibed cannibalism practice as a ritual sacrifice for war captives. To show respect for the dead, some Australians feasted on the corpses of their relatives.⁴⁸ As at the 1980s and 1990s, the Cameroonians were saying that the Igbo ate human beings. They claimed that when it was time for the Igbo to celebrate new yam festival, human sacrifice was made.⁴⁹ They did say that the yam would be eaten with human flesh. Whenever the argument was put forward that the issue of cannibalism and human sacrifice were common practices before the coming of the whites into Africa, their response would be in the negative. They would say if not all of Igboland, some parts were eating human flesh some even went as far as mentioning a particular group of Igbo as human eaters.⁵⁰

The colonial powers that took over the continent put a stop to cannibalism. They claimed that this negative behaviour was at its peak before colonialism. According to Sir Arthur Richards opined thus:

*the African had had self government. Until about 50 years ago he had had it for countless centuries, and all it brought him was blood –stained chaos, a brief, insecure life haunted by fear, in which evil tradition and custom held him enslaved to superstition, hunger, disease, squalor and ruthless cruelty even to his family and friends. For countless centuries, while the pageant of history swept by, the African remained unmoved.*⁵¹

Sir Richard never mentioned cannibalism. It could be deduced that cannibalism was an aspect of the "blood stained chaos". Also, in the view of Sir Arthur Kirby, Commissioner for British East Africa thus "in the last 60 years...East Africa has developed from a completely primitive country in many ways more backward than the stone age"⁵² The primitivity he mentions here could be related to cannibalism. Hume in 1768 posited that no nation was as civilised as the whites and saw the negroes to be naturally inferior



to the whites.⁵³ Prof Hugh Trevor Roper was asked to teach some African history courses, his response was that there was only the history of Europeans in Africa. He continued thus "the rest is darkness... And darkness is not a subject of history."⁵⁴ Trevor might have had cannibalism in mind when he talked of darkness, also did Hume when he made mentioned of inferiority of Africans.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, there was no information of any Igbo man caught eating human flesh in Cameroon. They might have got this information on cannibalism from their kith and kin that had been to Nigeria or from Nigerian ethnic groups living in Cameroon or from the Igbo themselves who referred to another group of Igbo as cannibals. Hearing about one or two Igbo men eating human flesh in any country does not make the Igbo cannibals. The Cameroonians should be aware that they themselves were also involved in similar practices before the coming of the white men into their country. During colonialism the practice waned. The implication of this is that there were and are still some cannibals among the people.

Biafra

Achebe wrote a book titled "There was a Country". He was referring to the Republic of Biafra formed in 1967 and lasted till 1970. The leader of Biafra was Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu who was former Governor of Eastern Region. Biafra broke away from Nigeria as a result of the pogroms against the Igbo ethnic group in the north and other disagreements between Ojukwu and Yakubu Gowon, the Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Federal Government declared war on the Eastern Region which lasted from 1967 to 1970 which the Eastern Region (Biafra) lost. To the Igbo man who has not been to Cameroon or not aware of a euphemism or metaphor for Biafra, he would feel that referring to the Igbo as Biafra was to praise or to hold him in high esteem. Rather, this word was used by them as a derogatory remark. They used the word as an insult and when an Igbo person was having disagreement with them. To them the word 'Biafra' implied loser.⁵⁵ As losers they caused a war which



they could not win. They regarded them as weaklings and they would continue to be losers and the country called Biafra would not come to be. The then Cameroonian government of Ahmadou Ahidjo contributed to the loss for not allowing the Biafrans to come through Cameroon into Biafra with arms and ammunition. There was jubilation by the Efik and Ibibio in Tiko as they organized a feast to celebrate this loss of Biafra.⁵⁶ This shows they were opposed to the secession and their kith and kin in Nigeria might have supported the Nigerian soldiers. From 1967 till date no Igbo man has become the president of this country or occupy any sensitive position in Nigerian government for a long time. This might have been because of the "loser tag" placed on the Igbo.

