

# **The Biafran War and its societal Ramifications/ Der Biafra-Krieg und seine gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen**

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## **Abstract**

This research paper systematically examines the roots and course of what is sometimes known as the “Forgotten War”; the actual Biafran War of 1967-1970 in Nigeria. It does so via a review of the available literature and also through a series of personal interviews.

The paper begins with the statement that the war has become a sensitive topic that is largely avoided being discussed in today’s Nigeria or anywhere else in the world. This war mainly revolved around an ethnic group, the Igbo tribe, that wanted independence and to withdraw itself from the State of Biafra.

After a geographical and demographic account of Nigeria, the paper proceeds by introducing the oral and cultural roots within Nigeria, exposing some seeds of unrest, before examining the eruption of the Biafran conflict. It additionally covers and comments on the interventions of colonizers and Christian missionaries, leading to the outbreak of the actual conflict.

The paper then chronicles the course of the war and details the social impact and lasting effects on the country, including the economy and the resultant refugee problem. It examines humanitarian attempts to intercede and gives a cross generational analysis of the impact of the war on the Igbo tribe itself by providing three interviews with active members of the Biafran Community in Vienna as case studies.

The outcome does not seem to be optimistic. The paper concludes that despite the fact that the war has been over for half a century the consequences seemed to have been swept under the carpet, that the conflict still has an impact on the Biafran descendants and that the conflict may still be smouldering.

## **Preface**

First and foremost, I give thanks and praise to God almighty who made this work possible from the beginning to the end.

I would love to thank some people for their moral support, their motivational help and their guidance throughout this journey of working on this paper:

First of all, I would like to thank my mother for facilitating the interviews by reaching out to the main spokesperson of the Biafran association in Vienna. I thank most especially Rev. Dr Lawrence Ogunbanwo for all round support, for his motivation and encouragement. I will not forget to mention my uncle, Ibukun Talabi for his moral support. In addition, I thank the three Biafrans Mr. Michael Umeh, Mr. Michael Arinze and Mr. Ejike Onymachi that gave me the opportunity to meet up with them and ask them questions about the whole topic. Their kindness and support motivated me even more to finish off my project.

Next I want to thank Dr. Ingeborg Grau, an expert concerning my topic, who helped me at the very beginning to awaken my interest on this whole conflict by answering my questions in a way that got me even more interested in this subject.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to Mr. Hatfield for giving me good advice and never putting me under pressure.

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Subject of Interest and Aim of this Study**

My interest in the subject matter of the Igbo culture and their world arises from the fact that I actually come from the Igbo ethnic group. Therefore, I would like to research and explain the Biafran war in the course of my academic paper. At the time of Nigerian independence in 1960, the country was divided into four regions: the Hausa Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the West, the Igbo in the East and the Benin and Delta in the Midwest. The people of the Eastern part of Nigeria, the Igbos, claimed to be Biafrans and not Nigerians. The strong identification of the Igbos with their own language, culture and territory in the East led to the desire and claims for their own country. To this end, I will focus on the "Biafran War" as one of the socio- political and cultural aspects of the Igbo tribe in Nigeria.

## **1.2 Method and Structure of Work**

Since my focus of study is the examination of the Civil War in Nigeria during the 1970s, I shall divide this academic paper into nine chapters including an introduction and a conclusion: It begins with general information about Nigeria followed by the history of the Biafra conflict, the history of the Christian missions in Eastern Nigeria, multiple triggers for the conflict, the Biafra War in 1967-1970 and its effects, the immediate impact of the Biafra War on the Igbo people, the view of the Igbo people from today and subsequently I shall give a final review about this study.

## **1.3 Sources: Literature Review**

To simplify the task ahead, I have used material from primary as well as secondary sources as they concern my topic. The following books from the major sources for this study were used: *There Was A Country* by Chinua Achebe, *Kriegsfolgen, Kriegsbewältigung in Afrika: Der nigerianische Bürgerkrieg 1967-70* by Axel Harneit-Sievers, *The History of Christianity in West Africa* by O.U. Kalu, *Nigerian Life & Culture* by O.Y. Oyeneke and M.O. Shoremi and *Nigeria und Biafra. Lösung oder Endlösung eines Problems* by

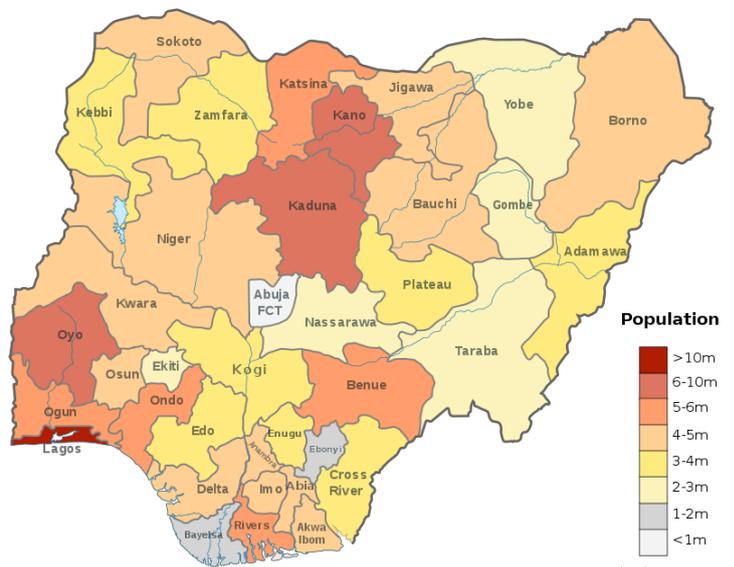
Hypolite Adigwe. The paper also includes interviews with multiple Biafrans that are affected by the consequences of the war.

## 1.4 Oral History

The focus of Oral History consists in the work with excerpts and events from recent history, e.g. war or individual phases of life like childhood, told by contemporary witnesses.<sup>1</sup> This definition gives an overview of the oral history method used in this work. After the interviews, which I recorded with a dictation machine, I reflected on their report and later on depicted their experience. For a uniform structure I asked a few guiding questions and let them answer in whatever form they wanted to. The interview partners were born after the war but have witnessed the effects of the war or know the story of the war from family members.

