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The Influx of Igbo Migrants and Intergroup Relations in Zaria, 1900-1965

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Abstract

Throughout human history, migration has remained one of the most important factors in the emergence and development of communities. The ancient city of Zaria evolved overtime as a result of migration of groups from near and distant communities. These groups of migrants included Yoruba, Kanuri, Fulani, Igbo, Hausa groups from neighbouring towns like Kano, Katsina and several smaller ethnic groups from Southern Kaduna. Migrant groups including the Igbo groups were attracted to Zaria due to: (a) Its strategic location on a network of old trade routes, the construction of motorable roads and railways; (b) the fertility of the soil and availability of water for agriculture; (c) availability of employment in the Colonial government and colonial economy. This paper examines these factors in relation to the influx of the Igbo migrants and their relations with other groups in Zaria within the period. The focus of this paper is on the role the Igbo migrants played in the growth and development of Zaria. The paper adopts the qualitative and thematic method of research which relies on the use of primary sources collected from the field and secondary sources from extant literature. The paper concludes that the influx of Igbo migrants in Zaria impacted on the social set up of Nigeria positively through the harmonious coexistence between the Igbo migrants and the host community. The paper recommends that the present day society should draw from the lessons of the past as source of unity and strength for the country

Introduction

An important theme in the history of Nigeria from the pre-colonial period is persistent movement and intermingling of groups in all directions. There were migrations from the north to the south and west to east and vice versa. Some of the migrations were voluntary, others were forced migrations. The voluntary migration was due to trade opportunities and opportunity for other forms of production and socio-cultural exchanges. The forced migrations were due to wars, conflicts,

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slave raids and famine. The continuous migrations and interactions resulted in the establishment of settler communities. Before 1900, many parts of Nigeria already had settler communities of migrants from other parts of the country in varying sizes. One of the major commercial centres in Northern Nigeria which attracted migrant groups before 1900 was Zaria. It had a large number of settler groups from neighbouring states and Kingdoms in the north as well as from the South. One of the major ethnic groups that migrated to Zaria by 1900 was the Igbo group. From 1900, the number of Igbo migrants to Zaria increased rapidly and by 1965, the Igbo community in Zaria had expanded considerably. Within the period the Igbo migrants participated actively in the Colonial economy and they benefitted well from it. In this way, they integrated into the society and they interacted actively with the Hausa and other groups.

A good number of literature exist on the history of Zaria but they do not carry substantial information on the influx of Igbo migrants in Zaria and how they interacted with the host communities and the different ethnic groups. The paper aims at filling the gap. Zaria as one of the ancient cities in Nigeria occupies a central position during the pre-colonial and colonial period as a major trans-Saharan trade routes and a major town with many colonial institutions which attracted migrants during the colonial period. The paper adopts the qualitative and thematic method of research which relies on primary and secondary sources in the collection of data.

The paper takes a look at the location and geography of Zaria to enable the appreciation of the position of Zaria in Northern Nigeria as major trade routes in the pre-colonial period with good climatic conditions and fertile land which supports agriculture and trading activities. Zaria in the pre-colonial period occupies a strategic position in the history of the Hausa states it was a commercial nerve centre that attracted traders from neighboring states for trading activities and settlement. The paper examines the colonial period which was a watershed in the history of Zaria. The establishment of colonial administrative structures, institutions, companies and railway lines increased the rate of influx of migrants in Zaria. Unfavorable conditions in the eastern province encouraged migrants to search for better opportunities outside their province. Fortunately, Zaria offered migrants a lot of opportunities. They settled with their families and

became integrated in the society through harmonious coexistence and social interactions.

Location and Geography of Zaria

Zaria is located on latitude 7042 East of the Meridian. It is bounded in the north by Dirum, in the Northeast by Ikara, in the northwest by Shika and Fatika, in the south by Igabi and Kaduna while in the Southwest by Sabon Birni. However, for the purpose of this paper Zaria refers to Zaria Province which was bounded in the north by Kano and Katsina Provinces, in the northeast by Bauchi and Plateau States while to the south and east were Nassarawa and Minna Provinces. Zamfara was to the north-east of the ancient town¹.

