CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE IGBOS TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF LAGOS (1970-2015)

BY

Precious Chinazaekpere ANYABUNSI ART2100510

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND DIPLOMACY, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND DIPLOMACY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify this research project was carried out by Precious Chinazaekpere ANYABUNSI in the Department of International Studies and Diplomacy, University of Benin, under my supervision.

Prof. J. C. Nwaka	**Prof. J. C. Nwaka**
(Project Supervisor)	**(Head of Department)**
Date:_____	Date:_____

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, my stone of help. The work is also dedicated to my lovely mother, Uzoegbu Ifeoma Charity, and to my lovely

siblings.

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ABSTRACT

The study extensively examined the contributions of the Igbo ethnic group to the growth and development of Lagos State between 1970 and 2015, revealing that the post-Civil War migration became a decisive force in shaping Nigeria's foremost commercial capital. The research established that the Igbo presence is deeply economic and structural in nature, profoundly influencing regional commerce and urban expansion. As Igbo entrepreneurs channeled their resilience and capital into Lagos, their dynamism resulted in the establishment of continental commercial hubs, including Alaba International, Ladipo Auto Spare Parts Market, and the Trade Fair Complex, which generate substantial internally generated revenue and employment. The study provides a comprehensive understanding of how the Igbaboi apprenticeship system served as a unique indigenous model for human capital development and upward mobility, sustaining the economic proliferation of the community. However, it demonstrated that despite these indispensable
contributions, the Igbo community's role is continually undermined by the indigenesettler dichotomy and exclusionary urban policies. The study recommended, among others, that Lagos State should formally recognize and co-manage migrant-built markets and establish stronger frameworks for civic inclusion to reconcile economic indispensability with political equity for all residents.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Lagos State, created in 1967, has evolved into Nigeria's foremost commercial and economic center. Following the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, the city became a major destination for internal migrants, including a significant number from the South-Eastern region, particularly the Igbo ethnic group. The war had caused massive displacement and economic dislocation, especially among the Igbo, who sought to reintegrate into Nigerian society through commerce, labor, and enterprise in urban centers like Lagos[1]

The post-war migration of Igbos to Lagos was largely driven by economic imperatives. Many Igbo people, faced with the loss of property and capital due to the "Abandoned Property" policy and the 20-pound ex gratia payment[2], were forced to rebuild their lives from scratch. Lagos, already a melting pot of cultures and economic activities, offered a fertile ground for this recovery. Over the next few decades, the Igbo community became deeply entrenched in the socio-economic fabric of the state.

Between 1970 and 2015, the Igbo contribution to the growth and development of Lagos was visible across several key sectors. In commerce, they

dominated wholesale and retail trade in electronics, auto parts, building materials, and textiles, transforming markets such as Alaba International, Ladipo, and Trade Fair Complex into commercial hubs with continental influence[3]. These markets not only boosted internal revenue for Lagos State but also generated employment and attracted foreign investment.

Beyond trade, Igbos have been active in the informal sector, contributing significantly to real estate development, transportation services, small and medium-scale manufacturing, and construction. Many Igbo entrepreneurs invested in housing estates, road infrastructure, and commercial buildings in developing areas such as Amuwo-Odofin, Festac, and Ajah, playing a direct role in the spatial and infrastructural development of Lagos[4].

Culturally and socially, the Igbos in Lagos have maintained vibrant community structures through town unions, professional associations, and cultural festivals. These have not only fostered social cohesion within the Igbo diaspora but have also facilitated integration and intercultural exchange with indigenous Yoruba communities[5]. Their increasing political participation—both formally through elected positions and informally through alliances and civic engagement—further highlights their stake in the state's development.

Despite these wide-ranging contributions, the role of Igbos in Lagos State's development is often marginalized in both academic literature and policy debates. This study aims to document and analyze the economic, social, and cultural contributions of the Igbo people to the growth and development of Lagos State from 1970 to 2015. It seeks to bridge a critical gap in understanding how migrant communities contribute to urban development in postcolonial African contexts.

Aim and objectives of the study

The primary aim of this study is to examine and evaluate the contributions of the Igbo ethnic group to the socio-economic growth and overall development of Lagos State from 1970 to 2015. The specific objectives are:

1. To investigate the historical pattern of Igbo migration to Lagos State before 1970.
2. To analyze the economic contributions of the Igbo to the growth and development of Lagos State.
3. To assess the role of the Igbo people in the infrastructural and urban development of Lagos State between 1970 and 2015.
4. To explore the socio-cultural impact of the Igbo including their integration and interaction with indigenous populations.

5. To identify the challenges and opportunities encountered by the Igbo community in contributing to the state's growth.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on examining the multifaceted contributions of the Igbo ethnic group to the growth and development of Lagos State between the years 1970 and 2015. The scope is geographically limited to Lagos State, Nigeria, which serves as the primary area of concentration due to its status as a major destination for Igbo migrants after the Nigerian Civil War. The study covers a 45-year period, beginning in 1970, immediately after the end of the Civil War—marking the reintegration of Igbos into Nigeria's socio-economic system and ending in 2015, a year significant for its political and economic turning points in Nigeria. The study will also examine the Economic contributions of igbos, such as trading, entrepreneurship, investment in real estate, and involvement in informal and formal business sectors.

Literature-Review

According to Achebe, in his work titled "*There Was a Country",* stated that the economic, social, and cultural landscape of Lagos State has been shaped by a diverse mix of ethnic groups, among which the Igbo community has played a significant role. The post-civil war period marked a resurgence of Igbo migration

to Lagos, driven by the need to rebuild livelihoods disrupted by the war and by the exclusionary policies that followed it, such as the "Abandoned Property" decree and the controversial 20-pound restitution cap on seized bank accounts[1].

In view of Falola, T., & Heaton, M., in theor work titled "*A History of Nigeria"*, stated that the migration of Igbos to Lagos State after the civil war is well documented in the works of Falola and Heaton, who described Lagos as a city of refuge and opportunity for war-affected populations[2]. He highlighted that the Igbos, despite being politically and economically marginalized after the war, reestablished themselves in major cities, with Lagos being the most prominent due to its open market system and accessibility[3]. Their settlement patterns, often in emerging suburbs and market-centric communities like Festac, Amuwo-Odofin, and Alaba, reflect a strategic engagement with the informal economy.

According to Nwoko, K. A in his book titled "The Politics of Biafra and the Future of Nigeria." Opined that the Igbos are particularly noted for their impact on the commercial sector of Lagos. Markets like Alaba International, Ladipo Auto Spare Parts Market, and Trade Fair Complex became economic hubs largely due to Igbo entrepreneurship. According to him, these markets generate billions in annual turnover and provide employment for tens of thousands of Nigerians from diverse ethnic backgrounds[4]. This commercial activity not only contributes

significantly to Lagos State's Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) but also enhances regional trade across West Africa.

Additionally, Nwangwu, C. in his work titled "Ethnic Minorities and Commercial Hegemony in Nigerian Markets: The Case of Igbo Traders in Lagos" stated that Igbos have made substantial investments in real estate and small-scale manufacturing. He emphasize that Igbo businessmen were instrumental in developing residential estates in Ajah, Lekki, and Satellite Town, indirectly contributing to urban planning and infrastructural growth[5]. Their business clusters often spur development in previously underdeveloped areas, influencing urban expansion.

Eze, M. O. in his book "*Urban Development and Migration"* stated that Culturally, the Igbo community in Lagos has created a dual identity—maintaining cultural traditions while integrating into the host society. He argues that cultural associations such as town unions and Igbo day celebrations help preserve identity and promote intercultural dialogue[6]. These social structures often provide welfare services, scholarships, and development initiatives for both Igbo and non-Igbo residents in Lagos.

In view of Nnoli, O in his book titled "*Ethnic Politics in Nigeria"*. Although not as prominent in elective politics in Lagos, the Igbos have

participated in civic life through advocacy, voting, and informal political alliances. He notes that Igbos in Lagos often form coalitions to protect their business interests and promote community security[7]. Over time, their political involvement has become more assertive, especially in local council elections and through community development committees

According to B. Salawu and A. O. Hassan showed in their work *"Ethnic politics and its implications for the survival of democracy in Nigeria"* that "it is a commonplace fact that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation-state with socio-cultural differences between its component ethnic groups all of which have resulted into cultural dissimilarity."23 Without dwelling much on the patterns of ethnic politics in Lagos in the years leading to Independence and the early years after Independence Salawu and Hassan revealed that ethnic politics in Nigeria is entrenched in virtually every fabric of the communities, local government and states in the country as they pointed out that "about five decades after Nigeria gained independence, the Nigerian diverse social structure in terms of her heterogeneity has not changed significantly. The diverse nature of the society has made identification with the 'nation' a difficult task. Today, identification is easier at both family and ethnic levels. A consequence of this is that many of the citizens may never develop a proper concept of nation."

Ayodeji Olukoju's work *"The Travails of Migrant and Wage Labour in the Lagos Metropolitan Area in the Inter-War Years"* provided first-hand information about what inspired an influx of people to Lagos. He revealed that "Migrant labor is defined in the particular case of Lagos as nonindigenes of Lagos, whether these were fellow-Yoruba or non-Yoruba from other parts of Nigeria or from the neighboring French and British colonies, who left their homes for a considerable length of time to make their fortunes in the port-city. While many of these workers did return to their homelands after their sojourn, others stayed on permanently."