Also, referring to the Igbo as Biafra, they reminded them mockingly of the hunger and starvation they experienced during the war. Relief materials from Oxfam, International Committee of the Red Cross, Caritas International, UNICEF and World Council Church were allowed into the enclave. Nigerian Red Cross fed about 700,000 people daily and had stockpiled 13000 tons of food and assembled another 7000tons by 31st January 1971.⁵⁷ These relief materials could not go round as numerous children and adults died of kwashiorkor. Some children suffering from kwashiorkor were sent to countries like Gabon for proper care. People started eating what they could not eat during peace time. The federal government used hunger as a weapon to compel the Biafrans to surrender. Moreso, calling the Igbo man Biafra and reminding him jokingly of the loss of lives suffered by him, his kith and kin during the war. Towns and villages were destroyed leading to homelessness. Some people became maimed and amputated. There was this allegation that there was a grand design by the government to wipe out the Igbo race in Nigeria. According to Madiebo over three million lives were lost.⁵⁸

They called them Biafra reminding them scornfully of their financial losses and abandoned properties declared by the River State Government led by Dietta Spiff. The so called 3Rs (reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction) programme was not genuinely implemented. No matter the amount of money



deposited in the bank by the Igbo before the war, only 20 pounds was given back to the depositor. This could be seen as an indirect way of collecting reparations from the Igbo. This affected the Igbo business men negatively as their businesses were in retrogression. As for the properties owned by the Igbo in River State, the government declared them abandoned properties. The implication of this declaration was that these properties were all taken over by the government of the state. It's being alleged that the plan not to give back the Igbo their properties was agreed between Gowon and Rivers State. The condition for this agreement was allowing the federal forces entrance into the Biafran enclave through Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

This paper has x-rayed the Igbo identity in West Cameroon from the 1970 to 1997. Truck pushing, trading and religious activities were some of the areas the Igbo delved into. They carried out their activities lawfully. Before becoming truck pushers, some were porters. As traders they ran provision shops, bookshops, cloth fabric shops and other shops selling different types of other goods. Some of the truck pushers later moved into trading activities after making money without abandoning truck pushing. Through the effort of the Igbo, the Anglican Communion was sustained and grew bigger. The Igbo were called various names that could be seen as Igbophobic The West Cameroonians who were making jest of the Igbo for losing the civil war are today fighting to break away from French Cameroon as they have declared West Cameroon as the Federal Republic of Ambazonia. Today, East Cameroon (French Cameroon) even refer to West Cameroonians as 'Biafra'. This is in line with the cliché 'what goes around comes around'. This paper recommends adequate application of the federal character policy as enshrined in the 1999 constitution. The federal character commission is saddled with the implementation of this policy but has not done much as the Igbo are being marginalized in terms of employment, political appointment and federal government infrastructural presence in Igboland. The commission



should ensure that the federal government provides equitable distribution of federal government projects and employment opportunities. If this is done the Igbo would have a sense of belonging in their country and the migration urge will reduce. In addition, the various states governments in Igboland should in collaboration with the banks provide soft loans to individuals who want to go into agriculture.



END NOTES

1. V.B Amazee, "The Igbo Scare in British Cameroon, 1945 – 61", *Journal of African History*, 31 (2), 1990, 281 -293.
2. "Cross Border Trade between Nigeria and CEMAC Countries", world bank.org 7th May, 2013, 5 (Accessed on 15th July, 2019).
3. Patrick Nwaehujoh, C70 years, Trader, Interviewed at Tiko Cameroon, 20th December 2018.
4. Patrick Nwaehujoh, Interview.
5. Fredrick Forsyth, *The Making of an African Legend: The Biafra Story* (Middlesex: Penguin Books,1977),108.
6. Richard Ayisi, C70 years, Retired Teacher ,Interviewed at Mamfe Cameroon , 23rd December 2018
7. "Social identity theory" www.simplypsychology.org
8. B. J Nkene, "Nigerian Immigrants in Douala: Problems and Strategies of Foreigners in an Urban Setting, Verfassung and Recht in *Ubersee/ Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, 2000, 43-59
9. A. B Atabong, "Cameroon's Nigerian Business Community is Fleeing as the Anglophone Crisis Deepens", *Quatz Africa*, 7th July, 2018 (Accessed on 16th July, 2019).
10. P. Konnnngs, "The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria Boundary: Opportunities and Conflicts", *African Affairs*, 104 (415), 2005, 275-301
11. T. Eyongetah and R. Brain, *A History of the Cameroons* (Essex: Longman Group Ltd,1982),142
12. V.B Amazee, "The Igbo Scare in British Cameroon, 1945 – 61" . . . 281 -293



