

INSECURITY AND BUSINESS IN IGBOLAND: A RE-EXAMINATION OF THEIR INTERACTIONS, 1895 – 1970

LAWRENCE, Chichebem Solomon

Lecturer, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

cs.lawrence@unizik.edu.ng

lawrencesolomon2016@gmail.com

&

OBIENUSI, Ihuoma Elizabeth

i.obienusi@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

Addressing the challenge of insecurity has proven extremely difficult for the Nigerian government. The proliferation of terrorist groups with global linkages and their nefarious activities have also worsened this challenge. While it can be argued that insecurity has negatively affected business operations in the country leading to the fleeing of some foreign investors, it is untrue to posit that insecurity has significantly or fully hindered the operation of businesses in the country. On the contrary, this paper argues that insecurity has sometimes widened business space rather than shrink it. The fact that insecurity has been commercialized and also globalized explains why it is difficult to deal with and why it is necessary for businesses to devise means to cope with it. Hence, this paper interrogates the wide assumption that insecurity stifles business prosperity by historically re-examining the interaction of insecurity with businesses in Igboland. It examines the nature of the relationship that has existed between insecurity and business prosperity between 1895 and 1970. The objective is to contribute to scholarly debates and discourses on the impact of insecurity on businesses in Igboland. Whereas majority of scholars believe that insecurity is unqualifiedly inimical to business operation and prosperity, some believe it favours certain businesses. The paper adopts a historical methodology, making use of primary (mainly oral interviews) and secondary sources presented in descriptive and discursive frameworks. The findings reveal that the interaction of insecurity and business in Igboland is not mono-directional (purely negative or purely positive) but both catastrophic and catalytic for certain businesses. The paper concludes that insecurity does not always foreclose business prospects as has been exaggeratingly concluded and that its negative impact on business can be managed.

Keywords; Insecurity, Business, Igboland, Re-examination, Interaction

Introduction

Although insecurity has for long been part of the existential challenges man has been confronted with in Igboland, it did not attract huge scholarly attention until the 21st century. Since then, the complexities of globalization and the heightening tales of insecurity all over the world have propelled discourses revolving around insecurity onto the front-burner. Particularly interesting has been how insecurity has impacted various aspects of life, especially the economic life of societies around the world. This paper focuses on the interaction of insecurity with businesses in Igboland.

It is often believed that insecurity and business prosperity cannot co-exist. It is widely assumed that insecurity stifles business engagements and that both are mutually exclusive or inversely related. This is a

mono-consequential view, a view that sees the effect of insecurity on business from one perspective, and more often than not, negative. This notion has dominated the literature for sometimes now. This mono-directional view of the relationship between insecurity and business has had the blessing of numerous scholars. However, a proper examination of the history of Igboland shows that this belief is a product of gross over-generalization and cannot always face up to facts. Igboland has historical antecedents that represent a clear and marked departure from the too-neat-and straight-forward description of the relationship between insecurity and business– the insecurity-against-business thesis. Hence, this paper challenges this mono-consequential view by critically re-examining the nature of the relationship between insecurity and businesses in Igboland starting from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era. It avers that the problem with mono-consequentiality is the same with mono-causality. Just as no historical event has only one cause, none equally has a singular consequence. Insecurity does not always result to the crippling of businesses, but sometimes catalyzes them.

In pre-colonial Igboland, especially in the 19th century which was a period of numerous warfares due partly to the non-centralized political system in place, businesses were still carried on. Some businesses even gained ascendancy and flourished rather than founder under insecure situations. In the colonial era, while the British colonial officers were carrying out military campaigns against the Igbo to forcefully bring them under colonial rule against their wish and vehement protests, businesses were still ongoing as will be seen in the paper. After colonial rule, Igboland witnessed a major period of insecurity between 1967 and 1970 when the Nigeria-Biafra war raged.

This study therefore commences from 1895 and terminates in 1970. The year 1895 was when the Brass people carried out a raid on the Royal Niger Company's station at Akassa. The date is chosen because the incidence was a pure manifestation of deep-seated acrimony between the local and foreign trading powers and the existence of insecurity in the area connected to business operation. The study is terminated in 1970 when the Nigeria-Biafra war came to an end because it marked the end of an era in the history of insecurity in Igboland.

