

Echoes from Post-Civil War Development in Nigeria: Igboland and Infrastructure Development in a Millennium Development Goals Epoch

Austine Okere

Department of History and International Studies,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka,
Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper examines trends in infrastructure development in Nigeria with specific emphasis on the Southeast geopolitical zone. Using the case of infrastructure development provided in sectors of health, water and sanitation, and education under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) programme, it posits that the region has recorded positive gains. As a result, this paper contends that despite the effects of the Civil War on Igboland, infrastructure development efforts of successive governments within the region together with years of self-supported infrastructure projects initiated by Ndi Igbo (both at home and in diaspora), have ensured that this once known commercial hub moves towards her pre-civil war status. The paper further argues that it is not yet eureka for Ndi Igbo since there is also the need to sustain this and other efforts amidst contemporary challenges of corruption, good governance, calls for reforms in revenue sharing formula, insecurity, return to true federalism, and political and socio-economic 'social justice in Nigeria. Using a qualitative case narrative methodology, the paper concludes that these contemporary issues have the potential to distract Ndi Igbo from the real focus, which is a continued and sustained effort towards accelerated infrastructure development of this once war-torn area in Nigeria.

Keywords: Civil War, Development Plan, Igboland, Infrastructure Development, MDGs

Introduction

War is an ill wind that blows nobody good. The attendant effects of wars both on the victorious and the vanquished have caused many to consider this position. Justifying this, the cost-benefit analysis of war for both parties puts this popular saying into further light. However, if consideration for the 'positives' of war are underscored, the results might be mindboggling. In the Nigerian context, the Nigerian-Biafra Civil War (1967 – 1970) affected both parties – the Nigerian and Biafran sides –in several ways. Among such was the loss of lives, disruption of economies, the lingering psychological effect, and the destruction of socio-economic infrastructures. Scholars have considered these effects and hold divergent views on the subject matter. Scholars like Nwankwo (1972), Achebe (1998), Ojiakor & Unachukwu (1997) have examined these effects of the war on Igboland using various parameters. Their views could be

summed up under arguments of how the Nigeria society genuinely needs ‘repositioning’ to cater for issues which the people fought against such as: failure of leadership, social injustice and mediocrity which has overtaken narratives of post-Civil War conversations in Nigeria; and how the average Igbo person had to start from scratch due to punitive fiscal policies.

Their views cannot be isolated from the real situation. No doubt, after the Nigerian Civil War, Igboland was ravaged and in dire need of infrastructural reconstruction. Destruction of schools, hospitals and health centres occurred and could not meet both the wartime and post-wartime demands of the people and above all living conditions were appalling. A situation like this was worse in rural areas. State governments, rural development institutions, and other concerned persons sought to assist in resuscitating development in both urban and rural Igboland. It was under these conditions that the military government introduced a development plan aimed at addressing these and other post-war challenges faced by Nigerians. Evidence abounds to prove that although General Yakubu Gowon’s administration had introduced ‘post-war’ reconstruction programmes contained under the 3’Rs (Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation), these programmes had minimal impact on post-civil war Nigeria. Although from such existing information, it is safe to say that after the war, earlier efforts at basic infrastructure development in Igboland had been destroyed and the Gowon-led administration did not live up to its commitment of rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation when considered from the *Ndi-Igbo* point of view. Additionally, the Second National Development Plan, which was expected to resuscitate socio-economic development, encountered numerous challenges as such its projects were selectively implemented. In fecundating this with such picturesque description, Achebe contends:

The policy of overt and covert exclusion and discrimination beginning with Awolowo's banking regulations at the end of the Civil War and pursued relentlessly by the Muhammed/Obasanjo administration has had its day.... [Also] Arguments about siting major Federal industries, huge irrigation schemes, and agricultural projects of revolutionary dimensions ... seem[ed] tiresome to Federal Ministries visiting Anambra and Imo States and having to explain away so much in television interviews. (Achebe, 1998, pp.62-63)