Zaria was strategically located along the three sources of movement in the present day Nigeria. These were: water ways through Zaria were Kubani River, a tributary of Kaduna River and Kaduna River itself. The two water ways provided movement with the use of canoe from several directions such as from Pategi and Muregi on the river Niger to River Kaduna through Manta to Shiroro to Kakuri, Rigachikun, Igabi up to Zaria. Another branch of the river passed southeast ward through Soba, Pambegwa, Saminaka, Lere, Zonkwa, Manchok, Kagoro, Kafanchan, Kwoi, Jemaa to present day Plateau and to Nassarawa States. The water way also extended north ward through Damisa to Rano and other parts of Kano State. The colonial administration recognized its strategic location by constructing roads and rail lines which further linked it to major parts of the country. The major roads which the colonialists constructed from Lagos to Kano passed through Ibadan, Ilorin, Jebba, Tegna, Birnin Gwari, Kaduna to Zaria and to Kano. They also constructed the eastern motor roads from Onitsha, Enugu, Oturkpo, Makurdi, Lafia, Keffi, Kachia, Kaduna to Zaria.

Later route passed from Enugu to Ankpa, Ajaokuta, Lokoja, Abuja, Kaduna to Zaria. The third route passed through Makurdi, Akwanga, Jemaa, Zonkwa, Kachia, Doka, Kujama, Kaduna to Zaria. Kaduna was the major connecting motor route to Zaria from both the eastern and western parts of the country. Similarly, the rail lines were constructed and extended to Zaria and Kano by 1911 from Lagos in 1896. The eastern rail line began from Port-Harcourt through Enugu, Makurdi, Lafia, Kafanchan, Kaduna to Zaria. It follows that the strategic location of Zaria from the pre-colonial through

the colonial period opened up the area to groups of migrants from northern and the southern parts of the country.

The geography of Zaria was a part of the larger area of North Central area of Nigeria. It was within the northern guinea savanna vegetation zone with moderately tall, closed woodland and grass cover with open spaces. The vegetation encouraged extensive and intensive agricultural activities such as farming, cattle rearing and livestock keeping. Agriculture was especially intense in the southern part with larger and denser tracts of bush interspersed with isolated rocky hills such as in the Kauru district and near the upper Kaduna valley. Also the Province was an open part area, with small hill ranges such as Kufena rock.² The landscape served as natural defence against attacks during its war of expansion. Notable hills around Zaria include Turunku hill, Parakwai hill and Hange hill. In the southern part of Zaria, there are two hills in the Kauru district close to the upper Kaduna valley. These hills did not obstruct migration in and out of Zaria. Zaria was part of the tropical continental climate. It was located on a plateau which was about 2200 feet above sea level and more than 400 miles away from the sea. It lay within a region with a dry season extending from November to March while the rainy season was from April to October.³ The climate was suitable for agriculture, especially farming. The principal river was the Kaduna River. Its main tributaries were Galma and Kogin Kerami. Gurara was the second river which rose in the Kaje area through Kagarko and Jere into present day Nassarawa and Niger states. Thus the climate was suitable for farming and it played an important role in the rise and development of Birnin Zaria. Thus, the strategic location of Zaria, its vegetation and climate encouraged the movement of groups from the south, especially the Igbo groups to settle in the area between 1900 and 1965. This is due to the fact that the people easily adapted to the environment.

Zaria in the Pre-Colonial Period

Zaria is the capital of the ancient Habe Kingdom of Zazzau. Zaria is one of the most ancient and extensive of the seven original Hausa States (Hausa Bakwai) Daura, Zaria, Gobir, Katsina, Rano and Biram.⁴ The early history of Zazzau is obscure, in the late sixteenth century, Zaria reached its peak with the power and influence wielded by the achievements of Sarauniya (Queen) Amina, the eldest

daughter of Bakwa Turunku. Queen Amina was a great queen, oral tradition credits her with many exploits. At the peak of her reign her influence extends as far as Bauchi, Katsina, Jukun and Nupe. These states paid tribute to Zaria.⁵ The Kano Chronicle succinctly puts her achievement this way;