The aim of this paper is to examine the nature of the relationship between insecurity and business and show whether the relationship is always negative. Addressing the challenge of insecurity has proven extremely difficult for the Nigerian government. Perhaps, understanding the connection between business and insecurity will help in no mean way to see why. The fact that insecurity has largely been commercialized can partly explain this. Business is part of life in Igboland and that aspect of life will always find an avenue for survival and expression under any condition. However, the business that flourished under insecure conditions are largely oligopolist in nature, dominated by the elites and the highly placed. Although business flourishes under conditions of insecurity, it is not always for the common good but for the good and profiteering of few who take advantage

It is in this light that this paper calls for a more fundamental approach to stemming the worrisome tide of insecurity - for the good of the majority. It is argued that insecurity is an elitist creation, and also their instrument of coercion. It is the elites that have the instruments of coercion and the wherewithal to instigate insecurity. This explains their reluctance and unwillingness to address the challenge headlong. It is argued that they may eventually not address it because of the commercial gains accruing to them from insecurity as well as the complex dimension it has assumed in this age of globalization. As a result, mechanisms to cope with the situation must be developed borrowing leaf from pre-colonial and colonial businessmen.

Some scholars have done some works on Igboland's traditional security and as well as business. Basden's work, *Among the Igbo*, aptly captures essential aspects of Igbo people's lives, including the connection between their security system and businesses. It is of the opinion however, that insecurity affected businesses negatively, but that the Igbo found ways to ameliorate the effect. (Basden, 1921)

Onukwube Alex Alfred and Ngozi Edith Anedo studied how Igbo traditional security systems can help in tackling Nigerian and global security challenges. The study identifies and explains various methods used in checkmating crime and insecurity in pre-colonial Igboland such as *Ngige*, *Ogwu*, *amosu*, *Nkwuogwu*, *Ijiogwa*, *Itu alisi* among others. [Onukwube Alex Alfred Anedo and Ngozi Edith Anedo, 2022]

Lawrence Chichebem Solomon and Daniel Nzereogu have also studied the connection between politics in Nigeria and Igbo business history. (Lawrence and Nzereogu, 2020) Their study shows that politically-motivated violence often affects businesses negatively by creating unfriendly business environments. Although this study, like the ones already mentioned and many others not mentioned, does not focus on the interaction or connection between business and insecurity directly, it is nonetheless helpful to the present study which directly focuses on that. These earlier works however provide some basic information on Igbo security and their business life and also provide a framework for the present study.

The rest of the paper is divided into five sections. The first section addresses the socio-economic background of the study area (Igboland). The second focuses on insecurity and business in the pre-colonial era, the third on insecurity and business interactions in the colonial era while the fourth paid attention to the post-colonial era up to 1970. The paper is concluded in the fifth section.

Socio-Economic Background of the Study Area

The Igbo people live in the Southeastern part of Nigeria. Their language, Igbo, constitutes one of the single most spoken language groups in Nigeria. The people traditionally settled in fragmented independent groups with so many autonomous communities. Politically, the decentralized form of government is the prevalent traditional political system adopted by the Igbo people. Two forms of this decentralized system have, however, been identified among them – Democratic Village Republic and the Constitutional Village Monarchy types. (Afigbo, 1972)

Essentially, the old Eastern Region which embraces the current Southeast and a little of the South-south constitutes the area called Igboland. The area was a larger part of the old colonial Eastern Region, with very few exceptions. Igbo land is historically and culturally, rather than politically defined. Igboland, as defined by some scholars, is a region, which is home to the Igbo, people having diverse dialects but with common cultural and linguistic history. In this vein, the renowned professor, Adiele E. Afigbo, in one of his books that relates to the Southeastern peoples, identified the peoples populating the Igbo area to include Igbo, Ibibio, Ijaw, and Ogoja. (Afigbo, 1972, 9)

Igboland today cuts across Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo state which constitute the Southeastern region of Nigeria. Igbo-speaking people also form 1/3rd of Delta State, 3/4th of Rivers State, 1/5th of Akwa-Ibom and 1/8th of Cross River State. (Onukwube Anedo and Ngozi Anedo, 2022) It also constitutes three local government areas of Benue State and few towns in Kogi State, all in Nigeria. The Igbo people are believed to have migrated from Israel to where they are now, although this is still highly contended. (Basden, 1921, 201)