Furthermore, the economic activities of those war-affected areas (mostly Igboland) which had been the focus of the Second National Development Plan, did not record rehabilitation despite over 2 million naira allocated for expenditure (Lawal & Oluwatoyin, 2011) (Olayiwola & Adeleye, 2005). Despite Nigeria’s high foreign exchange earnings from the sale of crude oil in Nigeria in the 1970s, implementation of capital projects in the Southeast region remained abysmally low. Investment in basic social infrastructures – education, water, and health – suffered tremendously. Although before the war and up to independence, infrastructures like these were provided by missionaries and community efforts in Igboland (Ajah, 2015) (Okoye & Pongou, 2014), sustenance of these basic infrastructures had taken a devastating turn during and after the civil war. In those days (i.e. before the civil war), Igbo towns competed among themselves for certain kinds of social achievement, like building schools, churches, markets, post offices, pipe-borne water projects, and roads. Those government-inspired infrastructures built before and during the colonial epochs proved inadequate and were located in selected cities like Enugu and Aba. Among such infrastructures included: electricity, tarred roads, railway lines,

ports, pipe-borne water, communication networks, health centres and schools. Therefore pre-war and post-war development plans and policy implementation was conceived as major catalysts which the Nigerian government sought to use to improve (and in the Igboland context, rehabilitate) infrastructures vis-à-vis development. However, questions still abound regarding the provision of necessary infrastructure for the Southeast region after the war. This study investigates the discourse surrounding the provision of such infrastructure long after the Nigeria-Biafra war using the period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000-2015) to evaluate such post-civil war provisions in Southeastern Nigeria. Such narratives would place Nigeria's infrastructure development into a case-specific context of a region that suffered from the devastating effects of the civil war.

To achieve the above objective, this paper first contextualizes what constitutes a Development Plan. This is necessary as infrastructure provision is subsumed under development plans. Furthermore, the study examines how far were development plans implemented within this region that suffered the effects of a civil war. With a specific focus on the Second National Development Plan (which was a post-civil war development plan), the study evaluates its success and failures. Additionally, the study examines the post-war development target /policy –which had international backing (the MDGs and its operationalization) – and how it influenced basic infrastructure development in the Southeast region. The paper shows what are the unique features of this period toward social infrastructure development and what roles have *Ndi Igbo*, both at home and abroad played. Finally, it concludes by noting some challenges that militate against infrastructure development in the Southeast within this period and beyond.

Development Plan: What It Means

The need for a development plan arises because of the desire to address general or specific inadequacies in economic growth. This is because planning involves the identification of a need and therefore the desire to meet it. Apart from this, the general aim of a development plan is to increase national output and increase wealth in specific areas of the economy that in turn would boost development. Often than not, development plans are guided by economic indicators and readily available data which act as the basis for steering or stimulating development.

In considering the definition of development plans, Carl Landauer sees it as the ‘guidance of economic activities by a communal organ through a scheme which describes, in quantitative as well as qualitative terms, the productive process that ought to be undertaken during a designated period (Landauer, 1947). Furthermore, in explaining his consideration of development planning, Landauer contends, that the place of an ‘indicative planning and a determined authority’ acting under a knowledgeable description or survey of economic system can never be over-emphasized in development planning. For Subrata, he conceived development planning as a conscious effort on part of any government to follow a defined pattern of economic development to promote rapid and fundamental change in the economy and society (Subrata, 1995). It remains the prerogative of the government to initiate specific development plans under its own conceived politico-economic conditions and systems. To this, proponents of development planning under a strictly monitored economic system holds such notion that a state-controlled system remains the best means to pursue economic development (Yeung, 2017). Such argument is borne out of the “evils” of free-market economies of which they cite exploitation and profit concerns as ills associated with this system. On the flip side, arguments for effective development planning hold such view that state control should act as steering and stimulating processes; thus opting for a

mixed economy system. Within such analysis, they posit state-controlled economies like the defunct USSR or free-market economies like Britain, remain sluggish and depressed whereas mixed economies like former West Germany and Japan where government combine industrial and economic policy but allows market forces to manage industry have succeeded in attaining much higher growth rates. Examinations into key items that constitute Development Plan include the following:

(i) an accurate survey of current economic conditions (e.g. national income, productivity and foreign trade).

(ii) A survey of social conditions indicating levels, concentration, the growth rate of population, health, education, etc.