... At this time Zaria under Queen Amina conquered all the towns as far as Kwararafa and Nupe. Every town paid tribute to her. The Sarkin Nupe sent forty Eunuchs and ten thousand Kolas to her. She first had eunuchs and Kolas in Hausaland. Her conquest extended over thirty four years. In her time, the whole of the products of the West (from Zaria) were brought to Hausaland.⁶

Amina built walled camps wherever she conquered, that all over Hausaland, ancient town walls are called Ganawar Amina (Amina's wall). M.G. Smith suggests that, "wall building in this scale implies mass use of corvee labour, substantial military force, intense political centralization, warfare on an imperial scale, slavery, tribute and technological development".⁷ Zaria established external relations with its Southern and Western dependencies with the Alafinate of Oyo and other forest states. The general establishment of an extensive network of international relations boosted trade, thus increasing the wealth and prosperity of the city.

Migration into Zaria constituted another important factor in the development and expansion of Zaria. From the 15th to the 19th century Zaria was marked by the influx of immigrants. These migrants groups included the Fulani who were mainly pastoralists and the Dyula or (Wangarawa) who were merchants and Muslim clerics from Mali. Other groups were from Kanuri Kanem-Borno, the Arabs, the Nupe and Yoruba of Oyo. It is important to point out that some of these migrations were occasioned by famine, wars and commerce, while other forms of migration were inspired by search of fertile agricultural land. According to Oyedele, "Zaria's position at the Southern tip of Hausaland and a fertile area excluded her from series of famines and droughts which affected other Hausa states. Also, Zaria did not experience the occasional battles between the other Hausa states like Kano and Katsina, Zamfara and Kano, Gobir and Katsina, Zamfara and Kano, Gobir and Katsina."⁸

Zaria emerged as an urban centre as a result of the production of surplus food, the existence of an administrative class and the evolution of an exchange system and a class of merchant traders. As there was no census it is impossible to know and give a population of the inhabitants of Zaria. However, travelers such as Clapperton who visited Zaria in 1820's, long after its establishment in an urban centre as 50,000 and Staudinger in the 1880's puts it at between 80,000 to 100,000.⁹ It is important to note that, Zaria was definitely a heterogeneous city with people from different parts of Hausaland, North Africa and Southern Nigeria. The socio-economic environment of Zaria determines was a strong factor in its development. This attracted inhabitants of other places to settle in Zaria. It is also important to note that Islam integrated all the Muslim immigrants into Zaria. The introduction of Islam into Zaria like other parts of Hausaland is generally associated with the coming of the Wangarawa a group of Mande Dyula Muslim merchants and clerics from Mali in the 14th century.¹⁰ Islam served as a unifying factor for the different ethnic groups that settled in Zaria in the pre-colonial period

Zaria in the Colonial Period

The period 1900 to 1965 marked a watershed in the history of Zaria. It featured mainly the conquest of the Caliphate and putting into place, the colonial structures as it was done in the colonial Nigeria. The conquest of Zaria by the colonial army was with little or no resistance.¹¹ The consolidation of British power over Zaria was followed by the establishment of colonial institutions and structures. This was aimed at meeting the imperialist needs of the British which was basically the exploitation of its area of influence. The British economic policy focused attention on cash crops at the detriment of food crops. To ensure this, the colonial government encouraged the growth of cotton and groundnuts for export, as against the cultivation of guinea corn, millet, corn and sorghum which were food crops. Similarly, the colonial policy concentrated on the promotion of such industries that could boost export trade to the neglect of local or traditional industries such as Tin and iron smelting and smiting. These two industries were killed by Colonial laws as most furnaces were forced to close down.¹² It was for the same reason that the local textile industry collapsed so as to give way for the export of cotton. All those local industries were forced out of production in order to provide the market

for the importation of the same goods that were locally produced such as imported textiles, household utensils and other materials made of iron and tin. In this way, the industrial base of Zaria was destroyed to give way for export-import commerce with a wide Colonial market.¹³ The implication of this colonial policy on Igbo migration to Zaria was that it provided large opportunities for the participation of the Igbo in the colonial economy by gaining employment in European firms which engaged in the importation and trade in European goods and by forming partnership with European trading companies as agents and intermediaries.¹⁴