## 2 General Information about Nigeria

Nigeria is a country based in the Western part of Africa. It declared its independence from Great Britain in 1960. Niger in the North, Chad and Cameroon in the East and Benin in the West are neighbouring countries of Nigeria. In addition to that, Nigeria has direct access to the Atlantic Ocean in the South. The former capital of Nigeria was Lagos which is now an industrial city. Since 1991 Abuja has been the current national capital which was completely built from scratch.<sup>2</sup> The country is known for the diversity amongst its people. Nigeria consists of over 250 ethnic



**Picture 1: Total population by state**

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Nigeria))

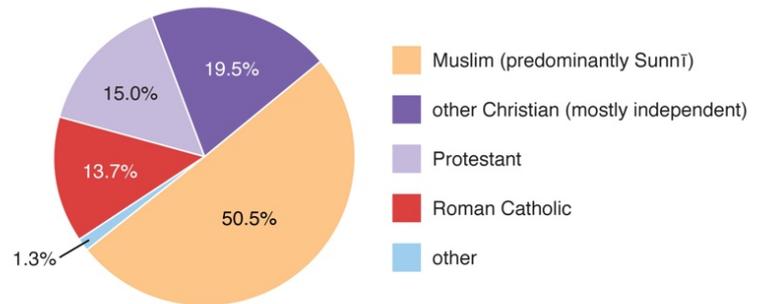
<sup>1</sup>See Dieter Haller, 2005, p.145

<sup>2</sup>See Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk Greene, Toyin O. Falola and others, Nigeria, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria#ref55281> [Accessed 22.12.2019]

groups (shown in the first picture). The three main ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani, the Igbos, and the Yorubas.<sup>3</sup> Many languages like Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, English etc. are spoken in the country. Nigeria has many natural resources like oil, gold and fertile fields for agri-cultural produce.

Religions such as Islam and Christianity had been brought to Nigeria after the independence in 1960. Before the advent of the missionaries, most Nigerians were members of traditional religion where rituals were practiced.<sup>4</sup> The colonization of Nigeria will be discussed in detail later on in my work.

**Religious affiliation (2003)**



© Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

**Picture 2: Religious affiliation (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/Languages#ref55291>)**

The pie chart above shows how many members the various religions counted in the year 2003. The overall percentage shows that half of the total population were Muslims. Until now this has not changed: Currently around 50% of the Nigerian population are Muslims while 45% are Christians and the rest of the population practices traditional African religions. The Northern region is predominated by Muslims and the Christian portion in the Southeast. In the Middle Belt and in the Southwest, there is a more balanced distribution.<sup>5</sup>

The Nigerian flag is made out of three vertical stripes with the colours green, white and green. The green symbolizes the natural riches of Nigeria, and the white stands for peace. Due to a



**Picture 3: Flag of Nigeria ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag\\_of\\_Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Nigeria))**

<sup>3</sup>See Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk Greene, Toyin O. Falola and others, Nigeria, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/Climate#ref55289> [Accessed: 22.12.2019]

<sup>4</sup>See F Ade Ajayi, Reuben Kenrick Udo and others, Nigeria, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/Languages#ref55291> [Accessed 22.12.2019]

<sup>5</sup>See Dr. Emmanuel I. Ede, Nigeria, LIPortal Das Länder-Informationen-Portal, 2019, <https://www.liportal.de/nigeria/gesellschaft/#layout-header> [Accessed: 24.12.2019]

competition for the design of the flag of Nigeria, that was held in the year 1959, the present flag was created by a student called Michael Taiwo Akinkunmi. Originally his design looked a bit different than the current flag of Nigeria. There was a sun in the centre, but it was removed by various judges before the flag was published. The flag was first issued on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.1 Culture

Due to the variety of ethnic groups, Nigeria has several cultures. Many definitions, which I will elaborate, for the word “culture” are mentioned in the book *Nigerian Life and Culture* written by O.Y. Oyeneye and M.O. Shoremi. One definition out of many says: “Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”<sup>7</sup>

Culture can be divided into two sections. One of them being the materialistic approach where the main focus is on materialistic things like tools, craft, arts, artefacts, etc. The other approach is the idealist or the non-materialist approach whereby ideas and philosophy, ceremonies, music and dance, festivals and religion, literature etc. play a big role.<sup>8</sup>

Within Nigeria and many other African countries, the ethnic groups differentiate themselves by their culture, which leads to a lot of conflicts. Some groups are firmly convinced about their culture being better than the others and start judging other cultures by the standard of their own culture. This is called Ethnocentrism or rather an ethnocentric behaviour.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.1.1 Art and Music

In the Northern part of Nigeria, the music is influenced by the Arabs due to the Islamic religion. Gogo, a popular music instrument, which is originally from Arabia is commonly

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<sup>6</sup>See Oishimaya Sen Nag, What Do The Colors And Symbols Of The Flag Of Nigeria Mean? WorldAtlas, 2019, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-do-the-colors-and-symbols-of-the-flag-of-nigeria-mean.html> [Accessed: 24.12.2019]

<sup>7</sup>See O.Y. Oyeneye and M.O. Shoremi, 1985, p.1

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.: p.4

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.: p.5

used in that region. The Yoruba are known for their talking drums (gangan) and the royal drums (gbedu). Talking flutes and horns are used by the Igbos, Tiv and Idomas. These Instruments are used for special occasions, like marriages.<sup>10</sup>

Most of the groups in the Northern region are known for their leather bags, purses, slippers and shoes. Among the Igbo there is a cloth called “abada-ba”, which is made out of raffia materials.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.1.2 Marriage**

Marriage can be celebrated in different ways for example native, in court, in church or in a mosque. A good overview is given in the book mentioned above by Oyeneye and Shoremi. In the Yoruba culture fees like “door opening fees”, “children’s fees”, “load carrying fees”, “senior wife’s fees” should be payed before any marriage. The system of marriage in Tiv land is different, in this case no dowry is paid, instead one family exchanges their daughter for another daughter in another Tiv family. Girls from Hausa marry between eight and twelve years. For young Fulani men to marry they have to join a public flogging called “sharo” at which his soon wife to be is present. There he must not show any discomfort or the pain that he is feeling during the flogging. Furthermore, the bride-price is given to the family in form of a cattle.<sup>12</sup>

## **3 The History of the Biafra Conflict**

### **3.1 British Colonial Policy**

Colonization is defined as the direct control or domination over a group of people or area that is reliant.<sup>13</sup> Bad results like slavery, theft, dependence etc. were brought to African countries, like Nigeria. Slavery was one of the main results of colonialism. Many