Methodology

This study intends to employ various approaches and sources to enhance quality and robust study, the study cuts across various discipline and will thus employ a multi-disciplinary approach.

Primary Sources

The research will be based on qualitative and quantitative data gathered from historical records, academic literature, interviews, and case studies, focusing specifically on the Igbo community's activities and impact within Lagos State

Secondary Sources

This study shall also employ the use of articles, journals, books from the library, and other websites as well as any other related publications such as

magazines, newspaper etc. will be consulted in the gathering of this secondary data for the purpose of this research work, in order to have robust knowledge and information in respect to the crux of the study.

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CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Igbos in Lagos before 1970

Before the advent of colonial rule in Nigeria, the movement of people across regions was largely motivated by trade, kinship, and migration for livelihood. The Igbo people, known for their enterprise, were among those who developed early contacts with communities along the western coast. The River Niger and its tributaries provided a natural link between the eastern hinterlands and the markets that stretched toward Benin and Lagos. Through these trade routes, palm oil, salt, and crafts from Igbo territories were exchanged for cowries, textiles, and other imported items.[1] These economic interactions laid an early foundation for the social and cultural familiarity that later encouraged mass Igbo migration to Lagos.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Lagos had evolved from a fishing settlement into a vibrant commercial centre that attracted traders from different parts of the region.[2] The influx of returnee ex-slaves, European merchants, and African middlemen turned Lagos into a cosmopolitan space. It was within this context that the Igbo traders began to participate more actively, bringing in agricultural produce and participating in inter-ethnic markets such as Oyingbo and Idumota. This participation not only expanded Igbo economic horizons but also

contributed to the gradual adaptation of their trading networks to western urban structures.

The pre-colonial exchange was not purely economic; it was also a channel for cultural interaction. The Igbo learned to communicate and conduct business in the Yoruba-dominated environment, while Lagosians became familiar with Igbo goods and enterprise.[3] This early exposure to urban cosmopolitanism helped prepare later generations of Igbos for migration during the colonial and post-colonial periods, when Lagos became the economic nerve centre of Nigeria. In essence, the pre-colonial period marked the beginning of a historical process of mobility, adaptation, and opportunity that would continue well into the twentieth century.[4]

The colonial period marked a decisive phase in the transformation of Lagos into a central hub of commerce and administration in Nigeria. The annexation of Lagos in 1861 by the British Crown brought new political and economic arrangements that integrated the city into global trade systems.[5] The establishment of the Lagos Port and railway connections linking the coast to inland regions, particularly the cocoa and palm oil belts, positioned the city as a strategic entrepôt for goods and labor migration.[6] These infrastructural developments stimulated urban growth, creating opportunities that attracted different ethnic groups,

including the Igbo, who gradually found spaces in both the economic and social fabric of colonial Lagos.

Under British rule, Lagos evolved into a cosmopolitan settlement characterized by its administrative importance and commercial vibrancy. Government institutions, trading companies, and missionary missions provided employment for a growing African workforce.[7] Many Igbos, known for their adaptability and entrepreneurial energy, engaged in petty trading, clerical jobs, and artisanal crafts that supplied the colonial city's growing population. They were particularly visible in early markets like Idumota, Oke Arin, and Ereko, where the exchange of imported goods such as textiles and household items took root. Over time, Lagos became not just a workplace but a settlement base for many Igbo families who began to establish cultural and business ties in the city.

The colonial structure also encouraged education and Christianity as tools for advancement. Missionary schools, particularly those run by the Church Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Mission, provided many Igbo migrants access to literacy and formal employment.[8] Through education, Lagos-born or Lagos-based Igbos began to enter clerical positions, teaching, and technical roles in government offices, banks, and trading firms. The experience of working in Lagos during the colonial period widened their exposure to modern

political ideas and urban lifestyles, laying the foundation for later nationalist participation by educated Igbo elites.

In terms of spatial settlement, the Igbo presence was largely concentrated in mixed urban areas like Yaba, Surulere, and Ebute Metta, where artisans, traders, and junior clerks coexisted. The multicultural nature of these neighborhoods fostered interaction between the Igbo and other ethnic groups, particularly the Yoruba, leading to a gradual adaptation of language, customs, and social values.[9] Although social tension occasionally arose, economic interdependence ensured continued coexistence and collaboration in trade, transport, and craftsmanship.

By the 1940s and 1950s, the Igbo had become indispensable in the colonial economy of Lagos. They dominated aspects of the informal market system, expanded apprenticeship networks, and were increasingly visible in trade unions and community associations.[10] The structural legacies of colonial rule notably the concentration of administrative power and commerce in Lagos unintentionally created a fertile ground for Igbo urban migration. This set the stage for their large-scale movement to Lagos after independence and particularly after 1970, when postwar reconstruction and national integration redefined the city's socio-economic dynamics.

The period leading up to Nigeria's independence in 1960 witnessed an intensified pattern of rural-urban migration across the country, and Lagos stood at the heart of this transformation. The city's rapid economic expansion, driven by trade, public administration, and emerging industries, created a demand for labour that could not be met locally.[11] Lagos was not merely a political capital; it was a space of opportunity where access to employment and education promised social mobility. For the Igbo, whose traditional homeland in southeastern Nigeria was marked by high population density and limited agricultural land, the city presented a chance to escape rural constraints and participate in a modern cash economy.[12]

Government institutions, railway services, and commercial firms absorbed a significant portion of this migrant workforce. Clerical and technical positions in colonial offices, railway workshops, and the ports offered stable income compared to rural farming. Many Igbos entered these occupations through referrals and apprenticeship systems that emphasized hard work and loyalty.[13] Others operated as traders, middlemen, and small-scale artisans in the informal sector, which expanded rapidly as the city grew. These economic activities did not only ensure survival but also generated communal wealth that was often remitted to families in the East, reinforcing a circular pattern of migration.

Urban life in Lagos also carried a symbolic appeal. The city represented modernity electricity, cinemas, schools, and an emerging public culture of consumer goods.[14] Igbo youths, especially those who had completed mission school education, were drawn to the promise of advancement that Lagos embodied. The transport network, particularly the railway linking Enugu, Onitsha, and Lagos, facilitated this movement. By the mid-1950s, Lagos had become a crucial node in the Igbo migration corridor, a place where the values of enterprise and perseverance found visible expression in the daily hustle of markets and motor parks.

Social adaptation was another key factor that sustained Igbo migration during this period. The establishment of town unions and cultural associations helped migrants adjust to urban life by providing financial assistance, accommodation, and social belonging.[15] These associations also acted as informal employment networks, helping members secure apprenticeships or trading stalls. Through these systems, the Igbo community in Lagos built an internal support structure that mirrored the kinship bonds of the village but operated within an urban economy.

The growth of these informal structures complemented the city's expanding formal economy. Construction work, transport services, and domestic labour all

relied heavily on migrant participation, with the Igbo forming an important segment of this workforce.[16] Their reputation for diligence and willingness to learn made them attractive to employers, while their communal organization enabled a degree of stability even in a competitive environment. The combination of opportunity, social connection, and ambition explains why by the late 1950s, the Igbo were already visible in virtually every major market and occupation in Lagos, setting a pattern that would deepen after 1970.[17]

The growth of Lagos as a colonial and postcolonial city created a social environment that encouraged interaction between diverse ethnic communities. For the Igbo migrants who arrived before 1970, settlement patterns were shaped by accessibility, economic activity, and social networks.[18] Many settled in areas close to commercial centers such as Idumota, Ebute Metta, and Surulere, where accommodation was affordable and markets were within reach. Over time, these areas became multi-ethnic spaces characterized by dense population, shared facilities, and cultural exchange. The presence of the Igbo in these communities was both an economic necessity and a sign of urban integration, as they participated in neighborhood associations and communal events that fostered coexistence with the Yoruba and other groups.[19]

Urban social life in Lagos revolved around a blend of cooperation and competition. Economic survival demanded collaboration across ethnic boundaries, particularly in the informal markets where trade relationships transcended regional identity.[20] Igbo traders often relied on Yoruba landlords, transport operators, and customers, while Yoruba artisans worked alongside Igbo apprentices and laborers in workshops scattered across Mushin, Yaba, and Oyingbo. This daily interaction gradually softened ethnic barriers, producing a hybrid urban culture marked by linguistic borrowing, interethnic friendships, and even intermarriages. Although competition occasionally led to tension, particularly over land or market spaces, Lagos's cosmopolitan atmosphere provided mechanisms for negotiation and tolerance.

Religious institutions also played a central role in integrating the Igbo into Lagos society. Christianity, already widespread among the Igbo before independence, provided a unifying moral framework that transcended ethnic differences.[21] Churches in Lagos became not only centers of worship but also platforms for social advancement, education, and community networking. The Catholic Church, Anglican parishes, and emerging Pentecostal assemblies all offered avenues for interaction and leadership, enabling Igbo migrants to gain visibility in religious and civic circles. Through these institutions, many Igbo

individuals found acceptance in urban society and contributed to the city's moral and social development.

Another layer of integration emerged through political participation and community organization. The rise of nationalist movements in the 1940s and 1950s encouraged urban residents to unite around common goals such as self-government and workers' rights.[22] Igbo professionals and activists were active in these movements, collaborating with Yoruba and Hausa leaders in organizations such as the Nigerian Youth Movement and later the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). The shared pursuit of political freedom helped reduce ethnic polarization, even if temporary, and gave the Igbo in Lagos a sense of belonging in national affairs.