The colonial economic policy in Zaria was a part of the colonial economic policy in Nigeria. Zaria's position was unique. It was the commercial centre for Kaduna which was established as the administrative centre of the northern region. Therefore many European trading firms included Kingsway Stores, Leventis Stores, Leventis Motors, CFAO, SCOA and PZ, United Trading Company (UTC), United African Company, Gorge Beam Ollivant (GBO) stores etc, were initially established in Zaria. The opportunity for employment in these firms and for participation in the colonial economy which were provided by these firms encouraged the Igbo to migrate to Zaria.

In order to further encourage migrant groups to settle in Zaria, the colonial administration provided land for them. That area was called Sabon Gari. It was intended to separate the settlers from the indigenes of Zaria; as the colonial policy of segregation.¹⁵ Sabon Gari was setup as settlement for immigrants from the south while Tundun Wada was for immigrants from other parts of northern Nigeria. But the European settlers resided on the outskirts of the old Zaria town in areas known as Government Reserved Areas or European Quarters. The same arrangement was done in Kaduna.¹⁶ In spite of the fact that the policy was set to divide Nigerians along the line of indigenes and settlers, it encouraged settlers migration because an area was already set aside for them to settle.

Igbo Migration in the Colonial Era

The need to explore trade relations led to Igbo movement north wards. The Nri traditions identified close cultural and trade connection between the Igbo and Igala which extended farther northward. The trade was initially based on the supply of horses.¹⁷ and goods from Igboland. The trade relations later expanded considerably.

Limited cultivable land also explains Igbo migration. There was exhaustion of cultivable land around Awka-Orlu and Nsukka-Okigwe area. The situation forced the people to abandon agriculture and take to trading, traditional medicine, blacksmithing, pottery and weaving. In addition to these professions, the people took to itinerant trading, up to Nupeland. There is an indication that prior to 1900, this trade extended to Zaria emirate. The river Niger and Anambra provided the routes for trading activities among the Igbo, Igala, Ebira, Nupe and other groups along the routes.¹⁸

Land hunger or lack of available farmland became a big problem as a result of population density which became acute in the district of Owerri, Aba, Afikpo, Bende especially. In addition, the Colonial administration in the eastern region imposed various types of taxation, especially the poll and hut taxes. These taxes forced them out of their land in search of wage labour employment elsewhere. As a result of this, quite a number of youths migrated northwards. Even employment opportunities were provided for non-indigenes by the colonial labour policy. This policy was designed deliberately to prevent raising an indigenous working class group, who were also considered lazy in both the east and the north. To this end, in road and rail lines construction in the eastern province, the colonial administration preferred to employ the unemployed youths from the Northern Province while the Igbo easily gained employment in Northern Province as well as in Fernando Po.¹⁹

The Igbo unemployed youths who felt discriminated by this labour policy migrated in large numbers to Kafanchan, Kaduna and Zaria in Zaria province and Kano in search of employment in the police, army, post office, sanitation, banks and colonial firms. And the Igbo youth who had acquired semi-skilled and skilled labour due to their education and training became readily employed in the north. With the amalgamation of southern and northern protectorates in 1914, movement to and from the south and north became more facilitated.²⁰

Igbo Migration to Zaria

Igbo trade link with Zaria predated 1900. The main trade link was along water ways. The Igbo traders brought trade goods such as palm oil, ivory and kola nuts to as far north wards as Nupe land. There, the Kede served as the main distribution link. The Igbo traders sometimes got as far as Rabba on the river Niger and by relay trading, exchanged

their goods with Hausa traders who then transported the goods along river Kaduna up to Zaria and even to Kano. The trade in Nupe Kingdom went along multiple routes. One of these routes passed from Bida, Jima, Dokombo to Kaduna in Zaria emirate; another route went from Baddegi to Kachia also in Zaria emirate; the third route was from Bida to Kachia also in Zaria emirate. These three water routes took off from Onitsha along river Niger to Idah, Lokoja and Rabba.²¹ Trade along the water ways had been going on for centuries prior to 1900. Although the trade movement along the water ways was in a small scale, but the Igbo traders must have been moving into Zaria and settling there even in their small numbers before 1900.