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<sup>10</sup>ibid.: p.7-8

<sup>11</sup>ibid.: p.11

<sup>12</sup>ibid.: p.9

<sup>13</sup>See Erin Blakemore, What is colonialism? National Geographic, 2019, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/topics/reference/colonialism/> [Accessed: 4.1.2020]

people were held hostage and sold. Nigeria's resources were also purloined by the British Empire. This action had a huge economic impact on the country.<sup>14</sup> Despite those facts, people have different opinions and views regarding the colonial impact in Africa. There are two main views: imperialist and Marxist. Imperialists say that colonialism was advantageous while Marxists say the opposite.<sup>15</sup>

In the year 1914, the state of Nigeria was founded by England. At that time, the British government had various problems with the areas around the Niger river, such as that the UK taxpayers had to pay part of the administrative costs in Northern Nigeria. In other parts of the country, the financial situation was more favourable. In addition, the railway system caused some problems for the British administration: due to the continuance of border controls within regions the transport of goods was complicated. These problems were solved after the Nigerian unification. However, a new challenge arose in the African continent. The British colonial power basically tried to exercise its rule in the form of "indirect government": the British political officials took over no executive obligations. These were carried out by local people who had to report to British officials.<sup>16</sup>

According to Hypolite Adigwe<sup>17</sup>, three main factors enabled this form of control:

1. a hierarchical society with an influential aristocracy,
2. a certain degree of social immobility and
3. shared interest of the ruling class and the colonial power.<sup>18</sup>

Traditional rulers<sup>19</sup> who were celebrated by the population for their well-doing had been used by the British so that they could have power over the citizens. This would avoid any type of criticism against the system due to the fact that these rulers played a big role in the society at that time.<sup>20</sup> Although Western Nigeria did not always use all of the above

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<sup>14</sup>See George Ibenegbu, Colonialism in Nigeria: positive and negative impacts, legit, 2018, <https://www.legit.ng/1131998-colonialism-nigeria-positive-negative-impacts.html> [Accessed: 22.12.2019]

<sup>15</sup>See Adeline Apena, 1997, p.4

<sup>16</sup>See Hypolite Adigwe, 1968. p.453

<sup>17</sup>First Nigerian (igbo) priest to come to Vienna.

<sup>18</sup>See Hypolite Adigwe, 1968, p.453-454

<sup>19</sup>People from the North like Sultan of Sokoto or Yahaya of Gwandu.

<sup>20</sup>See Elizabeth Isichei, 1983, p.380-381

conditions for the smooth functioning of the indirect government system, the chiefs and heavily biased social order still provided a sufficient safeguard for British colonial policy.

The Eastern part of Nigeria had a different system than the North and South. The people who lived in the villages never required to come together for their own safety to form a large political community. Each village association was politically independent. They had their own system of leadership e.g. marketplace etc. The Ibos<sup>21</sup> who consist of over 200 of such village communities made up about two thirds of the population of Eastern Nigeria.<sup>22</sup> These village communities vigorously rejected the British administration. Only after protracted military expeditions Britain succeeded in 1918 to take the last Ibo village (57 years after the beginning of Lagos's colonization and four years after the founding of the state of Nigeria).<sup>23</sup>

Even though Britain's military had succeeded with their plan, there still was resistance amongst the people in Eastern Nigeria. The Nigerian administration of the country did not want to grant them an exclusive power as an exclusive right. That is why the British administration also struggled to exercise its rights.<sup>24</sup>

The Eastern Nigerian's most urgent wish was to learn how to read, write and study. The Europeans obtained these wishes which now led to the dissatisfaction of the population with the facilities and provision provided by the missionaries. Therefore, the villagers built their own schools, sent their children there, and had skilled workers trained in America and England.<sup>25</sup>

From 1914, when the British occupation combined Northern and Southern Nigeria, the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) began to leave their homeland in large numbers to settle in several places, the Fulani-Hausa in the North and the Yoruba in the West.<sup>26</sup>

In 1944, the first increasing political movement at the national level, which was founded by intellectual people in Lagos, emerged. These intellectuals had met with Dr. Nnamdi

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<sup>21</sup> Later on in this paper a Biafran, called Mr. Ejike Onyemachi will elaborate today's meaning of Igbos and Ibos.

<sup>22</sup>See Hypolite Adigwe, 1968, p.454

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.: p.454

<sup>24</sup>See Hypolite Adigwe, 1968, p.454-455

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.: p.455

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.: p.456

Azikiwe, an Igbo politician that was the state president in Nigeria since about 1942, to discuss the political, social and economic problems of their country. Due to this movement Dr. Azikiwe created a political party called *National Council of Nigerian Citizens* (NCNC) in the year 1944.<sup>27</sup> This party is considered to be the first nationalist organization to carry out political campaigns against the British colonial rule. However, its organizational basis was almost entirely restricted to Southern Nigeria and Southern Nigerians living in the North.<sup>28</sup> At first, NCNC stood for the *National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun*, later on it changed to the *National Council of Nigerian Citizens*. All the nationalist movements were included in this party.<sup>29</sup> Sir Arthur Richards, the Governor of Nigeria at that time rejected Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's plan of dividing Nigeria into eight provinces with a centralized government.<sup>30</sup>

1951 the second political party the *Action Group* (AG) was founded by the nationalist and statesman Chief Obafemi Awolowo<sup>31</sup>. This party introduced a ministerial system of government, to weaken the influence of NCNC in Western Nigeria. At the national level, the NCNC (East) and the AG (West) were working towards a speedy independence of Nigeria, while the NPC (North) which stands for *Northern People's Congress* led by Alhaji Ahmadu Bello<sup>32</sup> was facing the threat of the secession of Northern Nigeria. However, Britain did not want the division of Nigeria.<sup>33</sup>

The parties aimed at promoting unity in Nigeria. Nigeria became independent on the first October 1960. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo man became the first president while Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Belawa from the Hausa ethnic group became head of the government.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.: p.456

<sup>28</sup>See Axel Harneit-Sievers, 1992, p.14

<sup>29</sup>See Hypolite Adigwe, 1968, p.456

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.: p.456

<sup>31</sup>See Dr. Emmanuel I. Ede, Nigeria, LIPortal Das Länder-Informationen-Portal, 2019, <https://www.liportal.de/nigeria/geschichte-staat/#c9697> [Accessed:4.1.2020]

<sup>32</sup>acted as the advocacy group for Hausa-Fulani. Dr. Emmanuel I. Ede, Nigeria, LIPortal Das Länder-Informationen-Portal, 2019, <https://www.liportal.de/nigeria/geschichte-staat/#c9697> [Accessed:4.1.2020]

<sup>33</sup>See Hypolite Adigwe, 1968, p.456

<sup>34</sup>See Dr. Emmanuel I. Ede, Nigeria, LIPortal Das Länder-Informationen-Portal, 2019, <https://www.liportal.de/nigeria/geschichte-staat/#c9697> [Accessed:4.1.2020]

## 4 Christian Missions in Eastern Nigeria

The actual advent of missionary work in the Eastern part of Nigeria can be dated back to the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Just as ordinary missionary groups occupied other parts of Nigeria, the *Holy Ghost Roman Catholic Missionary Society* was located in the Eastern part of Nigeria. This Missionary Society followed a French system called the *village de liberté*.<sup>35</sup> This Christian village system was a way to evangelize.