(iii) A definition of micro and macroeconomic policy.

(iv) Measures to stimulate savings and investment

(v) Improvement of the institutional framework and economic activity

(e.g. land reforms, markets, labour, and capital incentives).

(vi) Supply and demand forecast for production and consumption of home and foreign goods among other things (Lewis, 2004).

Since the 20th Century, the introduction of development plans has been conceived from short, medium, and long-term perspectives. In the short term, the strategy must meet the immediate challenges posed (e.g. food shortages, shortages of critical inputs like fertilizer or fuel, etc.) In addition, such plans aim to address contemporary trends in inflation and foreign exchange constraint. This will aim at moderating the impact of the worst effects of current economic shortcomings on mostly poorer sections of the population and sensitive aspects of the economy. Consideration for medium-term development plan has been used interchangeably in economic development literature to suggest a plan which gives a breakdown of programmes and projects to be pursued in 3-5 years. In the long term, development plans must not only take into account the long-run effects of the present socio-economic shortcomings i.e., issues and problems which have been brought to the forefront by the present shortcomings but which will continue to have its impact into the future, but also it must incorporate the lessons of experience in the past few years. Efficient application and management of skills and resources to devise a well-timed Development Plan could go a long way to determine its success and to what extent. Consequently, the civil war presented the Nigerian government with an opportunity to implement a medium term development plan to tend to post-civil development issues that included the development of social infrastructure in the Southeast region.

National Development Plans: The Nigerian Experience

Despite these indicative patterns and parameters for development planning, it remains a puzzle to policymakers and others alike, how and why countries (in spite of Development Plans) fail to achieve economic growth and promote development. This argument (not surprisingly) considers such failure mostly within the context of developing countries. Nigeria, one of such developing countries, introduced both prior and after independence, several development plans with the desire and intent to ensure economic growth and overall infrastructure development. These development plans have also had general and specific impact towards wholesome socioeconomic growth. In his attempt to trace the origins of development plans in Nigeria, Okigbo notes:

The origins of economic [development] planning in Nigeria are readily traceable: in December 1945, Sessional Paper No. 24 of 1945 entitled 'Ten Year of Development and Welfare for Nigeria' [which] was laid on the table of the Legislative Council of Nigeria. In February 1946 legislation incorporating the Plan was adopted by the Council. It derived (sic) from a development in 1940 when the Colonial Development and Welfare Act was passed in Britain with the purpose of promoting 'the social betterment of the Colonies' (Okigbo, 1989, p. 52)

Although some scholars believe that the origin of development plans in Nigeria is earlier than the date posited by Okigbo. Such scholars like Olatunbosun regards this early date of 1945 as 'Pseudo-planning Era' contending that such plans emerged only when 'colonial governments realised that only by interfering in the organisation of primary and other activities could it remedy the acute shortage of exports crops badly needed by its home markets (Onokerhoraye, 1978). These arguments plausible as they may be, the concern of the current writer is not the antiquity of development plans in Nigeria. From the colonial to independence development plans (and later post-independence driven by Chief Okotie-Eboh), one general agreement within academic circles is the fact that such plans aimed at changing the socioeconomic status of the country within the area of infrastructure and other specific areas of the economy. Based on Rostow's (1971) suggested 'take-off', the First and Second National Development Plans sought to ensure that the Nigerian economy was running, by setting up primarily an infrastructural base. To this point, Ogunyemi (2017) underscores how the First Republic understood the centrality of fiscal budgeting and infrastructure to the attainment of the government's economic development plan very early in post-independence Nigeria. Table 1 shows the sectorial allocation of the First Development Plan with the infrastructure sector having the most percentage share as a foundation for Nigeria's industrial base.