There is no doubt that by 1914 following the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates and the creation of Sabon Gari in Zaria, there was already, a sizeable population of Igbo settlers in Zaria, alongside other groups from southern Nigeria.²² By the 1920s and 1930s, a large group of migrants from the south were already well settled in Sabon Gari. In addition to the Igbo groups, there were groups from Benin, Ebira, Tiv, Yoruba, Igala and Idoma among others who were living side by side. The colonial administration allocated plots of land to the settlers who paid with ease. These separate quarters including Tundun Wada and Government Reserved Areas became the spots for interactions by the various groups.

Although there are no statistics or figures of the number of Igbo settlers, but the Igbo settler community was the largest group, in Sabon Gari.²³ The group expanded considerably by 1945 as many of them were gainfully employed. Some of them established small scale enterprises such as milling of grains and wheat. Others opened shops for sale of provisions, building materials, stationeries, textbooks and other school materials. As new small scale industries were set up by the European firms for tailoring or mechanical works, the young Igbo labourers were easily employed. The Sabon Gari market was established and it provided opportunities for Igbo and other groups to engage in small scale trading especially the buying and selling of food stuffs and imported goods.

A greater number of southerners, especially Igbo were employed by European trading firms such as UAC, B. Bacca, AJ Karouns, AG Leventis, CFAO, Fiat Motors, Leventis Stores and Leventis Motors, Union Carbide. The Motor importing firms established small enterprises like spare parts shops and

mechanic workshops in Zaria, Kaduna and Kafanchan towns.²⁴ During the depression of 1929 to 1932, there was a considerable decline in international trade. This resulted in unemployment, falling prices and low level of investment and trade. In the case of Zaria emirate, which economy depended mainly on agriculture, was most vulnerable to the effects of the economic depression. This is due to the fact that it resulted in impoverishment and debt which led to decline in agriculture. For instance, the price of groundnuts slumped, farmers were unable to sell their produce. Due to the situation UAC retrenched workers. Other foreign trading firms reduced wages. So, a lot of those who lost their jobs and whose wages were reduced were Igbo workers and others from the southern provinces. In response to the adverse effects of depression, the Igbo youths took to itinerant trading by transporting palm oil, textiles and food stuffs from eastern province to Zaria for the internal trade. Others took to haulage and transport businesses from Lagos, Port Harcourt, Onitsha, Enugu, Okigwe, Ohafia etc.

However the period after the depression up to 1939 provided a relief for the colonial economy. A few infrastructural projects were planned. They included the construction of barracks, government offices, police barracks, government quarters and railway quarters. These were constructed both in Zaria, Kafanchan and Kaduna towns. These opportunities provided for employment increased, leading to influx of Igbo migrants into the three towns. Many of them also served in the construction of residential buildings, government offices and public structures. The commencement of the Second World War, the colonial government again reviewed its economic policies. The colonial government focused attention on import substitution for industrialization which boosted trade and general business in imported goods in such business centres in Nigeria like Zaria, Kano, Lagos, Onitsha and Port Harcourt. The Igbo and Yoruba traders took advantage of the reviewed economic policies to establish private businesses which engaged in import processes and sale of imported goods such as wears, textiles, household materials and goods and general merchandise.

After the Second World War, the economy improved considerably. Branches of banks were established. Also government schools were set up both in Zaria town and in Kaduna. The transport services widened as more lorries and trucks plied the routes from Kano, Zaria, Kaduna through

Makurdi across the Benue to the eastern province. The Igbo transporters included E. E. Okonkwo, M. N. Mounkeke, C. N. Emeadi and D. A. Ejiofor.²⁵ More public structures were constructed both in Zaria town, in Kaduna and in a few more towns in southern Kaduna area. For instance, several official quarters were constructed as senior and junior staff quarters, of the Nigerian Railway in Zaria, Kaduna and Kafanchan, in different parts of the towns. Similarly, colonial and trading firms built quarters for their expatriate staff and for senior African staff. Other public infrastructures included those for the Post and Telegraph Service, Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, Nigerian Army Depot and the rapid development of landed properties by individuals.