To this effect, in the year 1900 the Holy Ghost missionaries set up three Christian villages. During this time slaves were still traded. Buying at least two human beings on special occasions was a manifestation for being in an upper class. Apart from using the slaves as labour force, they were an object of sacrifice for burials and other occasions. The Missionaries stepped in to eliminate these actions by buying these slaves, converted, taught and employed them as their co-workers in building the infrastructure and preaching the gospel.<sup>36</sup> These Christians became later the citizens of Biafra.

## 5 Trigger for the Biafra Conflict

The relationship between the three regions in Nigeria has always been strained. Problems in the political system, regional ethnic conflicts, the inability of the political class and the options of education were triggers for the outbreak of this civil war. However, it has to be mentioned that the main reason for this war is the aggressive military intervention by the Northerners.<sup>37</sup>

The dawn of Western education in Nigeria introduced by the missionaries was more highly embraced by the Southerners than the Northerners due to their Islamic system. This educational system gave rise to the elites of Nigeria. To this effect, most of the corporations like running railways, airports, seaports, printing were in the hands of the Southerners.

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<sup>35</sup>See O.U. Kalu, 1980, p.36

<sup>36</sup>ibid.: p. 38

<sup>37</sup>See Axel Harneit-Sievers, 1992, p. 17

After the independence of Nigeria in 1960 the Northerners came to realize the relevance and importance of Western education. This led to the elimination of the Southerners in their former environment.<sup>38</sup> Apparently, there has been Biafra before the colonization which has been approved by the IPOB leader Mike Umeh. More details according to this will be mentioned later on in this paper.

Between 1966 and 1999, seven military and only three democratically elected governments ruled in Nigeria<sup>39</sup>:

- 01.10.1960 – 15.10.1966 First Republic
- 15.01.1966 – 29.07.1967 Military rule under General Aguiyi-Ironsi
- 29.07.1967 – 29.07.1975 Military rule under General Gowon
- 06.07.1967 - 12.01.1970 Civil war
- 29.07.1975 – 13.02.1976 Military rule under Brigadier Muhammed
- 13.02.1976 – 01.10.1979 Military rule under General Obasanjo
- 01.10.1979 – 31.12.1983 Second Republic under Shehu Shagari
- 31.12.1983- 27.08.1985 Military rule under Major General Buhari
- 27.08.1985 -26.08.1993 Military rule under General Babangida
- 26.08.1993 – 17.11.1993 Third Republic
- 17.11.1993 – 08.06.1998 Military rule under General Abacha

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<sup>38</sup>See Patrick Egwu, “British colonial system caused the Biafran War” Interview with Christopher Chukwuemeka Ejiofor, Colonel Ojukwu’s former Military Adviser, thisisafrica, 2018, <https://thisisafrica.me/politics-and-society/british-colonial-system-caused-the-biafran-war-interview/> [5.01.2020]

<sup>39</sup>See Dr. Emmanuel I. Ede, Nigeria, LIPortal Das Länder-Informationen-Portal, 2019, <https://www.li-portal.de/nigeria/geschichte-staat/#c9697> [Accessed: 04.01.2020]

## 6 The Biafra War and its Effects

### 6.1 The Course of the Biafra War

The Nigeria Biafra War took place from May 1967 to January 1970. In the beginning of 1966, the Nigerian army did not consist of more than 10.500 men with a majority of Northern Nigerians.<sup>40</sup> On January 15, 1966 there was a military intervention, in which the government was overthrown by Putschists, that were mainly Igbos. The coup aimed at systematically liquidating politicians and military. Samuel Akintola, one of the most hated politicians from the South and two other politicians from the North called Ahmadu Bello and Tafawa Balewa, were killed in this intervention. This coup had been seen by the Northerners as an attempt for Southern Nigeria to win control over Nigeria. The coup failed, however a member of the Igbo ethnic group, Major-General Johnson.T Aguiyi-Ironsi became head of state.<sup>41</sup>

The persecution of the Igbos and Easterners started in the month of May 1966, where between 300 and 500 people were killed and more than twice as many people were injured.<sup>42</sup> Another Igbo-coup led by the Northern Military occurred in the same year on July 29 whereby Yakubu Gowon now became head of state.<sup>43</sup> Igbo Officers that worked outside their home region, Aguiyi-Ironsi as well as the military governor of the Western region, Lieutenant. Colonel Francis Adekunle Fajunyi, were killed by the Hausas. After this chaotic event the Northern part of Nigeria thought about seceding from Nigeria because they could no longer believe in the viability of a Nigerian federation. Nevertheless, this secession did not happen considered the fact that the Military and representatives of Great Britain and USA were not willing to support this idea. During that time the Eastern region thought about withdrawing itself as well from Nigeria but did not secede.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>See Axel Harneit-Sieviars, 1992, p. 18

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.: p. 18

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.: p. 19

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.: p.19

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.: p. 20

In September 1966 a second pogrom against the Igbos in the North commenced, with victims of 5.000 to 8.000 civilians. Places like the airport and railroad stations were preferred in order to attack these people.<sup>45</sup>

The massacre started at the airport in Kano which is located in the North-Western part of Nigeria. The soldiers stormed the airport and murdered all the Eastern Nigerians. These soldiers moved from the airport into the city, drove the Igbos out of bars and hotels and shot them in the streets. Thousands of house civilians joined the soldiers and attacked them with stones, knives and bottles. Eastern Nigerian soldiers, Christians, students etc. were attacked and killed by Northerners. Children were snatched from their parents, fed and gruesomely mutilated and much more. Mothers who were expecting a child were cut wide open and their children were killed in front of them. Within a few days more than 30.000 people died. These riots forced two million people to escape back to their original homeland in the East.<sup>46</sup>

Since the Northern Nigerian police failed to help during the massacre, no East Nigerian dared to cross its regional borders. This now raised more attention to the plan of Easterners withdrawing themselves from Nigeria. In January 1967 a meeting was held in Aburi, Akkra (Ghana). At this meeting all those present, including Gowon, signed a statement rejecting the use of force of arms to solve the Nigerian problem:

*“Wir, die hier am 4. Januar 1967 in Akkra versammelten Mitglieder der Supreme Military Council, erklären feierlich und eindeutig, daß wir die Anwendung von Gewalt zur Lösung der gegenwärtigen Krise in Nigeria verurteilen und verpflichten uns in Ehren zu dieser Erklärung.”<sup>47</sup>*

At another conference which was held a few days after the Aburi-conference, Gowon said that the decisions which had been made at the Aburi-conference were decentralized.<sup>48</sup> Gowon enforced a total blockade on the East so that even the import of the most necessary food supplies was prevented. He also tried to divide Nigeria into twelve prov-

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.: p.20

<sup>46</sup>See Hypolite Adigwe, 1968, p.450

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.: p.459

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.: p.459-460

inces, which was seen by the Easterners as a preparation for further massacres. Therefore, on May 27, 1967 Ojukwu's decision to withdraw from Nigeria had been accepted but the secession was formally confirmed on May 30, 1967.<sup>49</sup> Ojukwu was a Nigerian military leader and politician who later was the head of the secessionist state of Biafra during the Nigerian civil war.<sup>50</sup> (picture 4)



The way the Igbos were treated in their own country Nigeria, made them realize how unwanted they were. This now led to a huge desire for their own country. Ojukwu claimed that the Federal Army or the Nigerian government wanted to efface the Igbos as an ethnic group and named it the "genocide theory."<sup>51</sup>

**Picture 4: Ojukwu ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C.\\_Odumegwu\\_Ojukwu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._Odumegwu_Ojukwu))**

*"It is crucial to note that the decision of an entire people, the Igbo people, to leave Nigeria, did not come from Ojukwu alone but was informed by the desires of the people and mandated by a body that contained some of the most distinguished Nigerians in history: Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Nigeria's, former governor-general and first ceremonial president; Dr. Michael I. Okpara and Sir Francis Ibiyam, former premier and governor of Eastern Nigeria, respectively; and Supreme Court justice Sir Louis Mbanefo."<sup>52</sup>*

As already mentioned, the Biafran Republic wanted its independence and also fought for it. The restoration of the unity of Nigeria was the aim of the war declared by the German government in Lagos. The federal government and Gowon personally asserted that the fight was not directed against the Igbo as a population group, but against those responsible for secession.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid.: p.460

<sup>50</sup>See The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Odumegwu Ojukwu, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Odumegwu-Ojukwu> [Accessed: 8.7.2019]

<sup>51</sup>See Axel Harneit-Sievers, 1992, p.21

<sup>52</sup>See The editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Odumegwu Ojukwu, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 20119 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Odumegwu-Ojukwu> [Accessed 8.7.2019]

<sup>53</sup>See Harneit-Sievers, Axel, 1992. p.25

On May 29 1966 the pogrom against the Igbos started. On this day, the Hausa-Fulani elites like businesspeople, military, police, academics etc. who were obligated to serve, help and to give the population an assurance for safety “launched waves of premeditated genocidal attacks on Igbo migrant populations resident in the north.”<sup>54</sup>

The creation of a Biafran flag with its meaning buttresses the agitation of a Biafra Country. The Biafran flag (picture 5) has three colours: red, black and green, which lay horizontally. In the middle of the flag there is



a rising sun. The red colour stands for the suffering and the blood that the Easterners shed during the pogroms and their longing for independence. Black symbolizes the “ancestral connection to souls of years past.”<sup>55</sup> The green colour stands for the natural assets of the republic.<sup>56</sup>

**Picture 5: National Flag of Biafra ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag\\_of\\_Biafra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Biafra))**

There were only a few outstanding countries in Africa that supported Biafra due to “humanitarian, ethical, and moral reasons”<sup>57</sup> and because they knew that allowing Biafra to withdraw from Nigeria would make the whole continent less stable. Such countries as Tanzania, Gabon, Ivory Coast and Zambia. Julius Nyerere, the president of Tanzania at that time was the first African despot to recognize Biafra.<sup>58</sup>

*[...] “Soon after that the streets were filled with people dancing and singing. For the first time in months you found dancing again, and the radio was playing Tanzanian music. People were reassured again that there was justice in the world, saying, “Don’t imagine anyone would come to your rescue—they know you’re right, but it doesn’t pay, so they won’t do anything.” We were more or less persuaded that we would have to fight on our own. [Nyerere’s] gesture meant nothing in military or material terms, but it assured us— the effect it had on us—was electric.”<sup>59</sup>*

The federal government was convinced about the fact that they could stop the conflict with police officers invading instead of military forces, but this idea failed.<sup>60</sup> The federal

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<sup>54</sup>See Adigwe, Hypolite, 1968, p.450

<sup>55</sup>See Chinua Achebe, 2012, p.151

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.: p.97

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.: p.98

<sup>60</sup>See Axel Harneit-Sievers, 1992, p.26

troops conquered the university city of Nsukka and the port city of Bonny with the oil terminal. This conquest caused Biafra to lose its most important potential source of foreign exchange and its access to imports by sea. However, the Biafran army accumulated the Midwestern State with an Igbo-minority in August/September 1967. The next step was to threaten Lagos which then led to war. In early 1967, the capital city of Biafra, Enugu, had been taken over by the army.<sup>61</sup> In September 1968, the war actions caused the Republic of Nigeria to reduce its size. Biafra was based in one area from 150 kilometres to 200 kilometres of length and 50 to 100 kilometres width.<sup>62</sup> On January 12, 1970, one day after Ojukwu and other Biafra leaders left the country, there was a ceasefire. The official surrender took place on January 15, 1970.<sup>63</sup>

With the forgoing historical background, I shall now consider the main problems for the civilians that occurred during the war.

## **7 The Immediate Impact of the Biafra War**

### **7.1 The Refugees and the Victims**

“Refugees were on the move in no specific direction, anywhere, just away from the fighting.”<sup>64</sup> says Chinua Achebe in his book about his personal history of the Biafra War. These people had no choice than to escape the war zones in the night. During the day however they had to hide in the forests. This is where the need of food grew.<sup>65</sup> Later on in this paper, I will mention the humanitarian operations that supplied these refugees with food.