Traditionally, power and prestige were attained through the prized instruments of character, accomplishments, age and wealth. Igboland had a diverse socio-economic background. Bulk of the wealth was acquired from farming. The Igbo society was traditionally agrarian, with yam as the chief crop. Apart from yam, cassava and other food crops, the palm tree came to play an important role in the economy of these peoples during the colonial era. Until the imposition of colonial rule, the people were primarily subsistence farmers. Their secondary occupation was trading. The overwhelming importance of farming in the Igbo world was beautifully described by Uchendu when he called farming “the Igbo staff of life.” He went further to state that:

“to remind an Igbo that he is *’orimbeahia loro,*’ that is, one who eats only when the market holds, is to humiliate him.” This does not imply that traders are not respected: all it means is that the Igbo see farming as their chief occupation. (Uchendu, 1965) One result of this Igbo attitude to agriculture was the development of an industrious spirit. This industrious spirit also found expression in other economic activities including trading.

For instance, manufacture was a prominent economic activity in Igboland. Pre-colonial Igboland manufactured a wide range of products including agricultural tools, war implements, cloths, domestic items like earthen jars, household furnitures among others. They made various iron tools which the Igbo needed in the home and farm, in war and peace, for rituals and ceremonies. While some of the crafts which produced these items were practiced by anybody, some were restricted and could only be practiced by selected communities which either because they had the necessary raw materials in abundance or because they demanded more time and could not be combined with farming. Specialization thus gave rise to professionalization leading to the exclusion of others.

One important industry that rose as a consequence of farming and manufacture in Igboland was trading. It became the meeting point of the two. While they provided the articles of trade, trade provided them an outlet for extending their excess products to others in exchange of money for more production. Trade was also an important aspect of Igbo economic activity. It helped in the distribution of the products of farming and manufacture. Just as farming was revered and highly ritualized in Igboland, so were trading activities. The beginning of the farming season, the date of which varied from one part of Igboland to another due to ecological differences, as well as the commencement of harvest times were formal occasions marked by festivals and rituals to the Chi who is believed to have institutionalized farming. Trade and marketing are equally believed to have been institutionalized by Chukwu by creating the Igbo market days naming them after four heavenly fishmongers each of whom went round Igboland establishing markets bearing their names. (Basden, 1921, 102).

Agriculture, manufacture and trade were therefore important fabrics of the pre-colonial Igbo economy. The economic life of the traditional Igbo society can be said to have rested on three pillars, namely, agriculture, manufacture and trade, with agriculture and trade being the most pronounced in that particular order. As time went by however, especially by the 19th century, trade expanded and began to gain more practitioners.

Insecurity and Business in Pre-Colonial Igboland

The pre-colonial era in Igbo society was marked by a complex interplay of various factors, among which was insecurity. Insecurity played a significant role in shaping the dynamics of business. This section explores the intricate relationship that existed between insecurity and businesses during this period, shedding light on the challenges and means adapted to ensure the continuation of economic activities. It shows that although insecurity affected business negatively to some extent, it did not stop business operations. This was because the time of chaos proved to be a time of business and gain for certain people and secondly because the people developed mechanisms to cope with the insecurity they could not avert.

The fact that Igbo people are well known for their entrepreneurial spirit cannot be overemphasized. It is interesting to note that the development of long distance trade predated the colonial era in Igboland. Both long and short distance [regional] trade were already in place before the colonial era. While the former involved trade that linked the Igbo people with their neighbours and external communities, the latter was a trade that took place within Igboland. (Afigbo, 1973)

It can be suggested that these two kinds of trade developed in consequence of differences, or growing differentiation in ecological conditions. These differences led to a situation in which one community produced more of one kind of goods than it could consume, and had to exchange the excess for those

goods which it needed and could only get from its neighbours who could produce or procure them cheaply.