Table 1: First National Development Plan, 1962 -68
Allocation of Funds to Various Sectors

Expenditure on:	Amount (₦ Million)	percent Distribution
Transportation and Communication	348.0	25.8
Electricity	205.6	15.1
Primary Production	181.4	13.4
Trade and Industry	179.2	13.3
Health	141.8	10.5
Education	139.6	10.3
Administration	103.0	7.6
Water Supply	54.5	4.0
Total	1353.0	100.0

Source: National Development Plan 1962-68, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1962

Despite the benefit of development Plans, Nigeria could not meet its development needs. Given this, scholars like Okojie (2002) and Obadan, (2001) and examined some of the problems that militate against development planning. Among such was the fluctuation in economic GDP growth rates that were overwhelmed by events of externality; singular resource earning without proper channeling into productive and sensitive areas of development (planning). Additionally,

literature that examined the reasons behind the failure of the First National Development Plan contend that over fifty percent of resources needed to finance the plan was to come from external resources, while only fourteen percent of external finance was received within the period of the plan (Ogwumike, 1995). Furthermore, as with the case of most of Nigeria's Development Plans, Lawal and Oluwatoyin, (2011) believe that these have continued to fail because they lacked 'public consultation' and extensive discussions in public spaces. Mimiko (1998) while comparatively assessing development plans experience in Africa and Asia using the Nigerian experience, holds the view that corruption, lack of good governance and accountability, in addition to technocrats playing an overwhelming role without inputs from other sections of the economy, remain the bane of development plans in both pre-civil war and post-civil war Nigeria.

Post-Civil War Development Plan: Second National Development Plan and Its Effects on Southeast Nigeria

Shortly after the end of the civil war, the *Second National Development Plan* (1970-1974) was launched with the intent to "rehabilitate economic activities in the war-affected areas" which was primarily the Southeastern region, and with the objective of achieving a strong, united, just and self-reliant post-civil war nation (Olayiwola & Adeleye, 2005). The national objectives of the plan detailed the following as its guiding focus: (i) a united, strong, and self-reliant nation; (ii) a great and dynamic economy; (iii) a just and egalitarian society; (iv) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and (v) a free and democratic society (FRN, 1970, p.32). The plan earmarked about 2 million NGN (5.7 percent) for capital expenditure which included socio-economic infrastructure development in health, water, electricity, and educational sectors. The plan also targetted social infrastructure development in rural Nigeria which implied that the Nigerian government was desirous of socio-economic transformation for the whole country.

Available literature which examined this development plan vis-à-vis desires to ensure social justice and social change in post-civil war Nigeria has declared that this plan laid the precedence for industrial, fiscal, and economic policies which did little or nothing to bring Nigeria closer as a nation. Ekundare's (1971) analysis of the *Second National Development Plan* shows that while the Nigerian government attempted to place a premium on social justice and national integration after the civil war, some of its policies refused to acknowledge regional disparities as well as differences in levels of growth. Consequently, while the Southeastern region, which had been the theater of the civil war needed much more public investments, the development plan placed priority on 'equal sharing' and even socioeconomic investments across the country. For instance, while the plan spent over 86 million NGN as 'planned public investment expenditure' in this sector, it disregarded basic economic principles and sited industrial projects in 'uneconomical' areas. This meant that even if an area did not have necessary industrial inputs and opportunities at surviving, the development plan insisted on "promot[ing] even development and fair distribution of industries in all parts of the country" (FRN, 1970, p. 144). This significantly alienated many pre-war industries in Southeastern Nigeria within the period of the development plan because finance was not invested in many of the pre-civil war industries. Additionally, Obi-Ani (2009) is of the view that such fiscal and industrial policy contained in the development plan further ensured many Igbo people, after the war, ventured further into retail and services businesses, a sub-sector which could accommodate people with little or no capital. It is also important to note, that via the Second National Development Plan, financing for the resuscitation

of major markets in Onitsha, Aba and Umuahia for such retail trading, was provided to the Eastern Central State Government.

In terms of education, the development plan stated that it was devoted and designed towards an increased level of education while ensuring a reduction in the educational gap between the different States and between the urban and rural areas. The government recognized the differences in levels of education in various parts of the country, and how this could constitute a threat to “society’s economic and political equilibrium” (Ekundare, 1971, p. 155). The development plan provided for government education expenditure and investments towards areas like the development and expansion of the number of primary and secondary schools to all States. Additionally, the development plan provided for improving teachers' training and technical education development within the period. However, reports and inquiries into the implementation of such plans as it affected the Southeast region, hold varying views from the commitment of the post-civil war Nigerian government. According to the *Lagos Daily Times* (1970), a significant number of schools in the Southeast were provided with funds for resuscitation via international development partners (like UNICEF/UNESCO) who provided about 2.4 million NGN for this purpose. Also, while the Second National Development Plan emphasized the provision of a balanced sharing and development for schools, this once war-torn region which had lost well over 80 percent of pre-civil war school infrastructure, often resorted to a combination of voluntary agencies, private individuals, and government to the provision of infrastructure for education (Obi-Ani, 2009).