In total over 500 000 people died. In April 1969 more than 19000 Biafran soldiers were brought to hospital. These injuries were crucial and were difficult to treat due to the lack of adequate medications.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.: p.26-27

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.: p.30

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.: p.31

<sup>64</sup>See Chinua Achebe, Chinua, 2012, p.169

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.: p.169

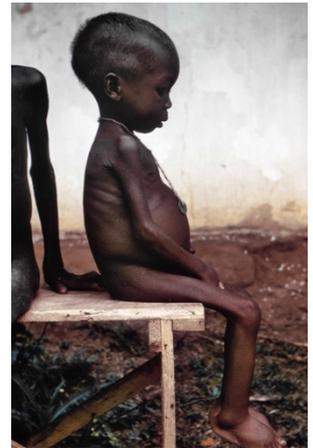
<sup>66</sup>See Axel Harneit-Sievers, 1992, p.64

*“In einem Krankenhaus in Lagos waren fast ausschließlich Soldaten mit Arm- und Beinverwundungen zu sehen: “the others don’t get this far,” wie ein Arzt erklärte.”  
“Men with brain injuries or torso wound usually died at the site where they were hit. Only those who could walk or crawl to the rear received even rudimentary medical attention, because there were few stretcher-bearers.”<sup>67</sup>*

## 7.2 Hunger

An African Proverb says: “A healthy man is a happy man.” Hunger was the main problem in this war. Most of the victims were suffering from malnutrition, which had a huge impact on them. At a relatively early stage of the war, Biafra lost control of the most productive plant-growing areas in the Eastern region, which is why they could not continue supplying carbohydrates like Yam and Cassava. The import of livestock from Northern Nigeria and the import of stock fish from Northern Europe and Canada were abolished. Biafra could no longer produce fish in-house either.<sup>68</sup>

Children suffered from kwashiorkor, which caused their belly to swell and their arms and legs to look like toothpicks. This sickness is a result of malnutrition, lack of protein and calorie.<sup>69</sup>



**Picture 6: Kwashiorkor**  
(<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kwashiorkor>)

## 7.3 Humanitarian Operations

Church aid organizations and other organizations helped with food supplies. Beginning in May/June 1968 the Church organizations distributed their first food to non-inpatient patients. At the end of June, the need for massive hunger relief became transparent. This was a wake-up call for all the organizations. They immediately flew to one of the remaining Biafra airports and provided tons of supplies for the remaining population.<sup>70</sup> The population urgently needed these relief supplies and the government exploited the hunger problem for its propaganda. Despite this fact, Ojukwu did not want to accept the technical and organizational structure of relief supplies. The refusal was based on al-

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.: p.66

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.: p. 73-75

<sup>69</sup>See C.N. Adichie, 2014, p. 338

<sup>70</sup>See Axel Harneit-Sievers, 1992, p.73-74

leged security reasons, for example due to the danger that food could be poisoned. Furthermore, it was also deemed unacceptable to set up a land corridor which could provide the population with relief supplies, as this could have posed a danger to certain military positions in Biafra. Although the famine was extreme, the Biafran government still refused food supplies in favour of military-tactical considerations. In the middle of 1969 this behaviour was increasingly questioned internationally and had a negative effect on the reliability of Ojukwu's policy. This, however, did not lessen the Biafran support until the war broke out six months later.<sup>71</sup>

## **7.4 Social Effects**

The massacres and the war in general affected the civilians in a way that a lot of them became disabled. The war merely aggravated these tendencies through military action like bombing or other forms of attack. The psychological fear of the people is another ramification of the war. People were scared of the conscription for young men. They were frightened about losing a relative during the war. The strong hostility against people grew after the war because of their experiences during the battle. This vexation became more apparent due to forced conscription into the war. Additionally, many families fell apart because of the separation between the husbands and the wives which often were caused by death on the battlefield.<sup>72</sup>

## **7.5 Economics**

The main economic impact of the civil war was poverty. In order to have a clear view of their enemies, Nigerian soldiers had to cut down bushes and trees around them.<sup>73</sup> The money of the war returnees was seized by the federal government and was only given as little as 20 pounds.<sup>74</sup> During the war a lot of the infrastructure in the Igboland were destroyed and unfortunately a lot of it has not been rebuilt since then. Since the government did not contribute much money for the repairs it is hard to fix everything like

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid.: p.76-77

<sup>72</sup>See Rev, Fr. Augustine Ejike, Nigerian-Biafran War: Social and Economic Effects on the Nigeria Igbos, 2010, p. 91, <http://oasisinternationaljournal.org/journals/2010/1011.pdf> [Accessed: 31.01.2020]

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.: p. 91

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.: p. 92

the roads. Up till today Nigeria has difficulties providing basic needs like health care, education, employment etc. for their people which is a reason why the Biafrans are still fighting for their own country.<sup>75</sup>

It has been said that war exposure for any given duration may be more harmful at a critical age than at another age. I found an online source, where four people analysed long-term impacts on the Biafran war. These long-term impacts are based on first generation and second-generation analysis. Here are the following impacts

## **7.6 First Generation Analysis**

### **7.6.1 Education**

Girls/women who were exposed during the war at the age of 0-3 were most likely not to finish primary school. Completing secondary school during the ages 0-16 was neither makeable for them. It was discovered that men's education is of more importance than that of women.<sup>76</sup> The lack of literacy hampered the emergence of future elite.

### **7.6.2 Marriage**

Men that were exposed to the war during their childhood are seen to marry at an older age. Women however, married at an earlier stage in their life. This had serious effects on family life and values.<sup>77</sup>

### **7.6.3 Fertility**

Being exposed during war had a huge impact on the fertility of the two genders. As mentioned above, women were exposed during the war, married earlier than men and therefore had their children at a young age. They had their first child 1.6 years after the

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<sup>75</sup>See Ugochukwu Iwuchukwu, Biafra: The pesky issue that won't go away, Ventures, 2017, <http://venturesafrica.com/biafra-the-pesky-issue-that-wont-go-away/> [Accessed: 31.12.2019]

<sup>76</sup>See Richard Akresh, Sonia Bhalotra, Marinella Leone, Una O Osili, First and second generation impacts of the Biafran war, nber, 2017, p.19-20 <https://www.nber.org/papers/w23721.pdf> [Accessed: 16.09.2019]

<sup>77</sup>See Richard Akresh, Sonia Bhalotra, Marinella Leone, Una O Osili, First and second generation impacts of the Biafran war, nber, 2017, p.21, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w23721.pdf> [Accessed: 16.09.2019]

non-exposed women. On the other hand, men who got married at an older age, therefore had their child at an older age. A man's first child was born 1.5 to 3 years later based on the duration of war exposure.<sup>78</sup>

## **7.7 Second generation analysis**

Being pregnant during the war had a huge impact on the unborn child. The unborn child's mortality rate is much higher when the mothers were exposed during their teenage years. Boys are 3 to 4 times larger affected by the ramifications than girls. The probability of children being stunted and underweight in the early stages of childhood is much higher when their pregnant mothers were exposed to the war during their teenage years.<sup>79</sup>

## **7.8 Today's Igbo People**

### **7.8.1 Michael Umeh**

Mr Michael Umeh is a member of the English speaking *African Catholic Community Vienna*. He is an active leader<sup>80</sup> of the IPOB organization in Vienna. On January 5, 2020 he gave me the following statement:

"IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) is a mass movement with the goal to liberate ourselves from the contraption called Nigeria. We want to build our own civilisation, take our own life and everything into our hands. Biafra has been in existence before Britain. We have been there before the coming of Europeans. Europeans are the ones that amalgamated the North, the South to name the contraption Nigeria. We want to go back to the way we were living before the Europeans came."