Among the famous long-distance professional trading groups of Igboland were the Aro, Awka, Nri, Nkwere, Abiriba, Umuneoha and Aboh. (Ofonagoro, 1972) There were many other, especially among the Northern Igbo who travelled widely. Among such groups were the Nike whose role as traders in Northern Igboland was first revealed by the researches of Horton. (Alagoa, 1970) The Aku of the Nsukka area and the Isuochi of Okigwe were equally dynamic in the regional trade of their respective zones. The Aku on their side even set up a system which sought to sidetrack the Aro system through establishing direct access to Uburu for salt and to Bende for imported European goods. It is therefore essential to emphasize that the Aro trade system, so often discussed in literature is not the only one in Igboland, but one out of many even though it must be acknowledged that it was the most successful and the one with the longest reach. (Yehuda Karmon, 1966)

The Igbo, prior to the British occupation of their land often had community clashes. Although there were internal clashes within the towns (one quarter of the town fighting against another quarter which were like civil wars), the general trend was town fighting against town. This had greatly paralyzing effect on inter-town relations including business activities. (G.T. Basden, 1921, 202)

In many ways, insecurity affected business negatively. It led to the disruption of established trade routes and networks. Trade routes were vital arteries connecting different regions. Inter-group or inter-community conflicts often led to the closure of trade paths, hindering the smooth flow of goods and services. It also brought a level of economic uncertainty which made it difficult for business owners to predict and plan for stable market conditions. The fear of potential conflicts or raids sometimes discouraged investment and trade activities. Furthermore, insecurity eroded and undermined the trust within and between communities. This affected business transactions which heavily relied on trust. It also hindered business partnerships.

Apart from the above negative impacts of insecurity on business in pre-colonial era, it led to the displacement of communities. When communities were forced to relocate, settled economic activities were disrupted. Businesses relying on local markets suffered as a result of the population displacement. Insecurity also fragmented communities, breaking down social cohesion and structures which pre-colonial businesses were tied to. Local market places were integral to Igbo economic life. These local markets were not immune to the challenge of insecurity. Merchants faced the risk of theft and attacks on the way to these markets, affecting both supply chains and consumer access to essential goods. It also increased transaction costs. Higher costs both in terms of ensuring security measures and potential losses reduced profitability.

However, it must be noted that during this period of serious strain on security, some kinds of businesses still flourished. Some people profited from the chaos. Although it was never safe to go from one town to the other for any activity including business, some people still had to. These had to go with a band of men ready to defend themselves (G.T. Basden, 1921, 202) or hired armed men to go with them as a defense. The men so hired were making money from the transactions.

Also, one of the preparations for war was the hiring of medicine men whose business was to prepare medicine or charms for the successful execution of the war. The medicine men made sacrifices to ensure success. Hiring these medicine men was not a child's play. They were serious businessmen. According to Basden, their services were available to "all such as could and would pay the price." (Basden, 1921, 203) Time of insecurity was thus a business-booming time for these business medicine-men.

Another group of people who gained from periods of insecurity were blacksmiths and other weapon producers. Usually, battles fought within the confines of the towns were fought with knives and staves for

attack. For defense were helmets woven from the stems of certain trees like the *akasioyibo*(koko) leaves, including back and front protectors made from the same material fastened over the shoulders. Shields composed of plaited palm fronds were also used. There were craftsmen involved in the production of these weapons. They exchanged these for money. Inter-town wars were fought with cap guns Schnider rifles which though were not too common.

Also profiting from periods of insecurity in pre-colonial Igboland were certain band of raiders. These were armed militants who raided towns for selfish goals and for war spoils. However, more often than not, they were hired and engaged by men of one town to raid another town they were in conflict with. Examples of these warrior-bands included the Abams on the eastern side of the Niger, Ndi-Ekumeku on the Western side [between Asaba and Benin]. These bands were like secret societies and had large membership. (Basden, 1921, 205) They caused havoc in the regions where they operated. During periods of war, they stood more chance to make money than during peace time.

The Abams were controlled by the Aros, and were like their fighting mercenaries. Any town having a dispute with another and needed the service of the Abams to fight them had to apply through the Aro agents. (Basden, 208,209) Before operation was carried out the Abams were paid a sum of money in advance and in addition, the lands of all the captives became their property. Their major weapon was cutlass. The Aros also dealt in slave trading. These slaves were procured more during warfare or in time of insecurity. They had guns

In pre-colonial Igboland, to ensure the safety of travelers and of merchants in particular, various measures were developed and adopted. From the legal angle, Igbo law, custom and morality forbade the molestation, let alone the wounding, kidnapping, enslavement or even killing of fellow clansmen. This meant that a trader could travel in safety within his clan. (Norther Up, 1970). This took care of the safety of most of the regional or short distance traders.