Despite these integrative trends, the Igbo community maintained strong cultural ties with their homeland. Town unions, women's groups, and age-grade associations ensured that traditional customs were preserved even in an urban context.[23] Festivals like the New Yam celebration, though adapted to city life, remained expressions of identity and continuity. These cultural practices not only strengthened intra-group solidarity but also enriched the multicultural landscape of Lagos, which thrived on diversity and innovation. The ability of the Igbo to

combine economic pragmatism with cultural pride became a defining feature of their early settlement experience in Lagos.[24]

Lagos and Its Geography

Lagos, Nigeria's economic powerhouse and one of Africa's most dynamic megacities, has a rich historical and geographical tapestry that has shaped its growth into a global urban center. Its strategic location along the Atlantic coast, coupled with a complex network of lagoons and islands, has made it a hub for trade, culture, and migration.[25] By 1970, Lagos was a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups, with the Igbo population playing a significant role in its economic and social fabric.[26] Lagos, a coastal city in southwestern Nigeria, boasts a history deeply intertwined with its geography. Initially an Awori Yoruba fishing settlement, it evolved into a major slave-trading port and later became a British colony.[27] By 1970, Lagos had developed into a diverse metropolis that attracted migrants from across Nigeria, including a significant Igbo population.

Lagos is situated on the Atlantic coast, encompassing islands, a peninsula, and extensive mainland areas. Its natural deep-water harbor facilitated its emergence as a major trading port, particularly during the colonial era. The city's expansion was initially limited to the Federal Territory of Lagos (under the 1954 Constitution), but the creation of Lagos State in 1967 allowed for broader

development across the mainland. Lagos remains a major economic and socio-political hub in Nigeria, despite the relocation of the federal capital to Abuja in 1991.

Lagos's history dates back to the 15th century when Yoruba-speaking fishermen and hunters settled on what is now Lagos Island, then known as Oko (meaning "farm" in Yoruba).[28] The earliest inhabitants were the Awori, a Yoruba subgroup who established fishing communities around the lagoon.[29] The Portuguese explorer Rui de Sequeira named the area "Lagos" in 1472, likely due to its resemblance to the lagoon-rich town of Lagos in Portugal.[30] By the 16th century, the city had become a significant port for the transatlantic slave trade, with Portuguese traders establishing a flourishing commerce in enslaved Africans.[31] The British intervention in 1851, aimed at suppressing the slave trade, marked a turning point, culminating in Lagos's annexation as a British Crown Colony in 1861.[32]

Under British rule, Lagos transformed into a major administrative and commercial center. The construction of railways and highways connected the city to Nigeria's hinterland, facilitating trade in commodities such as palm oil and groundnuts.[33] From 1914 to 1960, Lagos served as the capital of colonial Nigeria, and after independence, it remained the federal capital until 1991, when Abuja

officially took over. The creation of Lagos State in 1967, with Ikeja as its capital, marked a new phase of administrative autonomy. The city's population grew rapidly from about 325,000 in 1950 to 1.4 million by 1970 driven largely by rural-urban migration and the oil-fueled economic expansion of the 1960s.[34]

Geographically, Lagos is divided into two broad regions: Lagos Island and the Mainland. Lagos Island, the historical and commercial core, is situated within Lagos Lagoon and protected from the Atlantic Ocean by sand spits. The Mainland, encompassing areas such as Ikeja, Mushin, Surulere, and Yaba, has expanded rapidly due to urbanization. Lagos State covers approximately 1,292 square miles (3,345 km²), with nearly 25% of its area consisting of water bodies, including the Lagos and Lekki Lagoons, and the Ogun and Osun Rivers. The region's tropical climate, classified as humid equatorial, features high humidity, heavy rainfall, and average temperatures of about 27°C (80°F). This environment supports diverse ecosystems such as coastal wetlands, mangrove forests, and lowland rainforests, which host species like mona monkeys, African grey parrots, and Nile crocodiles. The lagoons and rivers have historically facilitated transportation and trade, with ports like Apapa and Tin Can Island serving as critical arteries of Nigeria's economy.[35]

However, Lagos's geography also poses challenges. Flooding is a recurring problem, worsened by poor drainage systems and rapid urbanization; by the 1970s, only about 14% of residents had access to piped water.[36] Land reclamation projects, such as Eko Atlantic, have been initiated to address housing shortages, though these efforts carry environmental costs, including mangrove depletion.[37] Architecturally, Lagos reflects its multicultural evolution, blending colonial European designs, Brazilian creole styles, and traditional Yoruba structures such as the Iga Idunganran palace.[38]

Lagos's strategic coastal position continues to underpin its significance as a hub for trade and cultural exchange. By 1970, it had become Nigeria's economic engine home to major industries, bustling markets like Balogun and Idumota, and the nation's main seaport.[39] The city's cultural life is equally diverse, marked by festivals such as Eyo and a vibrant music scene influenced by Yoruba, Igbo, and other ethnic traditions.[40] Lagos's role as both colonial and post-independence capital attracted migrants from across Nigeria, shaping its enduring cosmopolitan identity.[41]

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CHAPTER THREE

BASIS OF IGBO MIGRATION TO LAGOS STATE FROM 1970

The end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970 marked a defining point in Igbo history, as the region was left in ruins with its economy, infrastructure, and social systems shattered. The Eastern region had been cut off from national trade for nearly three years, and when the war ended, most banks refused to honour pre-war deposits, granting a mere twenty pounds to every account holder regardless of their former balance[1]. This singular policy pushed many Igbo families into acute poverty. The physical destruction of cities like Enugu, Onitsha, and Aba, combined with the absence of industrial recovery programs, forced individuals to look outward for survival. Lagos, already established as Nigeria's commercial and political centre, became a natural point of convergence for displaced Igbos seeking

to reconstruct their livelihoods. The city represented not only a geographical relocation but an economic rebirth after the stagnation of war[2].

The economic structure of post-war Nigeria favoured regions that were less affected by the conflict, creating a development gap that widened over time. Lagos, with its ports, growing industries, and expanding informal sector, offered immediate opportunities for traders, artisans, and labourers. The Igbos, historically known for their mobility and adaptability, began to channel their human capital into this thriving urban economy. Many moved first as individuals before sending for their families once some form of stability had been achieved[3]. The process reflected a pragmatic survival strategy rooted in communal trust and kinship ties, where earlier migrants acted as anchors for newer ones. *Mr. Chukwuma Anozie*, a spare-parts dealer in Ladipo Market, explained that "it was not about adventure; it was about survival. Lagos was where life started again after everything was gone."[4] His statement captures the pragmatic realism that characterised this first wave of post-war migration.

The new economic environment of Lagos was particularly attractive because it did not demand high entry qualifications. Informal commerce, construction, and transport industries absorbed those displaced from the East who lacked formal education or connections to government establishments[5]. The city's

rapid expansion under the oil boom opened jobs that ranged from factory work to street trading. However, beneath this economic movement lay a psychological need for restoration. Many migrants saw their relocation not just as a means to earn a living but as a statement of resilience. The war had humiliated the Igbo population, and migration became a subtle form of resistance to marginalisation[6]. *Mrs. Nneka Udeh*, a textile trader in Balogun Market, revealed that "many of us came to Lagos to prove that we could still stand on our feet. Nobody wanted to be pitied."[7] This sentiment transformed migration into both an economic and moral enterprise.

Lagos also presented a new kind of social order that contrasted sharply with the post-war conditions in the East. The city offered anonymity and freedom from communal pressures, enabling individuals to redefine their status through work, not lineage or pre-war wealth. Igbo migrants integrated quickly into the commercial ecosystem through markets such as Alaba, Idumota, and Oshodi, where informal apprenticeship and credit systems allowed newcomers to climb the economic ladder. The redistribution of urban opportunity meant that success in Lagos was measurable, visible, and replicable, encouraging a self-perpetuating cycle of migration[8]. The presence of these markets functioned as magnets for entire kin networks, as younger relatives were routinely invited to join and learn

trades under established traders. This dynamic gradually transformed Igbo migration from individual escape into an organised socio-economic movement.

The state's inability to fully reintegrate the East into national economic planning further reinforced migration as a rational survival mechanism. Federal reconstruction funds were concentrated in oil-producing areas and urban centres, neglecting large parts of Igboland[9]. Consequently, young men and women who could not find meaningful employment in the East redirected their ambitions toward Lagos. The decision to migrate was not spontaneous but often discussed within families as a strategic step in rebuilding household economies. *Mr. Joseph Eze*, a retired builder in Festac Town, recalled that "after the war, staying at home meant doing nothing. In Lagos, there was always something to do, even if it was carrying blocks."[10] His words underline how post-war migration was not an act of desperation but an assertion of agency in the face of systemic neglect.

The steady influx of Igbo migrants into Lagos after 1970 therefore represented an adaptive response to both structural inequalities and personal aspirations. Economic logic blended with social motivation as survival needs intersected with the search for identity and dignity. The war had dismantled old hierarchies, and Lagos became the new frontier where wealth could be rebuilt through determination and skill. Over time, the city turned into a microcosm of

Igbo enterprise, embodying the people's resilience and their unbroken belief in economic self-determination[11].