Other sectors like healthcare, water, and sanitation also received considerable attention in the Second National Development Plan. However, evaluation reports on the implementation of such plans at different State levels indicate partial success. In the health sector, despite the destruction of numerous hospitals and healthcare centres across the Southeast, only about 40 percent of hospitals were restored by the East Central State Government, of which many of them could not tend to the post-civil war health crisis in the region (*Lagos Daily Times*, 22 October 1970). While most States attempted to navigate the tight finances provided in healthcare, water, and sanitation, many communities in the Southeast began to introduce schemes to support the provision of health centers and water for their communities. Obi-Ani (2009) records that in Njikoka and Ohafia Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Anambra and Abia States respectively, the first post-civil war cottage hospitals were built primarily by community efforts. Also in the water sector, while the government plan (at the State level) provided for the provision/improvement of rural and urban water schemes at Enugu, Nsukka, Abakaliki, Onitsha, Owerri, Umuahia, and Aba, it cost the government about 340,000 NGN and 600,000 NGN respectively. These provisions remained inadequate when compared to the pre-war levels, consequently, community efforts further intensified during the period of the Second National Development Plan. In Anambra for instance, several communities spent over 400,000 NGN on forty-six water projects, while in areas that had severe water shortages (like the Abakaliki zone), people often resorted to streams which often increased the rate of guinea-worm cases (Egboh, 1973).

Development Plan of the 21st Century –The MDGs and the Southeast Region

Nigeria’s commitment to wholesome development shows in her acceding and subsequent ratification of numerous international development agreements, plans, and partnerships for economic advancement. This is evident within different system levels (sub-regional, regional and

international). Here, development blueprints and strategies championed by international global governance regimes fall within our purview. Such development plans and strategies, although conceived sometimes as ‘Western or Eurocentric’ have been fashioned towards development models of Western developed countries. Justification of such arguments arose because of attempts to demystify models of economic advancement that dominated by Euro-centric writings. Such perspectives existed since the mid-point of the 20th century, as necessary pointers for economic growth and development. Another fundamental characteristic of such development plans and programmes which they received from both developed countries and their development partner agencies like Britain and its UKAid/DFID; the United States and USAid and Japan’s ‘The People of Japan Fund and international organizations. Furthermore, other global governance institutions like the World Bank, African Development Bank, and the United Nations via some of its specialised agencies have also channeled their support towards the design, implementation, and monitoring of such global development plans. Although nation-states are encouraged to adjust such programmes, this is usually done at individual countries own discretion and if such country feels the need to seek alternative development models or plans, for which some western institutions are tacit about and frown on (Brown, 2020).

One of such commitment to international development plans, which the Nigerian government actively participated in, was the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Since the signing of the *Millennium Declaration* in 2000, the Nigerian government alongside 146 countries initiated programmes aimed at ensuring she meets the MDGs before the 2015 target date. As contained in the *Millennium Declaration*, these eight goals constituting of 18 targets and 48 technical indicators represented a widely cited yardstick against which advances for wholesome development is measured and judged (Kenny & Sumner, 2011). The MDGs was also seen as a nexus for tackling major social challenges like provision of adequate healthcare, improve education enrollment, reduce dropout rates and provide needed infrastructure. All of which besets developing countries, as was the case of post-civil war Nigeria. The MDGs represented renewed international commitment and partnership to address these challenges.

In the Nigerian context, the MDGs were believed not to be new to development planning and policies. Those who hold this view believe the MDGs are essentially a scaled-up version of policies investment that Nigeria had been putting in place for decades (Eze, Pondell, & Agu, 2015), (Okere, 2013). Thus, the MDGs are considered as an invaluable reference point for ensuring that efforts for development are redoubled and continuously scrutinized.