Between one clan and another, a ritual brotherhood could be established by means of the *Igbandublood* pact. Under this arrangement, the leading representatives of the clans or village-groups concerned met at their common place, usually where they shared a boundary and after performing series of prescribed rituals, drew out blood from their veins into a container and mixed it. Then they would dip pieces of the kolanut they had used to verbally enter into a covenant and dipped in the blood and ate. This ceremony, it was believed bound the parties concerned in a blood union. They were thereafter bound to treat each other as clansmen. By this means, the outward-looking Igbo communities could extend the area within which their citizens could travel for business and other activities in safety. Also, travelling merchants who practiced crafts that were in hot demand such as the Nri, Awka, Aro, Abriba and Nkwere were allowed free communication through feuding communities. Another measure that was used was the establishment of vigilante groups.

Even during the time of real conflict and clashes one could notice business and its protection going on. Sometimes, conflicts, which may bring about insecurity in an area is only a sign that a great deal of business is going on there. Conflicts actually ensued between powerful trading powers over the control of business. This means that in periods of conflict and insecurity, business still went on. As a matter of fact, the 1885 Berlin Conference which was called to address the Scramble of European powers over Africa's land and business opportunities underscores the equanimity that sometimes exists between insecurity and business.

In 1895, the Brass people carried out a raid on the Royal Niger Company's station at Akassa. This incidence was a pure manifestation of deep-seated acrimony between the local and foreign trading powers and the existence of insecurity in the area. Yet, the raid took place while business was going on at the trading station at Akassa. The raid itself was a business move. It was a business survival move, an attempt

at securing the Brass business interest and sending a message to the European traders that their presence was offensive to African business interests.

This Akassa attack was an outgrowth of the boiling conflict between African and European businessmen some years before over the control of trade. A good example is the conflict European trading and commercial powers had with the indigenous trading powers in the Niger-Delta region in the 1880s and 1890s. Opobo, Brass, Itsekiri all fell to the British powers after some degrees of conflict with the trading lords of these regions while businesses were still going on. Their fall marked the triumph of European businessmen and the control of trade in the area.

Also, the British invasion of Itsekiri land of Nana in 1894 and other Delta areas were moves to replace slave trade which the indigenous leaders were protecting with palm oil trade. (Falola, 118) In Bonny, there was intense conflict between Jaja and Oko Jambo [head of Manilla People House] after Jaja became head of Anna people house. The conflict eventually led to civil war in 1869 (Falola, 120), yet, slave trade business was going on successfully. Time of war was even a serious business time as people captured during war became articles of trade. By 1900, the European traders had gained much ground in African business space, displacing or allying with some Africans to establish their money-making ventures. As would be seen in the next session, the 20th century marked the massive use of force to further consolidate colonial rule and business interests.

Insecurity and Business in the Colonial Era

Igboland saw the introduction of a new dimension of insecurity with the advent of colonial rule. The imposition of colonial rule disrupted existing economic structures, as traditional systems clashed with foreign influences. The establishment of the colonial administration further fuelled tensions, contributing to a sense of insecurity among the Igbo people. The resistance of the Igbo people to alien rule, their forceful subjugation and the bloody process of their pacification via military campaigns all brought a new dimension of insecurity. From 1902 when the military campaign meant to bring Igboland to its knees before the colonial powers started, insecurity took on another colouration and dimension. However, that did not mean the stoppage of business.

The military campaigns themselves were profitable business ventures for the European colonial rulers as many Africans were taken as slaves and used to carry out forced labour in both domestic and public works. In Umuahia's Ngor Okpuala for instance, after destroying the place, and the people had surrendered, the British soldiers still took 'two chiefs and 10 men from each town' and 'detained them as a guarantee for good conduct and making of roads, etc in Ngor. (Ofonagoro, 1972, 334)

Therefore what appeared as insecurity for the African people were periods of making profits for the Europeans. By the 1920s, the forced labour situation had not changed considerably, even though attempts were made to overtly show 'fairness'. Official documents issued in the 1920s approved that Africans might be required to perform work of a public nature. (Hailey, 1968)