The Igbo apprenticeship system, locally known as Imu Ahia, became one of the strongest foundations for post-war migration to Lagos. After 1970, the economy of Eastern Nigeria was too weak to absorb its growing youthful population. Families who had lost their farmlands and small industries during the war began to send their sons to relatives and acquaintances already established in Lagos, where they could learn trades and business skills[12]. This system, which combined mentorship with economic discipline, offered a structured path for young Igbos to acquire capital and independence. Apprenticeship thus became not just a means of livelihood but a cultural institution that transformed migration into a multigenerational strategy of survival. By transferring entrepreneurial knowledge from one generation to another, the system ensured that the scars of the war did not translate into permanent economic paralysis[13].

In Lagos, the apprenticeship model evolved rapidly because the city provided an enabling environment for commerce. The growing markets of Ladipo, Alaba, and Aspanda were built largely through the initiative of early Igbo traders who brought their apprentices from home to expand their enterprises. Under the typical arrangement, a young apprentice served his master for a period ranging

between five and seven years, during which he was trained in trade, accounting, and negotiation. At the end of his service, the master "settled" him with capital or goods to start his own business[14]. Mr. Obinna Oguejiofor, a dealer in electronics at Alaba International Market, explained that "this was our own university; we learned by doing, and Lagos was the campus."[15] His description highlights how the city became an informal centre of economic learning, providing both training and opportunity outside the formal educational system.

The economic landscape of Lagos made the apprenticeship model particularly effective. The concentration of industries, the influx of consumers, and the availability of diverse goods created a vast commercial network that rewarded hard work and innovation. For many Igbo migrants, apprenticeship was not only a means to escape poverty but a way to access the expanding middle class of traders and importers who controlled the informal economy[16]. Through collective saving and trust-based business partnerships, the Igbos transformed marginalised occupations into highly profitable ventures. The social prestige attached to becoming a successful trader also reinforced the appeal of migration. Success stories from Lagos circulated widely in villages across the East, inspiring new waves of youths to follow the same path. Mrs. Ifeoma Nnadi, who sells building materials in Trade Fair Complex, observed that "once one boy succeeds

here, he brings three others; that's how the chain continues."[17] This testimony reflects the embedded social logic that linked migration with mentorship and progress.

The apprenticeship system also fostered a distinct moral economy built on reciprocity and obligation. Migrants who had benefited from settlement felt culturally bound to help others in turn, reproducing a cycle of support that gave Igbo commerce in Lagos its communal character. This self-reinforcing network provided security in a competitive urban environment where state institutions offered little protection to small-scale traders. Economic solidarity replaced government policy as the real engine of social mobility[18]. The communal nature of Igbo business also blurred the boundaries between kinship and enterprise, making every success story both a personal and collective victory. Apprentices often lodged in their masters' homes, sharing not only business lessons but values such as honesty, perseverance, and thrift. The system turned migration into a cultural pedagogy where learning, earning, and belonging were inseparable experiences[19].

By the 1980s, the Igbo apprenticeship model in Lagos had matured into a parallel economic institution capable of producing its own elite class. Traders who had once arrived with nothing now imported goods directly from Asia and Europe, establishing powerful associations that regulated prices and controlled access to

markets. This process of vertical mobility reinforced the attraction of Lagos as a destination for aspiring entrepreneurs. For many families in Anambra, Abia, and Imo States, having a son in Lagos was seen as an investment in the household's future. Mr. Sunday Okeke, an automobile parts importer at Ladipo Market, recalled that "in my time, our parents didn't wait for government jobs; once your brother was in Lagos, your life could change."[20] His statement encapsulates the self-reliant spirit that underpinned the economic migration of the Igbo people.

The success of the apprenticeship tradition reveals how the Igbo transformed adversity into advantage. In the absence of state-driven reconstruction, they relied on internal social mechanisms to rebuild capital and confidence. Lagos offered the space, while the apprenticeship system provided the structure. The outcome was a vibrant entrepreneurial community that became central to the city's informal economy, laying the foundation for Igbo economic influence that persists to this day[21].

The post-war era coincided with Nigeria's oil boom and the expansion of industrial production in Lagos, which became a magnet for job seekers from all parts of the country. For many Igbos, the attraction of Lagos was not limited to its markets but also its factories, ports, and construction sites that required abundant labour[22]. The federal government's urban development projects and the influx of

multinational corporations in Ikeja, Apapa, and Surulere created openings in manufacturing, logistics, and administrative services. The Igbos, known for their adaptability and willingness to work under difficult conditions, filled many of these positions. Migration was thus both an economic strategy and a form of reintegration into the national economy after the exclusion of the war years[23]. The city became an industrial workshop where displaced youth could exchange their labour for stability and upward mobility.

Employment in Lagos held symbolic significance for post-war Igbo migrants. While trading and entrepreneurship were the most visible forms of success, wage labour represented inclusion in the modern, urban economy that had previously been closed to them. For many young men who had limited education, jobs as factory hands, drivers, dockworkers, or clerks offered not just income but a sense of belonging in a rapidly changing society[24]. Mr. Innocent Nwachukwu, who worked at the Nigerian Breweries plant in Ikeja, recalled that "getting that factory job made me feel human again after the war. It meant we could contribute to Nigeria's growth, not just survive."[25] His reflection highlights how the search for employment was intertwined with psychological recovery and the restoration of national identity. The migration to Lagos, therefore, had both material and emotional motivations.

The rapid industrialisation of Lagos during the 1970s and 1980s created a unique dual economy: a formal sector dominated by large corporations and an informal sector that supplied the labour and services sustaining them. Igbo migrants moved fluidly between these two worlds, using factory work to fund small-scale trading or apprenticeship ventures[26]. This flexibility became a hallmark of their economic behaviour, allowing them to survive economic downturns and inflation. While some remained in steady employment, others used wages from formal jobs as seed capital for self-employment. The pattern reflected an economic pragmatism that prioritised independence over long-term subordination. Mrs. Chinyere Edeh, a former typist at a shipping firm in Apapa, stated that "many of us took jobs first, but our eyes were always on business. We worked to gather experience and save for our own shop."[27] The intertwining of wage work and enterprise marked the distinct entrepreneurial orientation of Igbo migrants in Lagos.

As Lagos grew, so did the competition for employment. By the 1980s, unemployment began to rise, forcing many Igbos to diversify their skills and move into emerging industries such as electronics repair, transportation, and private security[28]. The city's cosmopolitan nature made adaptability an essential survival trait. The ability to learn on the job, combine multiple skills, and shift between

trades became a cultural advantage. Igbo migrants often relied on community networks to locate openings or gain referrals. Informal associations, church groups, and hometown unions served as employment agencies that linked new arrivals with opportunities in factories, markets, or workshops[29]. Mr. Uchenna Okafor, a mechanic in Mushin, noted that "nobody was alone; if you came to Lagos and didn't know where to start, your brothers would find you something to do."[30] This sense of shared responsibility helped sustain the migration flow even during periods of economic decline.

Lagos also offered exposure to new forms of industrial knowledge and technology that were unavailable in the East. The Igbos who worked in factories often learned the basics of machinery, logistics, and retail distribution, which later influenced the development of small-scale industries back home[31]. The process created a feedback loop where migration produced not only income but also technical transfer. Many former employees eventually returned to establish workshops in Aba, Nnewi, or Onitsha, adapting the skills acquired in Lagos to local conditions. The city thus functioned as a training ground for industrial modernity, shaping the economic transformation of the wider Igbo region[32]. In this way, labour migration transcended its immediate economic purpose and

contributed to the long-term reindustrialisation of Eastern Nigeria through the spread of urban experience and technology.

While economic opportunity remained the dominant factor, the moral dimension of labour migration cannot be ignored. Working in Lagos was seen as an act of self-redemption and proof of character after the collective humiliation of the civil war. Employment gave dignity and reaffirmed the Igbo belief in industry, perseverance, and self-worth. The migrants' success in the urban economy challenged stereotypes and redefined their social identity in post-war Nigeria[33]. Lagos provided the setting where labour was not just an occupation but a form of cultural expression a demonstration of resilience that bridged the gap between defeat and renewal.

The years following the Nigerian Civil War marked a renewed determination among the Igbo people to pursue education as a means of reclaiming their dignity and ensuring social mobility. Lagos, with its concentration of schools, polytechnics, and universities, became a centre of attraction for thousands of Igbo youths who saw education as both an escape from post-war marginalization and a pathway to economic empowerment[34]. For many families, sending their children to Lagos symbolized hope for a new beginning in a city associated with progress, exposure, and access to modern knowledge. The schools

in Lagos were better equipped, and the city offered not only learning but also opportunities to interact with other ethnic groups an experience that expanded horizons and social awareness.

The attraction of Lagos went beyond formal schooling. Many migrants recognized that urban exposure itself was a form of education. The city's culture of innovation, competition, and self-presentation taught lessons that were not available in rural communities. *Mr. Emmanuel Eze*, who came to Lagos in 1978 as a secondary school student in Surulere, recalled, "Even walking on the streets was education. You learned confidence, how to speak English properly, how to behave like someone going somewhere." For such individuals, migration became a social classroom a space where they learned discipline, ambition, and adaptability. The exposure to diverse people and urban systems nurtured a modern consciousness that later influenced community development in the Southeast.