The development of these properties led to increase job opportunities for Igbo migrants as well as other migrants. In the area of agriculture, the colonial administration encouraged expansion in groundnuts production by giving incentives to farmers and by allowing individual entrepreneurs to participate as agents in the export processes, such as buying agents and as middlemen between the farmers and the exporting firms. The official records show that there were 10 Igbo groundnuts middlemen and there were 6 Igbo buying agents between 1945 and 1950.²⁶ These numbers increased considerably before 1965. Another business incentive which boosted the opportunities and prospects of Igbo enterprises was the establishment of the African Continental Bank (ACB) by Nnamdi Azikiwe, being an indigenous bank, established by a prominent Igbo political leader. Thus, the Igbo traders and business men and women both at home and in the northern parts of Nigeria saw it as a form of assistance to them. African Continental Bank was far more preferred to the Colonial banks because it offered credit facilities to Nigerians.²⁷ So, it was well patronized.

By 1960, the influx of Igbo migrants into Zaria was significant. Their population ran into hundreds of thousands.²⁸ Quite a number of them also had landed properties, not only in Sabon Gari but in other parts of Zaria province, especially in Kaduna and Kafanchan. Due to the rapid development of Kaduna, as the regional capital, quite a large number of Igbo migrants were also well integrated in the town. While some of them lived in Sabon Gari, Kaduna, a larger number of them lived within town such as Tudun Wada, Oriapata, Tudun Nupawa and those who worked with the Nigerian Railway Corporation lived in Railways quarters while those who were employed by the Colonial

administration, lived in the centre of the town and in government reserved areas in Zaria, Kaduna and Kafanchan.

Inter-Group Relations

Language is a major source of identifying groups in Nigeria. Even when migrant groups settled down outside their places of origin, they are easily identified by their languages. Thus, the Igbo group in Zaria just like any other group spoke their languages among their kinsmen and women. However, for the purpose of cordial and harmonious relationship, the Igbo and other groups were compelled to learn Hausa language. It was not just the language of trade, it was also the language of communication, to promote mutual and cordial interaction among all groups. So every non-indigene had to learn to speak in Hausa language. The Igbo trader and worker learnt to communicate intelligibly in Hausa. In the same way, the Igbo taught the Hausa and other groups some Igbo words. This was especially so in the market, where certain Igbo food items were requested for by the non-Igbo buyers such as the Hausa. Such items like Okazi, Ugu, Ogbonno, Okporoko.

The Igbo group soon got familiar with names of the Hausa indigenes. Children were more familiar with names through close interactions as they played together and they attended government primary schools. In some cases closest friends of some Igbo children were their Hausa classmates or play mates. So close were some Hausa and Igbo families that for instance Mr. Uche Okeke named his female baby, Amina in 1962. Amina later married Abubakar Mohammed, a Hausa businessman and she named her daughter, Ngozi Mohammed.²⁹ And up to 1965, there were a few other Igbo girls who were married to Hausa men. Some of these marriages were encouraged by the parents who were close business partners or close childhood friends.³⁰ Another Igbo family who lived in Tudun Wada, Zaria, named their daughter, Laraba Udenze. Alhaji Yusuf Bala stated that as a youth in the 1960s he usually paid visits to family friends who were mostly Igbo and Yoruba. He referred to his frequent visits to the family house of Ojukwu, his friend at Sabon Gari every Sunday after the family returned from Church Service.³¹

In terms of religious practices, the early Christian missionaries had some tough time in their mission to spread Christianity. But their problem was with the leadership not with the ordinary people. Dr. Miller, a Christian Missionary attempted to establish Christianity in the ancient city of Zaria

but was forced to relocate to the outside of the city wall. So he chose to settle in Wusasa area. Miller and his team won many converts among the ordinary people, including the princes and indigenes of Zaria. So the Church, hospital and school which they built in 1929 served various Christian groups that migrated to Zaria in the 1930s to 1965 and beyond. In spite of these experiences, relations between Igbo Christians and Hausa Muslims remained cordial. The two groups celebrated each other's religious festivities together by way of sharing meat, food and drinks during such important festivities like Christmas and Easter for Christians and Eid-l-Fitr and Eid-l-Maulud for Muslims. Also they invited each other to naming or wedding ceremonies and they mourned each other's death or tragedy together.³²