Land acquisition by the government, especially in the so-called crown lands and the townships, was another way of fomenting insecurity for the Igbo people. The lack of sufficient farmland and the general control which artificially pushed down the price of agricultural products drove many people to go in search of wage labour. It also led to the displacement of some people affecting local market shares of local businessmen. Also, the domination of the primary/agricultural sector by the colonial government (both in land space and market space), leaving the traditional farmer largely disadvantaged, made farming less attractive compared to wage labour. The government also promulgated laws to make land acquisition easy for themselves. One of such laws was The Native Lands Acquisition Ordinance (NLAO) of 1908.(Government Gazette, 1908)

Also, during this period, African chiefs, including warrant chiefs colluded with the foreign capitalists to exploit the African people. They supplied them with slaves and got money and some other privileges from them. To them, it was a business time. So, the colonial insecurity favoured African chiefs and elites. Colonial rule itself was essentially a business because the policy of self-sufficiency was adopted in its financing. The colonial officers reasoned like businessmen and were very reluctant to expend on the colonies beyond what the colonies could provide themselves. The Secretary of States often warned the Governors to be economical by all means and avoid overspending. (Lawal, 1979)

Resources of Africa were procured easily to feed their fledgling home industries that produced finished products that were brought back to be sold to Africans at exorbitant prices. This business (colonialism) flourished against the wish of the African people. Their protests and revolts like the PWD Strike of the late nineteenth century were all quelled by massive security apparatus put in place by the colonial administration.

Also, some groups in Igboland became agents of the European traders. Already by the late 1890s, European guns had gotten into their hands of some traders that acted as agents for the Europeans. Some of these Igbo groups include the Abam, Edda, Ohafia, Awka among others. They used these guns directly and sometimes by proxy to raid for slaves. (Falola, 132) Thus, some people were getting involved in transactions that can be rightly called business and were making profits during this period of insecurity.

Apart from these gainers in chaos, some Igbo businessmen exhibited remarkable adaptability and resilience during this period. New trade networks were formed, European goods were integrated into the local economies and alliances were formed to counter external threats. These were all strategies employed to navigate the changing landscape and to ensure that business continued. African farmers also switched to the production of externally demanded cash crops. Some African businessmen also had to get their businesses registered with the government to secure approval and chance to get government contracts.

In the 1950s there was a large increase in the number of indigenous companies who wished to be given contracts by the government by registering their companies. In the building line, indigenous companies that were registered with the government's Public Works Department, PWD in the Eastern Region and got contracts of specific amounts from them as at 1956 included Mr F.O. Mbadiwe and Sons (£8, 721), Mr M.A. Nigumi (£4, 707), Eastern General Contractor (£2, 885), E.O. Amene (£2, 007), Messrs Cappa and D' Alberto Ltd (£88, 810), among many others. [Nigeria PWD Annual Report, 1956]

During the period of the nationalist movement, when the nationalists struggled for independence, people like Nnamdi Azikiwe established print media company that produced and released papers that attacked and criticized the bad actions of the colonial government. While the struggle was going on, people like Nnamdi Azikiwe were making their money from the print media business.

Generally, the colonial era did not witness the seizure of businesses but saw its expansion. In the transport industry for instance, prominent Igbo capitalists emerged between the 1920s and the 1960s. That period saw the emergence of prominent capitalists like J.C. Ulasi, L.P. Ojukwu, Albert Igbokwe, D.D. Onyemelukwe, A.E. Ilodibe, F.A. Obi, B.C. Ubajaka, L.C. Amazu, D.C. Emefo and F.N. Okonkwo. (Lawrence and Nzereogu, 2020, 127)

Insecurity and Business in the Post-Colonial Era

Immediately after political independence, the environment was friendly and overtly void of conflicts. The nation was still basking in the joy of independence. During this period, businesses continued to operate. Shortly after political independence, however, the Nigeria-Biafra war broke out which brought another dimension of insecurity in Igboland. The war jeopardized the course of business in Igboland. It brought economic uncertainty and the forceful closure of some businesses. Also, some businesses that

were about to be established before the war broke out could not see the fruitful light of day. For instance, Chief J. Edokwe's plan to establish an aluminum industry in Onitsha failed due to the war. (Lawrence and Nzereogu, 2020, 128]

The war, however, also made a positive impact on business in Igboland. Before that time, many Igbo businessmen, especially Nnewi businessmen invested hugely outside Igboland. When the war broke out, many of them, having lost much of their investments outside Igboland, began to look inward in their investment pattern. A clarion call for the Igbo people to come back home was made. The home-coming also meant business-home-coming. The pattern of business investment became more inward-oriented (Lawrence and Nzereogu, 2020, 128) During the war, Nnewi markets still functioned and served Igboland a great deal as a major market. The home-coming also eventually brought about diversification into new fields of enterprise in the local markets.