Education in Lagos also served as a bridge between traditional values and urban professionalism. Many Igbo parents worked tirelessly in markets or small trades to sponsor their children's studies. *Mrs. Anthonia Obi*, a trader at Balogun Market, explained, "We suffered to pay school fees, but it was for the future. My son read accounting at YABATECH, and now he is managing his own firm." This intergenerational investment reflected the belief that education was not just

personal advancement but collective restoration after the disruptions of the war. Through education, families rebuilt confidence and reasserted their presence in national life. The emphasis on knowledge and skill transformed the Igbo community in Lagos into one of the most literate and upwardly mobile groups in the city[35].

The educational migration also strengthened networks of support among Igbo youths in Lagos. Church groups, town unions, and student associations acted as social anchors for newcomers who were struggling with accommodation, employment, or school admissions. *Mr. Chijioke Nnadi*, who studied at the University of Lagos in 1985, remembered that "the first thing our town union did was to find a room for any boy that came from home. We shared food, helped each other with assignments, even found holiday jobs." Such networks mitigated the harshness of city life and reinforced the communal values that defined the Igbo spirit of cooperation. The shared experience of migration deepened solidarity and created a generation of urbanised Igbos with both traditional roots and modern outlooks[36].

In addition to academic learning, exposure to Lagos culture reshaped attitudes about gender and youth roles. Urban life encouraged female education and participation in new professions. *Miss Ifeoma Nwankwo*, who attended a

secretarial school in Ebute Metta, noted that "in Lagos, you could see women driving cars, working in offices — it opened our eyes." The city environment challenged conservative expectations from home communities, enabling women to see themselves as equal contributors to development. This shift had long-term implications for Igbo social structure, as educated women became teachers, nurses, and administrators who later influenced local governance and education back east[37]. Migration to Lagos thus catalysed a subtle but profound cultural transformation rooted in learning and exposure.

The pursuit of education in Lagos was not without difficulties. High rent, limited spaces in schools, and discrimination sometimes frustrated the aspirations of Igbo students. Yet these obstacles strengthened determination. The drive to succeed in spite of hardship became part of the moral identity of the post-war generation. *Mr. Augustine Nnaji*, who worked nights as a security guard while studying part-time at the University of Lagos, reflected, "We didn't have comfort, but we had hunger the hunger to change our story." Such testimonies reveal that for many migrants, the search for knowledge was inseparable from the struggle for dignity. Education in Lagos was therefore not merely a career strategy; it was a symbolic act of reconstruction — a way of proving that a people once silenced by war could rise again through intellect and perseverance[38].

Apprenticeship has long been the backbone of Igbo economic culture, and its revival after 1970 became one of the strongest drivers of migration to Lagos. The post-war years brought widespread poverty in the East, but Lagos offered new commercial possibilities and a setting where the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (known as Igba-Boi) could thrive. Many young men were sent by their families to live with established traders, learning both the technical and moral aspects of business. According to Chief Michael Onwuchekwa, a trader at Alaba Market since 1976, "We came to Lagos with only our boxes and hope. Our masters taught us how to sell, save, and survive. It was not just business, it was training for life." The movement of apprentices from rural towns such as Nnewi, Onitsha, and Owerri to markets in Lagos reflected an organized system of skill transmission and capital accumulation[39].

The Igba-Boi system in Lagos represented both continuity and innovation. While rooted in Igbo tradition, it adapted to the modern urban economy by incorporating new forms of trade and technology. Mr. Sunday Obidike, who started as an apprentice at Ladipo Auto Spare Parts Market, recalled that "the markets in Lagos were schools of business; you learned how to import, how to talk to customers from Ghana, Togo, even Cameroun." Apprenticeship thus evolved into a transnational business education where young migrants acquired negotiation,

logistics, and marketing skills[40]. The completion of apprenticeship, usually marked by settlement (the financial establishment of the apprentice by his master), symbolized economic independence and maturity. Through this process, Lagos became a vast incubator for small-scale entrepreneurs who later spread throughout Nigeria and beyond.

The significance of apprenticeship migration was also social. Families viewed it as an honourable alternative to idleness and unemployment in the villages. Parents proudly sent their sons to Lagos with expectations of discipline, hard work, and eventual return with capital. Mrs. Ngozi Okorie, a widow from Abiriba whose two sons trained at Alaba, stated, “We trusted the masters. Lagos was far, but that was where boys became men.” The apprenticeship system thus reinforced family values of trust, perseverance, and responsibility. In many cases, the success of one apprentice encouraged entire kin groups to participate, sustaining a continuous flow of migration from Eastern communities to Lagos markets[41].

Entrepreneurship became not only a means of survival but a cultural statement about self-reliance and resilience. The war had stripped the Igbo of property and privilege, but through trade and apprenticeship in Lagos, they rebuilt both wealth and reputation. Mr. Jude Nwosu, who established a spare parts

business in 1983 after serving his master for seven years, explained that "our business was our answer to rejection. Nobody gave us jobs, so we created our own." His statement captures the deeper psychology behind Igbo entrepreneurial motivation: migration was not merely for profit but for self-redemption and collective pride[42]. The proliferation of Igbo businesses in markets like Alaba, Trade Fair, and Ladipo reflected an economic renaissance driven by communal mentorship and hard work.

The apprenticeship tradition also contributed to the modernization of Igbo business culture. Exposure to Lagos's cosmopolitan environment introduced new management techniques and technological awareness. Some traders began to adopt formal record-keeping, partnerships, and banking habits learned from interactions with multinational companies and urban institutions. Mr. Augustine Ezeani, a former electronics importer, noted that "being in Lagos changed how we did business. We learned to trust receipts, banks, and contracts." These changes modernized the traditional system without erasing its moral foundation of loyalty and reciprocity[43]. The blending of indigenous and urban practices gave Igbo entrepreneurship its adaptive strength, enabling it to dominate informal markets and influence Nigeria's wider commercial landscape.

Women also began to play visible roles in apprenticeship and trading. While male migration dominated early movements, the 1980s saw a gradual rise in female apprentices who learned tailoring, catering, or textile trade under established mistresses in Balogun and Idumota markets. Mrs. Chika Mordi, who learned fabric trading in 1987, recalled that "our madams were tough but fair; they wanted us to be strong like men." Female apprenticeship challenged patriarchal assumptions and expanded the Igbo definition of economic participation[44]. The presence of both male and female apprentices in Lagos reinforced the inclusive, generational continuity of the Igbo entrepreneurial ethic a system where learning, discipline, and independence were intertwined with the broader story of migration.

Through apprenticeship, Lagos became a living school of commerce for the post-war Igbo generation. It shaped not only the city's informal economy but also the cultural character of the Igbo people in diaspora. The drive for independence, the respect for mentors, and the faith in hard work that defined this migration remain enduring legacies of a people who turned adversity into opportunity[45].

Marital and Social Factors of Migration

Marriage and social integration became another foundation for the movement of Igbos to Lagos after the civil war. Many migrants who initially came for business or employment eventually brought their families to settle permanently

in the city. For others, marriage itself was the catalyst for relocation, especially when a spouse had better opportunities in Lagos. Mrs. Ifeoma Ude, who moved from Enugu to Lagos in 1978 after marrying a civil servant, explained, “My husband got a job with the Lagos State Ministry of Works; it was natural that I followed him here.”[46] Marital migration thus linked economic aspirations with family stability. It also reflected broader post-war patterns in which young Igbo men sought urban environments where their professional or entrepreneurial prospects were higher, and women adapted by creating social networks through associations, churches, and markets.

The social attraction of Lagos for young Igbo women also contributed to steady migration. The city’s growing middle class, modern housing, and exposure to education created a vision of urban sophistication that appealed to many. According to Miss Chidinma Okafor, a seamstress in Surulere, “Our people used to say that if you haven’t been to Lagos, you haven’t seen Nigeria.”[47] Migration for marital and social reasons was therefore not just an economic choice but a quest for modern identity. Lagos provided access to cosmopolitan experiences, inter-ethnic friendships, and religious communities that enhanced both social and marital prospects. Through these, many Igbo families rooted themselves in urban life while maintaining ties with their ancestral villages.

Social networks played a decisive role in sustaining migration patterns. Igbo unions, age grades, and town associations acted as support structures for new arrivals. They provided temporary accommodation, job information, and sometimes even helped arrange marriages among members. Mr. Chukwudi Eke, secretary of the Nnewi Union in Mushin, noted that "we looked after one another; when a man's sister comes from the East, we make sure she stays with a trusted family until she finds her feet."[48] Such systems of communal welfare softened the challenges of relocation and reduced the sense of alienation many migrants initially faced. Marriage, in turn, helped to consolidate these networks, ensuring that migration was not an isolated event but part of a generational cycle of settlement.

Cultural and religious factors reinforced these marital migrations. The expansion of Christian denominations and social fellowships in Lagos gave many Igbo families a sense of belonging. Couples often met through church activities, cultural associations, and cooperative societies. Mrs. Ngozi Eze, a teacher in Yaba, stated, "The Catholic Women's Organization became my second home; it helped us feel connected even far from the East."[49] Churches provided emotional support, marital counselling, and platforms for social mobility, helping families adapt to the fast-paced urban environment. This moral and communal structure

strengthened the foundation for stable family life and long-term residence in Lagos.