13. Felix Nwokeforo, (once lived in Cameroon) C70 years, Retired Truck Pusher, Interviewed at Okwudor Imo State,16th June 2017
14. Dickson Bissong, C70 years, Retired Truck Pusher, Interviewed at Mutengene, 15th December 2018
15. Felix Nwokeforo, Interviewed
16. Victor Bong Amazee "The Igbo Scare in British Cameroon C.1945 -1961, 281 – 293
17. Felix Nwokeforo, Interviewed
18. Nwankwo T Nwaezeigwe, *The Igbo and their Nri Neighbours* (Enugu:Snaap Press Limited,2007),6
19. Robert Levine was quoted in Nwankwo T Nwaezeigwe, *The Igbo . . . 6*
20. A S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, New 8th Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press,2010),1584
21. A E Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand* ,(Nsukka: University Press Limited,1981),124
22. "Cross Border Trade between Nigeria and CEMAC Countries", world bank.org, 7th May, 2013 (Accessed on 15th July, 2019).
23. Fredrick Forsyth, *The Making of an African Legend* (New York: Penguin Books,1997),108 – 109
24. Winifred Ojong,C50 years, Teacher, Interviewed at Limbe,18th December 2018
25. Nwankwo T Nwaezeigwe, *The Igbo and their Neighbours. . . 4*
26. Felix Nwokeforo, Interview
- 27 James Tataw, C70 years, Retired Civil Servant, Interviewed at Kumba,22nd December 2018
28. Peter Etuk, C60 years, Former Seafarer, Interview at Tiko, 20th December 2018



29. Mark Bolak Funteh, The Paradox of Cameroon - Nigeria Interactions: Connecting between the edges of Opportunity/Benefit and Quandary, University of Maroua, *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, Vol 6,3, March 2005, 30-48 www.academicjournals.org/UPDS (Accessed on 16th October 2020)
30. "Anglican Church of Cameroon-About us- Anglican Diocese" anglicandioceseofcameroon (Accessed on 18th June 2018)
31. Nnanna Ukaegbu, (once lived in Cameroon) C60 years, Retired Truck Pusher, Interviewed at Okwudor Imo State, 18th January 2017
32. Priscilia Nwokeforo, (once lived in Cameroon), C60 years, Housewife, Interviewed at Okwudor Imo State, 20th June 2018
33. Israel Isiuku (once lived in Cameroon) C60 years, Retired Church Teacher, Interviewed at Amucha, 16th December 2019
34. "Anglican Church of Cameroon" anglicandioceseofcameroon-org/index... (Accessed on 20th August 2020)
35. Fredrick Forsyth, *The Making of an African Legend: The Biafra Story* . . .108
36. E Ardener, "Political History of Cameroon" in *The World Today*, 1962, xviii
37. Julius Ngomba, C. 50years, Teacher, Interviewed at Buea, 17th December 2018
38. Moses Nwoye, C. 80years, Retired Business man, Interviewed at Kumba, 22nd December 2018
39. Tambi Eyongetah and Robert Brain, *A History of the Cameroon* . . .142



40. NAB/Cameroon Nigeria Boundaries, No 101/510, Vol 1, Letter from the Chief of Regional Service of the National Security to the Delegate General, National Security, Yaounde, Cameroon, Catalogue of Recent Incidents at the Border, 20th December,1973,119-121
41. MINER, No 0276/DIPL/DI/A/AF, Memo from the Minister Delegate at the Presidency in Charge of Defence to the Minister of External Relations,Yaounde,12th June 1990(Note: Sangmelima is in East Cameroon and not in West Cameroon)
42. Louis Etchu, C 50years, Civil servant, Interviewed at Tiko,20th December 2018
43. Benson Okoro (once lived in Cameroon),C80 years, Retired Business man, Interviewed in Owerri, 19th August 2019
44. Benson Okoro, Interview
45. The Committee on Bible Translation, *Holy Bible -New international Version* (Colorado:.,1983), 1177
46. A S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary . . .* 206
47. "Cannibalism"www.britanica.com(Accessed on 4th June 2019)
48. "Cannibalism"www.britanica.com
49. Gilbert Mbi, Civil Servant, C 50 years, Interviewed at Likomba, 14th December 2018
50. Gilbert Mbi, Interview
51. Sir Athur is quoted in K B C Onwubiko, *School Certificate History of West Africa AD 1000-1800*(Onitsha: Africana-Fep Publishers Limited, 1983),no page number
52. Sir Arthur Kirby is quoted in K B C Onwubiko, *School Certificate History of West Africa AD 1000-1800*...no page number



53. Hume is quoted in C.O Anaele and N L Njoku "Africa's Socio-economic Crisis: Whose Blame is it, Anyway" in N Njoku and E C Njoku (eds), *Nigeria and the Rest of Africa in a Globalised World Order* (Owerri: Avan Global Publications, 2002),105 .
54. Trevor Roper is quoted in C.O Anaele and N L Njoku "Africa's Socio-economic Crisis: Whose Blame is it, Anyway" . . .105
55. Philip Nwafor, C40 years, truck pusher, Interviewed at Tiko, 18th December 2018.
56. Felix Nwokeforo, Interview
57. Ngozi Ojiakor, *Social and Political History of Nigeria 1970-2006* (Enugu: EWANS Press, 2014),7
58. A Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers Co,1980), xi