One major great business breakthrough that Igboland therefore had was the re-directing of the focus of Igbo businessmen's investments back home and the diversification of business investments there. Rather than stop business operation, insecurity during this period changed the direction and location of business. The crisis brought increase in business operation in a place like Nnewi. Although the crisis had negatively affected Igbo businesses in other places like Lagos and Kano, it also brought business prosperity to Igboland. This is different from the technological breakthroughs made during the war especially in weapons production. Business linkages and connections with foreign countries supporting Biafra were also made during the war. (T. Forest, 1994) These linkages were helpful after the war in the promotion of businesses.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the insecurity-against-business thesis sometimes flies in the face of fact, judging from the history of Igboland. It has been established that although insecurity had jeopardizing impact on certain businesses in pre-colonial colonial and post-colonial eras, it also brought about the flourishing of certain businesses. The common belief that business collapses in the face of insecurity is a partial truth and not the whole. Insecurity had both catastrophic and catalytic impact on business in Igboland during the period of study. Sometimes both appeared as enemies, at other times, they embraced each other and saw face to face. Pure acrimony or equanimity cannot therefore define the relationship between insecurity and business. Both characterize their relationship. Insecurity gave a boot to business and some other times a boost. It must also be pointed out that most of the positive impact on business were achieved because the people or rather the businessmen employed measures to cope with the reality of insecurity to ensure that their businesses kept moving.

Insecurity on its own cannot therefore hamper the prosperity of business, it is what people do or the way they react to insecurity that determines the impact it makes on their businesses. Most people, especially foreign investors flee in the face of insecurity rather than fashion out or device means to ride on it and move on. This paper therefore recommends that businessmen must be proactive in managing insecurity especially in regions where they have a large market share. Supporting the government to fight insecurity, providing intelligence reports, being in good relationship with their host communities and practically identifying with them in such trying times among others can be of immense help in weathering the storm and retaining their business space.

REFERENCES

- Afigbo, A. E., *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria, 1891 – 1929* (Ibadan: Longman, 1972), 16, 9

Afigbo, A.E, *Trade and Trade Routes in the Nineteenth Century*, Nsukka: Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1973, 77

Alagoa. E. J., “Long Distance Trade and States in the Niger Delta”, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 11, NO. 3, 1970, 319-329

Anedo Onukwube Alex and Anedo Ngozi Edith, “Igbo Traditional Security System: A Panacea to Nigeria’s Security Quagmire,” Researchgate

Basden, G.T., *Among the Igbos of Nigeria*, London: University Publishing Co., 201, 202

Falola, T., *History of Nigeria: Nigeria in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 2. 118, 120, 132
Nigeria PWD Annual Report, 1956-57, 34-37

Forest T., *The Advance of African Capital: The Growth of Nigerian Private Enterprise*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute, 1994

Government Gazette, Rule No. 4 of July 8, 1908,961

Hailey, *An African Survey, Revised 1956: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 136

Lawal, A. A., “A History of the Financial Administration of Nigeria 1900 – 1945,” a Ph.D Thesis Submitted to the Department of History, University of Lagos, February, 1979, 14

Lawrence C.S., and Nzereogu Nzereogu, Nigerian Politics and Igbo Business History Since the Civil War: A Case Study of Nnewi Businessmen’s Investment Pattern, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol 29, 2020, 121-138

Northernup David, “The Growth of Trade Among the Igbo Before 1800,” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 11, No. 4115-120

Ofonagoro, W. I. “The Opening up of Southern Nigeria to British Trade, 1881-1916,” Ph.D Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Columbia, 1972, 131

Uchendu, V.C., *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1965, 30

Yehuda Karmon, *A Geography of Settlement in Eastern Nigeria*, Jerusalem, 1966, 28-29