Relations among groups extended to government employment at a time when tribal sentiment was prevalent among leaders. Ifeanyi Christopher, an Igbo settler explained that his father joined the services of the College of Arts and Science (later Ahmadu Bello University) in 1940's shortly after he settled in Zaria.³³ He was one of the very few non-indigenes that worked in the College before it transformed into a University in the 1960s. In addition to being a public servant, Ifeanyi also setup a small hotel and drinking place which was patronized by the Igbo, Yoruba and Christian Hausa who were resident in Samaru, Zaria. While Ifeanyi was into local hotel business, his mother employed herself to tailoring. She acquired sufficient training in the employment of Singer machine store. She setup her tailoring shop which quickly expanded, and she employed a number of apprentices from Yoruba and Hausa ethnic groups.³⁴

The sale of fairly used clothes in Zaria also promoted intergroup relations. Igbo traders in used clothes commonly called okrika brought these clothes from across Nigeria's borders especially from Cameroon. The clothes were taken to Zaria markets where youths of various groups of settlers, and Hausa always gathered to select their choices. It was through the sales of these second new clothes that the use of European dresses and the sewing of European styles became wide spread in Zaria.

Igbo traders established the spare parts business in Zaria and Kaduna in the 1950s. Just after the Second World War, with increasing importation of vehicles into Nigeria, many Nigerians across the Country gradually became car and lorry owners. It was the same in the north, especially among big businessmen, very senior civil and public servants as well

as high caliber politicians. So, the Igbo traders who ventured into the spare parts business, especially those from Nnewi, had to expand the frontiers of their business to the north, especially to Zaria, Kaduna and Kano towns. Among the early spare parts entrepreneurs who expanded their trade to Zaria emirate were Augustine Ilodibe, Izuchukwu and C. Moore. They established their branches in Sabon Gari in Zaria and in Tudun Wada and Tudun Nupawa in Kaduna. This trade extended beyond the limitations of tribalism and colonial segregation as Hausa buyers went to Sabon Gari to buy spare parts and to repair their vehicles.³⁵ It therefore formed the basis for intergroup relations.

The development of education in Zaria pulled the other groups, especially the Igbo group into contact with the Hausa indigenes. In the early years after 1900 frantic efforts were made by the Colonial administration to develop formal education in northern Nigeria. Hanns Vischer, Director of Education in Northern Nigeria proposed the establishment of schools for the sons of Chiefs such as elementary Vernacular.³⁶ But due to paucity of instructors, Hanns Vischer began to recruit teaching staff from among Igbo and Yoruba staff. The provincial school was established in 1916, in Zaria and Kaduna. Due to poor state of educational development in the Northern Provinces, a conference met in Kaduna in 1922. The conference realized acute shortage of trained personnel among the northerners who were literate and were required.³⁷ The conference suggested systematic expansion in the number of schools especially in the various districts. So in Zaria province, a number of government primary schools were established in various districts. A few Igbo and Yoruba workers were employed. They contributed to the educational development of Zaria and Kaduna towns. So between 1900 and 1965, there was cordial and harmonious relationship between the Igbo and Hausa groups.

Conclusion

Zaria became the point of attraction for Igbo migrants after 1900 because of its strategic location and especially the direct road and rail routes from Igboland to Zaria province. It was also the point of attraction because of the many opportunities for gainful employment, enterprises trading and quick integration. The establishment of Kaduna, a small part of Zaria province, as the capital of northern Nigeria, provided enormous opportunities for migrant groups who provided labour, for employment and who engaged in productive

ventures. They participated actively in the Colonial employment and Colonial economy and thereby earned good living. Also the period 1900 and 1965 provided cordial and harmonious relationship among groups in Zaria province, and particularly between the Igbo migrants and the Hausa indigenes.

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