Him saying that Biafra had existed before Great Britain named it Nigeria was an interesting account due to me hearing that for the first time. Apparently, Mr Michael Umeh

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.: p,21

<sup>79</sup>See Richard Akresh, Sonia Bhalotra, Marinella Leone, Una O Osili, First and second generation impacts of the Biafran war, nber, 2017, p.22-23 <https://www.nber.org/papers/w23721.pdf> [Accessed: 16.09.2019]

<sup>80</sup>Or as he mentioned in the interview, a coordinator.

as well as other members of IPOB do not classify themselves as Nigerians. Instead, they use the term Biafra and call themselves Biafrans. This now shows how irritated they are by the term and construct “Nigeria”, which he calls a “contraption”. The main problem thereby was the British colonial politics which led to the inadequate country that has been created due to the amalgamation of the North and South.

On January 18, 2020 I was invited to an IPOB meeting and had the chance to interview two other Biafrans Mr. Michael Arinze and Mr. Ejike Onyemachi.

### **7.8.2 Michael Arinze**

“I am from Ika in Agbo in Delta State-Biafraland. Agbo is a part of Biafra. I did not experience the War, but I have family members who experienced it, my parents were there doing the war and they told me stories about the war and I also read things about the war. I saw many things with my eyes like the effects of the war even like 15 years after. I was born 15 years after the war.

The killing of our people was what led to the war. 1966 there was a pogrom that happened in the Northern part of Nigeria, they are actually very good in killing our people. Mainly because of Religion. When Frederick Lord Lugard<sup>81</sup> amalgamated Nigeria he made it very clear in his documents that bringing together of the northern and the southern is like bringing together oil and water together that can never mix. He said after 100 years, if any part decides to go their way, they can do that without any problem. This happened 1940. The 100 years expired on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. However, the Nigerian state is suppressing this very fact. [...]”

Mr Michael Arinze gave me a very detailed summary of the war and mentioned some impacts that the war has in today’s Nigeria. I learned a lot of new things in this particular interview and I could feel his pain while talking.

Mr Arinze mentioned some injustice that the Eastern region is going through: Up till today there is no standard functioning international airport in the Eastern region, there is no standard productive functioning company, economically the Easterners are being

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<sup>81</sup>He served as high commissioner and governor.

strangulated up till today and to become a prominent Igbo man you must be willing to do what the Northerners want you to do. In the East the chances of finding a job is low, the housing system is not as good as in other regions because the war is economically and psychologically still going on. These problems are being ignored by the government. After the war the government promised that they would reconstruct, rehabilitate and recuperate the affected region, but this never happened.

Mr Arinze say feels anger anytime he has to think about what happened during the war and this anger keeps him motivated to fight against this injustice. He emphasized towards the end of the interview that the Biafran State will surely come and that they will fight as long as it takes.

### **7.8.3 Ejike Onyemachi**

“I want a Biafran State because Nigeria as a country is not a working state. The country is not working because of the unbalanced system. This dated back many many years before the independence.

Imagine two people who do not have anything in common. No common religion, no common culture, you decided to bring them together. Not thinking that Nigeria will have a lot of 280 ethnic groups. The only thing that matters to you is your business.

They started with the palm oil business. After this business they discovered crude oil in the eastern region. This were the main resources that were found in the eastern part. The eastern people, the Biafrans were the last people they conquered. It took them more that 30 years to weaken them. They knew that the easterners would give them a hard time to control. So, they gave the North a lot of power. They gave the prime minister to Tafawa Balewa they offered it to Sultan Sokoto then, Ahmadu Bello. He wanted to be seen as the Sultan of Sokoto while he controls the prime minister. See, so they had two powers. They used Nnamdi Azikiwe from the East as the ceremonial president, a president without power.

Three months after the independence Ahmadu Bello said a lot of nasty things about the Igbos in an interview in England. He said that the Igbos are domineering and that anywhere you put them they try to emerge as the hitmen and dominate everybody etc. The easterners did not accept this.

There was a coup in 1963, which had been labelled as the Igbo coup because it was led by an Igbo man. This was when they turned everything in Nigeria against the Igbos. After this a lot of injustice upon injustice happened:

In Nigeria today the people from the Southern region have no jobs waiting for them after studying in the university, but for the Northerners jobs are waiting for them, whether they finished their studies or not, same thing for the people in the West.

Most of the Oil companies today are occupied by the Northern and Southern part of Nigeria.

There are international airports in almost every second state in the North. The Western part, there is one international airport, which is the Murtulla Mohammed Airport in Lagos. In the Eastern part of Nigeria there is a semi international airport in Porthacourt. Then Enugu international Airport which came under the regime of the former Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan. Now it is closed down and it was only one international plane that was allowed to come to Enugu. This was the Ethiopian airline, not even a European airline.

There were seaports in the Eastern part of Nigeria, which were closed down by Obasanjor. Now in Kaduna and Lagos there are Seaports. All this injustice happened in the former Eastern part of Nigeria which is the South-East and the South-South, but they systematically and politically divided us. Now we have people from the South-South and people from the South-East. There is no state in Nigeria that was created by an Igbo man. It was the Hausas and the Yorubas that created all the states in Nigeria. So how can a Hausa man come now and tell me who is my brother and who is not my brother? So, when somebody is from Delta-State automatically you are not an Igbo. They call you Delta-Ibo. Is there any difference? Igbo is Igbo!

Igbo never conquered anybody in Nigeria, and they do not have the intention on conquering anybody, but every bad thing that is happening in Nigeria is being blamed on

the Igbos. Igbos are taking your oil; Igbos are killing you etc. the 80 percent of oil in Nigeria is from the east but because of their way of craftiness they took the pipeline from the mainland to the coastal region. (the first oil company was in Imo-State) Oil goes under the ground to Kaduna.