Urban exposure also transformed gender roles within Igbo families. Unlike in the rural areas where patriarchal norms were stronger, Lagos created opportunities for women to engage in paid work, small-scale trade, or professional careers. Many wives contributed to household income, shared rent responsibilities, and financed children's education. Mrs. Adaora Nwachukwu, a caterer in Ikeja, explained that "Lagos opened our eyes; women here don't wait for their husbands before doing something meaningful."[50] This shift challenged traditional dependency structures and gave rise to a more balanced family dynamic. Migration thus became a channel through which gender roles evolved, reshaping both domestic and community relations.

At the same time, inter-ethnic marriages between Igbos and other Nigerian groups increased significantly. The cosmopolitan nature of Lagos encouraged social mingling and cultural exchange. Mr. Peter Nnadi, an Igbo mechanic married to a Yoruba woman in Agege, remarked that "we quarrel sometimes about food or language, but our children now speak both Yoruba and Igbo; that is Lagos for you."[51] Such unions symbolized the city's unique power to blend identities and reduce ethnic barriers. They also showed how migration extended beyond

economic necessity into the deeper realm of cultural integration and social transformation.

The expansion of Igbo families in Lagos helped cement a sense of belonging that went beyond temporary economic pursuit. Children born in the city often grew up identifying more with Lagos than their ancestral towns, yet family visits and festivals maintained ancestral continuity. By merging rural values with urban experiences, these families contributed to Lagos's multicultural fabric. Migration through marriage and social adaptation therefore served not only as a survival mechanism but also as a means of redefining Igbo identity within Nigeria's most dynamic metropolis[52].

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43. Mr. Augustine Ezeani, Electronics importer, Lagos. Personal interview, 2025.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE IGBOS TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF LAGOS STATE (1970–2015)

Economic Contribution

The economic role of the Igbo in Lagos after the Nigerian Civil War was first and foremost visible in trade and commerce, where their dynamism made them dominant actors in several key markets. From the 1970s, Alaba International Market, Ladipo Auto Spare Parts Market, and the Trade Fair Complex emerged as continental commercial centres, largely because of Igbo entrepreneurial initiative. These markets attracted customers from West and Central Africa and became engines of growth that generated enormous turnover for Lagos State's internally generated revenue. Nwangwu notes that Alaba alone accounts for billions of naira in annual transactions, providing employment for thousands of Nigerians of diverse ethnic backgrounds.[1] This testimony is echoed by Mr. Emmanuel Okafor, a long-time trader at Alaba, who explained that "our shops are not just for buying and selling; they are places of apprenticeship and empowerment. Every boy who finishes his training opens another shop, and this is how our markets multiply."[2] The system of Igba-boi apprenticeship therefore became not only a means of sustaining trade but also a mechanism of business reproduction and social advancement, strengthening Lagos's position as Nigeria's commercial hub.

Beyond the markets, Igbo entrepreneurship shaped Lagos's informal industrial landscape in decisive ways. Many Igbo migrants established small workshops in Mushin, Surulere, and Ajegunle, dealing in electronics repairs, automobile mechanics, and light manufacturing. Uche has argued that such clusters were vital to Lagos's development, creating multiplier effects that provided jobs and skills training for thousands who could not be absorbed by the formal sector.[3] This is reinforced by the account of Mr. Chukwudi Nnaji, a mechanic in Mushin, who recalled: "After serving my master for seven years, he settled me with capital. Today I run my own workshop and I employ twelve young men who are also learning the trade."[4] Testimonies such as this highlight the circular nature of Igbo enterprise, in which apprenticeship, settlement, and re-investment created a self-sustaining cycle of growth that benefitted the wider Lagos economy.

The Igbo also made significant contributions in the sphere of small and medium-scale enterprises, where their entrepreneurial networks helped establish trading clusters that extended beyond Nigeria. Through links with importers in Asia and Europe, Igbo businessmen brought electronics, building materials, and auto parts into Lagos, distributing them through wholesale outlets across the metropolis. These enterprises, often family-based, provided employment not only

for Igbo migrants but also for indigenes of Lagos and other ethnic groups. According to Mr. Peter Eze, an electronics dealer at Idumota, "our business feeds many people who are not Igbo; our workers, drivers, and shop assistants come from different tribes, but they all benefit from what we built here."[5] In this way, Igbo entrepreneurship contributed not just to commerce but also to inter-ethnic collaboration and the diffusion of wealth across communities in Lagos.

Real estate became another crucial channel through which the Igbo transformed Lagos's economic and spatial development. Having lost property during the civil war, many Igbo families viewed land as the only secure form of wealth and channelled their post-war earnings into housing and commercial buildings. Eze and Onuoha note that Igbo developers were instrumental in opening up new suburbs such as Festac, Ajah, and Amuwo-Odofin, helping to decongest Lagos Island and Mainland.[6] This scholarly observation was powerfully confirmed by Mr. Vincent Ujah, a property developer in Festac Town, who explained: "After the war, we saw land as the only bank that could not collapse. We built apartments and shopping complexes, not only for our families but to rent to others. In doing so, we turned Festac and Ajah into new centres of growth."[7] His words show how investment in land served both as an economic survival strategy and as a catalyst for the expansion of Lagos's physical infrastructure.

The ripple effects of Igbo real estate investments extended beyond housing to stimulate construction industries and ancillary services. Contractors, artisans, and labourers many of them Yoruba, Hausa, and other ethnic groups found employment in building projects financed by Igbo investors. According to Mr. Uchechukwu Eme, a contractor in Ajah, "the housing estates you see here were funded by Igbo businessmen, but the workers came from everywhere. They gave jobs to masons, carpenters, and plumbers, and all of us ate from those contracts."[8] Thus, the Igbo role in real estate did not only satisfy their private need for security but also contributed to broader economic redistribution and infrastructural growth across Lagos State.

Taken together, the economic activities of the Igbo through trade, industry, and real estate reshaped Lagos into a globalising metropolis. Their markets became epicentres of West African commerce, their small industries absorbed surplus labour, and their housing projects physically expanded the city. As Mr. Festus Ezebue, a trader at Alaba, summarised: "We came here with nothing, but by God's grace we built something that even the government cannot ignore. The markets and houses we developed are now part of Lagos itself."[9] Despite facing discrimination and occasional hostility, the Igbo community's resilience and

ingenuity ensured that their economic imprint on Lagos between 1970 and 2015 was both deep and permanent.

One of the most enduring contributions of the Igbo community in Lagos between 1970 and 2015 was in the area of infrastructure and the physical expansion of the city. In many parts of Lagos, particularly the suburbs, Igbo migrants invested in and initiated self-help projects that compensated for the shortcomings of government provision. Town unions and market associations often financed boreholes, repaired feeder roads, and installed street lighting in their neighbourhoods. Lawanson and Oduwaye have noted that such community-driven initiatives became essential coping mechanisms for the urban poor in Lagos, filling infrastructural gaps left by state neglect.[10] This is supported by the testimony of Chief Ifeanyi Obidike, Chairman of the Nnewi Town Union in Surulere, who explained that "when the government failed to fix our road, our union contributed money and we did it ourselves. We also dug a borehole to supply water to our people and neighbours."[11] Such examples show how Igbo self-help traditions were transplanted into Lagos, where they played a crucial role in sustaining communities and improving basic living conditions.

Markets, as centres of Igbo economic activity, were not only spaces of trade but also infrastructural catalysts that spurred the growth of surrounding districts. The development of Alaba International Market transformed Amuwo-Odofin from a relatively underdeveloped area into a thriving commercial corridor. Nwangwu has argued that markets dominated by Igbos often generated their own internal governance systems, with private arrangements for waste disposal, security, and utilities.[12] This observation was vividly illustrated by Mr. Festus Ezebue, a trader at Alaba, who remarked: "Alaba is like a city within a city. We have our own rules, we provide our own security, and even the banks came here because of us."[13] In a similar way, Ladipo Market reshaped Mushin by attracting transport services, warehouses, and residential settlements. The transformation of these spaces reveals how Igbo-led markets functioned as nodes of urban growth, creating ripple effects that spread far beyond the markets themselves.

Urban expansion in Lagos during this period was also closely tied to Igbo-driven real estate and housing projects, which not only created homes but also necessitated the extension of roads, electricity, and drainage systems. Scholars such as Eze and Onuoha have shown that Igbo entrepreneurs developed low- and middle-income housing estates in Festac, Ajah, and Okota, thereby contributing to suburbanisation.[14] According to Mr. Vincent Ujah, a property developer in Festac

Town, “our buildings forced the government to extend roads and power lines. Before we built here, this area was bush, but now it is a city.”[15] His account demonstrates how Igbo investments directly pressured public authorities to provide infrastructure in newly urbanised zones, accelerating the physical integration of Lagos’s hinterlands into the metropolitan system.

At the same time, Igbo involvement in informal housing contributed to the expansion of Lagos in less regulated ways. Many migrants unable to afford formal land titles invested in informal settlements in areas such as Ijegun, Ajangbadi, and Iyana Isolo. Olanrewaju has argued that such informal developments, while often outside planning regulations, nevertheless provided affordable housing and helped absorb the massive influx of migrants into Lagos.[16] Mr. Chinedu Opara, a landlord in Ajangbadi, described his experience: “I bought land from the local community leaders without government papers. I built four rooms, and soon others followed. Today, the whole street is full, and people live here because they cannot afford Ikeja or Surulere.”[17] These narratives reveal how Igbo investment at the grassroots level contributed to the rapid expansion of Lagos, albeit through processes that sometimes conflicted with official planning frameworks.