In the president administration, there is no South-East or East-East presence in the president administration, but the law says that the power has to be balanced which it is not. The president is Fulani, the vice president is Yoruba, the senate president is Fulani, Chief of Army staff is Fulani, Chief of CP of police is Fulani, Inspector General is Fulani. There is a lot of injustice in Nigeria. Things are not getting better; they are getting worse.

The only thing that will bring everlasting peace is division of Nigeria. Nigeria has to be dissolved. Africa is Europe's business empire. Until this mistake is being corrected, Africa will never be free. The Fulani's are the British that we are seeing today in Nigeria, while their British masters watch and teach them from a far."

## 8 Long-term Perspective

The long-term effects on the war are the socio-political, economic impacts.

There are two main movements that are trying to resurrect the Biafran State. One is the IPOB which stands for the *Indigenous People of Biafra* and the other one is the MASSOB which stands for the *Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra*.

On August 17, 2018 a large group of women who were members of the IPOB protested for the release of their leader, Nnamdi Kanu and for a referendum on the independence of Biafra. However, this demonstration had been stopped by the police with the help of tear gas. Two days later 112 women of 114 had been arrested due to the fact that members of the organisation IPOB were seen as terrorists. Since 2017 this organisation has been banned as a terrorist organization.<sup>82</sup>

Nigeria is known to be the most populous country in Africa with a population of 200 million people and has the largest economy. Despite their broad oil deposits, more than

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<sup>82</sup>See ACCORD, Nigeria: Sicherheitslage, ecoi.net, 2019, <https://www.ecoi.net/de/laender/nigeria/themendossiers/sicherheitslage/> [Accessed:23.12.2019]

two thirds of the population live in poverty and the rate of unemployment is very high in Nigeria.<sup>83</sup> However, these are not the only current problems in Nigeria

Terrorist attacks by the Islamist militia, Boko Haram take place repeatedly in North-Eastern Nigeria. Around 2 million internally displaced people have left the towns and villages to save themselves from the attacks. Central Nigeria has a problem due to the reason, that numerous ethnic groups live there. Ethnic differences in the population led to ethnic and religious struggles and violent crimes which can be easily noticed in the areas of organized cattle robbery as well as stealing and looting.<sup>84</sup> Nigerian's major revenue come from oil and gas in the Southern Niger Delta, yet those who live there benefit only little from the proceeds. In 2016, this area was controlled by the militias and pirates due to the non-payment of the rebels by the government and also due to their failure to clean up the dirty areas.

The neighbouring dream of an independent Biafra, which seemed to have ended due to the failed secession in 1967, is experiencing an unexpected renaissance in the neighbouring Igbo heartland. Organized crime, especially kidnapping, remains at a high level.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>See Heinrich Bergstresser, Nigeria, bpb, 2018, <http://www.bpb.de/internationales/weltweit/innerstaatliche-konflikte/176466/nigeria> [Accessed: 26.12.2019]

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

## 9 Final Review and Conclusion

### 9.1 Final Review

Nigeria has never felt united, the ethnic groups have always been strained due to the unwanted amalgamation of the South and the North. However, the pogroms from May 1966 showed the lack of security in Nigeria and made the Igbos feel unsafe. Yet this was not the only reason for the desire of a Biafran State. These violent attacks as well as the injustice in Nigeria led to the agitation.

What was more serious for the decision to establish an independent republic was that the Igbo did not feel safe in Nigeria. Since these attacks, it appeared that interpersonal conflicts had become irreconcilable. These violent attacks were decisive for the proclamation of the Republic of Biafra.

### 9.2 Conclusion: Smoldering conflict - No solutions in sight?

As a young lady with a Nigerian background, I have to say that this is a conflict that can't be resolved. Nigeria would not be complete if the Eastern region was not included. Oil, as being one of the most important resources in Nigeria would cause a big problem if this secession would take place. It is 2020 and unfortunately the injustice in the East as well as the empty promises are still going on in today's Nigeria.

The foregoing reflection is buttressed by Christopher Chukwuemeka Ejiiofor, a former top military advisor who wrote a book *Biafra's Struggle for Survival* about his personal experience during the war. He tried to include this book into the school curriculum, in order to educate the students about the negative effects of war, but this failed. Therefore, the agitation for a Biafran Country through war seems to be an illusion.<sup>86</sup>

Their only goal was and still is to develop their inborn abilities and their children in an atmosphere of peace and security. They were mistreated, killed chased etc. by different

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<sup>86</sup>See Patrick Egwu, "British colonial system caused the Biafran War" Interview with Christopher Chukwuemeka Ejiiofor, Colonel Ojukwu's former Military Adviser, thisisafrica, 2018, <https://thisisafrica.me/politics-and-society/british-colonial-system-caused-the-biafran-war-interview/> [Accessed: 05.01.2020]

groups in Nigeria. On July 6, 1967 the federal government of Nigeria declared war with genocide against the Biafran population. Great Britain, the Soviet Union, Spain and other Western countries made sure of the starvation of the civilian population by blocking supply routes. After 30 months of intense fighting, Nigeria prevailed, and Biafra had no choice but to capitulate to the Nigerian government.

For most Nigerians, the war and the conflict are not taken seriously and therefore a lot of people do not understand the whole situation and forget about this important event. Notwithstanding, this past event is life changing for the Igbos who fought for secession and are still fighting for secession. Seceding from a whole Country is a big step and I do not think that Nigeria will ever accept this idea due to the loss they would entail. Would the situation resolve itself any differently if the Eastern region was not rich in natural assets?

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## 11 Pictures

Picture 1: Demographics of Nigeria

Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Nigeria) [Accessed: 24.12.19]

Picture 2: Religious affiliation in Nigeria (2003)

Encyclopaedia britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/Languages#ref55291> [Accessed:24.12.2019]

Picture 3: Flag of Nigeria

Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag\\_of\\_Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Nigeria) [Accessed: 17.11.19]

Picture 4: Ojukwu

Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C.\\_Odumegwu\\_Ojukwu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._Odumegwu_Ojukwu) [Accessed: 11.02.2020].

Picture 5: National Flag of Biafra

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Picture 6: Kwashiorkor

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**Selbstständigkeitserklärung**

Ich erkläre, dass ich diese vorwissenschaftliche Arbeit eigenständig angefertigt und nur die im Literaturverzeichnis angeführten Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe.

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Ort, Datum

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Unterschrift