Despite their contributions, Igbo developers and traders often faced obstacles in infrastructural development due to government policies that marginalised informal actors. Forced evictions and demolitions became recurring problems, as authorities sought to enforce urban planning regulations. Agbola and Jinadu note that forced evictions in Lagos disproportionately affected informal settlers, many of whom were Igbo migrants.[18] This was reflected in the testimony of Mrs. Ngozi Eke, a widow in Ejigbo, who recalled: "I built my small shop and house here with my late husband's savings. Then one day the bulldozers came and destroyed everything, saying we had no permit. Till today, we have received no compensation."[19] Cases like this underline the tensions between Igbo-led informal development and the state's formal planning agenda, showing how contributions were sometimes undermined by structural exclusion.

Overall, the infrastructural and urban development of Lagos cannot be understood without recognising the central role played by Igbo initiatives. Their investments in housing and markets, their self-help projects, and their participation in both formal and informal urbanisation processes were critical to Lagos's transformation into a megacity. As Mr. Emeka Anozie, a contractor in Okota, summarised: "Everywhere you go in Lagos, you will find the hand of an Igbo man whether it is a road repaired by our town union, a market built by our traders, or a

housing estate funded by our businessmen."[20] This encapsulates the reality that Igbo infrastructural contributions, though sometimes carried out under adverse conditions, were indispensable to the growth and modernisation of Lagos State.

Socio-Political Contributions

The Igbo presence in Lagos between 1970 and 2015 was not limited to economics and infrastructure; it was equally evident in the socio-cultural sphere, where they established vibrant community structures and enriched the city's cultural life. Town unions, professional associations, and community groups served as key institutions that provided welfare, mediated disputes, and fostered a sense of belonging among Igbo migrants. Nnoli has observed that ethnic associations in Nigeria often function as quasi-governments for their members, organising collective action and providing social safety nets.[21] This was confirmed by Chief Uzochukwu Anene, who explained: "When one of us loses a job or has a medical emergency, it is the union that raises money. We do not wait for the government; we help ourselves."[22] Such structures not only sustained Igbo migrants in a challenging urban environment but also reinforced solidarity and identity, ensuring that the community remained cohesive even while dispersed across Lagos.

In addition to welfare, these associations played a crucial role in dispute resolution and community discipline. They mediated conflicts among traders, tenants, and even families, thereby reducing dependence on formal judicial systems. The authority of town union leaders and elders was widely respected, and their verdicts often carried moral weight that transcended legal enforcement. Meetings were not merely

administrative but also social gatherings where members exchanged news, discussed investments, and planned communal projects. Through such regular interactions, Igbo migrants maintained the social fabric of their home communities while adapting to urban realities. This sense of order and self-governance helped the Igbo community function as a stable social unit within the fluid dynamics of Lagos life.

Furthermore, Igbo associations became important channels for political mobilisation and civic participation. During elections, these groups provided platforms for dialogue with political candidates and encouraged voter education among their members. Many Igbo professionals and entrepreneurs leveraged their community networks to gain access to political circles in Lagos, contributing to the state's pluralistic political landscape. The collective voice of these associations also served as a means of advocacy on issues such as market regulation, taxation, and urban planning. By engaging constructively with local authorities, Igbo leaders demonstrated a pragmatic approach to urban citizenship one that balanced ethnic loyalty with civic responsibility. This blend of self-help and political awareness contributed to the broader development of participatory governance in Lagos.

The social influence of the Igbo community was also expressed through philanthropy and inter-ethnic collaboration. Wealthy traders and professionals often sponsored scholarships, donated to churches and hospitals, or funded community projects that benefitted both Igbo and non-Igbo residents. Such gestures strengthened inter-ethnic harmony and showcased the inclusive spirit of the Igbo community in Lagos. Women's

wings within town unions further extended this tradition by organising health outreaches, marriage counselling sessions, and charity drives. Through these acts of generosity and community service, Igbo migrants not only reinforced their internal solidarity but also contributed meaningfully to the social welfare of the city at large.

Finally, these community organisations served as instruments of cultural preservation. Even as Igbo migrants integrated into the cosmopolitan life of Lagos, they retained their customs through social events, naming ceremonies, and traditional marriage celebrations. Cultural centres and union halls often doubled as venues for festivals and drama performances that celebrated Igbo heritage. This cultural resilience ensured that younger generations born in Lagos remained connected to their ancestral identity. At the same time, these expressions enriched the city's multicultural landscape, turning Lagos into a space where ethnic diversity was not only tolerated but celebrated. Through their social, political, and cultural initiatives, the Igbo community proved that migration could be both an economic and a civilising force in urban development.

Cultural Contributions

The cultural contributions of the Igbo were also manifested through festivals, ceremonies, and public events that showcased their traditions and created avenues for intercultural exchange with other groups, particularly the Yoruba.

Annual celebrations such as Igbo Day and the New Yam Festival became important markers of identity, reinforcing ties to the homeland while integrating Igbo culture into Lagos's cosmopolitan landscape. Afolabi notes that migrant festivals in Lagos function as "cultural bridges," promoting dialogue between ethnic groups and fostering tolerance.[23] This observation was vividly illustrated by Mrs. Emmanuella Ekechukwu, a cultural organiser in Surulere, who stated: "Our Igbo Day is not only about food and dance; it is about showing our Yoruba neighbours that we are part of Lagos. When they join us, they see that our culture adds colour to the city."[24] Her testimony highlights how festivals performed a dual role: preserving Igbo identity while facilitating social integration into the host community.

Beyond festivals, the Igbo also contributed to the artistic and entertainment landscape of Lagos, a city often described as Nigeria's cultural capital. Highlife music, pioneered by Igbo musicians, became a staple of Lagos nightlife in the 1970s and 1980s, influencing Yoruba popular music and blending into Afrobeat. Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry that emerged in the 1990s, was heavily driven by Igbo producers, directors, and actors, many of whom were based in Lagos. Osinubi argues that Igbo participation in cultural industries not only enhanced Lagos's cultural prestige but also provided platforms for inter-ethnic

collaboration in creative production.[25] Supporting this, Mr. Chijioke Nwankwo, explained: “From Alaba we distributed films to the whole of Africa. Lagos gave us the stage, but it was Igbo energy that built Nollywood.”[26] Through music, film, and literature, the Igbo community ensured that their cultural imprint was deeply etched into the identity of Lagos.

Equally significant was the role of Igbo language and education in shaping cultural interactions in the metropolis. Igbo migrant communities maintained language schools and evening classes to teach their children the mother tongue, even while they attended mainstream schools conducted in English and Yoruba. Chuku has shown that such efforts reflect a conscious attempt by Igbo migrants to preserve linguistic heritage in the face of assimilation pressures.[27] This finding was reinforced by the testimony of Mrs. Ifunanya Dike, a teacher in a community Igbo school in Ajegunle, who remarked: “We teach our children that even if they are born in Lagos, they must speak Igbo. This way, they know where they come from, even as they learn Yoruba from their friends.”[28] These initiatives reveal how Igbo migrants balanced the pressures of assimilation with the desire to maintain cultural continuity.

Another important social contribution was in the area of philanthropy and community development projects initiated by Igbo associations in Lagos. Many

town unions provided scholarships, organised youth mentorship, and financed small development projects that benefitted both Igbo and non-Igbo residents. Achebe observed that migrant communities often export their traditions of self-help and communalism into urban contexts, where they become lifelines for disadvantaged groups.[29] A testimony by Mr. Udechukwu Mba, Secretary of the Anambra Progressive Union, illustrates this: "We give scholarships every year, not only to Igbo children but to anyone who qualifies. Our belief is that when you lift one child, you lift the whole community."[30] This philanthropic dimension demonstrates how Igbo socio-cultural organisations in Lagos extended their influence beyond ethnic boundaries, contributing to social development across the metropolis.

Taken together, the socio-cultural contributions of the Igbo in Lagos were as critical as their economic or infrastructural roles. Through associations, festivals, language preservation, artistic expression, and philanthropy, they sustained their identity while integrating into the wider fabric of Lagos society. As Mrs. Emmanuella Ekechukwu summarised: "We came to Lagos with our culture, and we shared it. We did not hide it, and now it belongs to Lagos too."[31] These contributions reveal the resilience of Igbo culture and its transformative impact on Lagos's cosmopolitan identity between 1970 and 2015.

The political involvement of the Igbo community in Lagos between 1970 and 2015 reflected both their growing stake in the state and the limitations imposed by their status as migrants. Although they were not the dominant ethnic group in Lagos politics, the Igbos nonetheless participated in civic life, influenced electoral outcomes in several districts, and built informal networks of lobbying and alliances to protect their economic interests. Nnoli has argued that migrant groups in Nigeria often rely on civic associations and informal bargaining rather than direct political power.[32] This was evident in Lagos, where Igbo traders and professionals frequently engaged with local authorities to secure favourable policies for their markets and residential areas. By participating in community development committees and local councils, they carved out a measure of political influence without necessarily occupying the most visible leadership roles.

One key aspect of Igbo political engagement was the forging of informal alliances with Yoruba political elites, particularly during election seasons. These alliances were often transactional, with Igbo business leaders offering financial contributions or mobilising voter blocs in exchange for assurances of protection for their markets and residential communities. Salawu and Hassan observed that ethnic politics in Nigeria is deeply entrenched, shaping both patronage and electoral behaviour.[33] In this context, Igbo participation in Lagos politics cannot be

seen as marginal, since their concentrated populations in districts such as Amuwo-Odofin, Surulere, and Oshodi-Isolo gave them significant leverage. Mr. Chidera Ike, popularly known as Agubandieze, summarised this dynamic when he remarked that "our votes are our bargaining chip; when we vote together, no politician can ignore us."[34] His words reflect the strategic role that collective electoral behaviour played in amplifying Igbo voices in Lagos.

Over time, this electoral weight began to manifest in tangible political representation. By the 1990s and 2000s, Igbo candidates began contesting and occasionally winning seats in local government councils and state assemblies. Osinubi notes that although Igbos were often seen primarily as economic actors, their gradual foray into electoral politics showed a deeper integration into Lagos's civic fabric.[35] This integration was most visible in the 2015 elections, when constituencies with heavy Igbo populations contributed decisively to victories for certain candidates of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).[36] While this development was sometimes met with hostility from sections of the indigenous elite, it marked an important milestone in the assertion of Igbo political agency in Lagos.

The Igbo community's political participation was not limited to formal electoral politics but also extended into civic activism and advocacy. Igbo unions

frequently petitioned local authorities on issues ranging from market demolitions to infrastructural neglect. Such advocacy mirrored broader Nigerian civil society strategies, where ethnic associations acted as pressure groups. Achebe has argued that the resilience of migrant communities lies in their ability to adapt self-help structures into instruments of negotiation with the state.[37] In Lagos, this was seen when Igbo associations collectively lobbied against discriminatory taxation in certain markets, forcing authorities to reconsider policies that disproportionately affected non-indigenous traders. The success of these efforts underscored the importance of civic organisation in supplementing limited formal representation.

Nevertheless, the Igbo community's political influence in Lagos was circumscribed by ethnic tensions and persistent stereotypes. Yoruba–Igbo rivalry often resurfaced during election seasons, with political rhetoric sometimes framing Igbos as outsiders seeking undue influence. Salawu and Hassan point out that Nigeria's entrenched ethnic divisions make national identity weaker than ethnic loyalty.[38] This was evident in Lagos, where periodic clashes over indigene rights and electoral disputes revealed the fragility of Igbo political gains. In some cases, Igbo traders faced threats of disenfranchisement or were discouraged from voting, illustrating the challenges of asserting full political belonging in a state where they were not considered indigenes.

Despite these challenges, the overall trajectory of Igbo political and civic participation in Lagos reveals a gradual process of integration and influence. From informal alliances and lobbying to direct representation and civic activism, the Igbo community steadily carved out a role for itself in the political landscape of Lagos. As Mr. Ike put it, "we cannot remain silent in politics, because Lagos is where we live, work, and raise our children."[39] This statement underscores the logic behind Igbo political engagement: that active participation was both a necessity for protecting their interests and an expression of their claim to Lagos as a shared home.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The study comprehensively examined the contributions of the Igbo ethnic group to the growth and development of Lagos State between 1970 and 2015, demonstrating that their presence in the metropolis went far beyond mere migration and settlement, and instead represented a decisive force in shaping Nigeria's foremost commercial capital. A central discovery was the way Igbo entrepreneurship transformed Lagos's economy through the establishment of large trading complexes such as Alaba International, Ladipo Auto Spare Parts Market, and the Trade Fair Complex. These markets became continental hubs, generating immense turnover, employment, and revenue for Lagos State while simultaneously creating apprenticeship systems that reproduced firms and empowered successive generations. The Igbo system of Igba-boi emerged as a unique social and economic mechanism that not only sustained trade but also facilitated upward mobility for apprentices from diverse backgrounds, thereby positioning Lagos as a magnet for commerce across West and Central Africa.

The research also confirmed that Igbo migrants were instrumental in expanding the industrial and service economy of Lagos through small and

medium-scale enterprises, informal manufacturing clusters, and transnational trade linkages. Their commercial networks linked Lagos to Asia and Europe, ensuring the continuous inflow of consumer goods, building materials, and machinery. Real estate investment provided another critical pathway of influence: Igbo families, in the aftermath of the Civil War, redirected their wealth into land and housing, opening up new suburbs such as Festac, Amuwo-Odofin, Ajah, and Okota. These investments not only secured economic survival but compelled the state to extend infrastructure and services to previously undeveloped areas, accelerating the suburbanisation of Lagos. The ripple effects extended into construction, labour, and ancillary industries, providing opportunities for people of multiple ethnic backgrounds and demonstrating that Igbo investments acted as both private assets and public growth catalysts.

Beyond economic and physical development, the study highlighted the socio-cultural imprint of the Igbo in Lagos. Town unions and professional associations became critical welfare and governance structures that mediated disputes, provided scholarships, and fostered communal solidarity. Annual festivals such as Igbo Day and the New Yam Festival served dual purposes: preserving ethnic identity while encouraging cultural exchange with host communities, thereby embedding Igbo culture within Lagos's cosmopolitan life.

In the creative sector, Igbo musicians and Nollywood producers, many of whom were based in Lagos, played a defining role in shaping Nigeria's artistic and entertainment industries, further strengthening the cultural profile of the city. The persistence of Igbo language schools and community educational initiatives revealed a deliberate effort to balance integration with heritage preservation, underscoring the resilience of identity within a multi-ethnic environment.

Politically, the study revealed that although Igbos were often outsiders in the formal structures of Lagos politics, they gradually carved out influence through strategic alliances, collective voting behaviour, and civic activism. By the 1990s and 2000s, Igbo candidates began to emerge in local councils and state assemblies, while concentrated Igbo populations in areas such as Amuwo-Odofin and Surulere wielded significant electoral weight. Informal lobbying and petitions by market associations further demonstrated how the community leveraged civic organisation to negotiate with the state. However, this political participation was constrained by Nigeria's indigene–settler dichotomy, which restricted access to public office, and by periodic outbreaks of ethnic tension that cast Igbos as outsiders despite their deep-rooted contributions to Lagos's prosperity.

The research equally underscored the numerous challenges and constraints that shaped Igbo experiences in Lagos. Structural exclusion embedded in

federalism and indigene rights created institutional barriers, while periodic hostility from host communities reinforced stereotypes of Igbos as economic competitors rather than co-owners of Lagos. Episodes of forced eviction and demolition under urban renewal policies disproportionately affected Igbo informal settlements, eroding wealth and heightening insecurity. Discriminatory levies, economic harassment, and political rhetoric intensified these vulnerabilities, even as the Igbo community remained indispensable to the city's economic survival. Social integration was complicated by the visibility of Igbo culture, which while enriching, sometimes reinforced perceptions of separateness and generated ambivalence about their place within Yoruba-dominated politics.

Overall, the study concludes that the contributions of the Igbos to Lagos between 1970 and 2015 were profound and multidimensional, encompassing commerce, infrastructure, culture, and politics. Their resilience, agency, and ingenuity were central to Lagos's transformation into a megacity, yet their story is equally marked by marginalisation and exclusion. The paradox of being both indispensable and marginalised highlights the unfinished project of building an inclusive urban citizenship in Nigeria. The evidence affirms that Lagos cannot be fully understood without recognising the imprint of the Igbo community, whose markets, estates, festivals, and civic struggles have become integral to the city's

fabric. The chapter therefore affirms that future urban governance in Lagos must reconcile economic indispensability with political inclusivity, and transform the contributions of migrant communities from contested legacies into recognised pillars of metropolitan development.

In conclusion, this study has shown that the Igbo community played an indispensable role in shaping the growth and development of Lagos State between 1970 and 2015, not merely as migrants but as active agents of transformation. Their entrepreneurial dynamism was visible in the establishment of powerful market hubs such as Alaba International, Ladipo, and the Trade Fair Complex, which became engines of commerce for Lagos and West Africa as a whole. The Igba-boi apprenticeship system further demonstrated a unique indigenous model of human capital development that multiplied enterprises and created pathways of upward mobility for successive generations of traders and artisans. Real estate investments by Igbo entrepreneurs opened up new suburbs including Festac, Amuwo-Odofin, Ajah, and Okota, forcing state infrastructure to extend into previously underdeveloped areas and accelerating Lagos's suburbanisation. These contributions were not limited to economic growth alone but extended to socio-cultural life, where Igbo town unions, festivals, and creative industries enriched

Lagos's cosmopolitan identity and reinforced its reputation as Nigeria's cultural and commercial capital.

At the same time, the study highlights the paradox of Igbo experiences in Lagos: their contributions were vital to the city's prosperity, yet they were persistently constrained by structural exclusion, discriminatory levies, forced evictions, and episodes of ethnic hostility that questioned their belonging. Politically, they forged alliances, mobilised electoral blocs, and gradually secured representation, but their influence was circumscribed by the indigene–settler divide and recurrent ethnicised rhetoric. This contradiction reflects the broader tension within Nigeria's federal system, where migrant communities contribute immensely to urban development but remain marginalised in formal recognition. Yet, the resilience of the Igbo community ensured that despite adversity, their imprint on Lagos remains both deep and enduring. Ultimately, this study affirms that the story of Lagos's transformation cannot be told without acknowledging the agency of the Igbo people, whose commerce, housing, cultural creativity, and civic participation have become integral to the city's identity. A more inclusive approach to urban governance one that recognises and secures the rights of all residents regardless of origin will be essential if Lagos is to consolidate its position as a truly global African metropolis.

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