Although the *Millennium Declaration* was signed in 2000, renewed vigour for MDGs came in 2005 with a negotiated debt relief granted to Nigeria under President Olusegun Obasanjo. With this debt relief, Nigeria saved about one billion dollars every year. In turn, she committed a significant amount of such monies to pro-poor programmes and policies concerned with meeting the MDGs before 2015. It was this money derived from debt relief that the Nigerian government committed towards the provision of health, water and sanitation, education sectors across the country to achieve the targets of the MDGs before 2015. In the Southeast region, although successive governments after the Second National Development Plan had introduced multiple programmes and projects to accelerate socio-economic development, the MDGs should be regarded as a similar post-war plan in the right direction. Implementation of this international plan was achieved via strategic programmes like the conditional grants scheme to states and local government (CGS), conditional cash transfers (CCTs), Quickwins –constituency projects, and direct finance provided to specific ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) for MDGs-

specific projects (Okere & Okeyika, 2016). Table 2 shows debt relief gains (DRG) funds allocation from the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP-MDGs) under the conditional grants scheme programme towards development plan implementation from 2007-2014. States implementing the MDGs plan under the architecture of the CGS were expected to provide matching grants to support the federal government's efforts towards achieving the MDGs before 2015.

Table 2: Summary of Total CGS to State and CGS to LGA Funds from 2007-2014

Year	CGS to States Total Investment (N' billion)	CGS to LGAs Total Investment (N' billion)	CCT	Total (N' billion)
2007	18.41	0.00		18.41
2008	48.80	0.00		48.80
2009	53.65	0.00		53.65
2010	0.00	0.00		0.00
2011	36.06	22.60	13.06	58.66
2012	12.89	29.60		55.55
2013	10.21	42.00		52.21
2014	12.50	13.60		26.10
Total	192.52	107.80	13.06	313.38

Source: CGS Unit of OSSAP-MDGs

According to the Debt Relief Gains (DRG) report produced by OSSAP-MDGs, the Southeast region between the periods of the MDGs had witnessed significant investments in sectors of healthcare, education, water and sanitation, among other sectors (OSSAP-MDGs, 2012) which needed further attention despite the effects of the civil war and successive governments' effort to turn around socio-economic development of the region. The report shows that despite 5468 project interventions in these sectors (Abia: 923; Anambra: 1562; Ebonyi: 882; Enugu: 685; Imo: 1416), over 49 percent of these projects were identified when evaluators conducted project identification and impact analysis between 2011 and 2012. The MDGs development plan had laid a further foundation for social infrastructure investments in this region. Consequently, such investments, which saw healthcare systems, become the most dominant sector accounting for over 50 percent of investments across all the states in the region (OSSAP-MDGs, 2012: pp 56-59). Anambra State particularly had received the most DRG healthcare intervention 443, followed by Abia and Imo States at 338 and 308 respectively. Health projects like improvement of primary healthcare centres and cottage hospitals, as well as (re-)training healthcare personnel for maternal and child mortality issues and the provision of drugs and medical equipment covered the scope of these healthcare DRG projects. The report further indicates that Enugu State had the most DRG interventions in education projects (158) covering issues like reconstruction of basic primary and secondary schools as well as equipping these schools with necessary furniture and infrastructure.

This MDGs development plan period also saw increased investment in water and sanitation across the Southeast region. Information provided by the DRG report indicates that

over 800 projects to cater for the water needs of the region were provided under the MDGs development plan across the region, with Anambra State recording the most (471). Evaluators and government officials believe that because of the MDGs development plan and process of implementation at State and Local Government cum community levels, most communities in the Southeast witnessed further increase in social infrastructure intervention projects that sought to improve their post-civil war living conditions (Eze, Pondell, & Agu, 2015). The motivation for this was because communities actively participated in development planning, citing, and in some cases financial contribution (via counterpart funding) of MDGs projects across these sectors. Consequently, this gave most communities that had benefited from these MDGs projects a sense of ownership. Reflective of this, most of these MDGs projects were provided with adequate security and finance to offset the cost of minor maintenance and repairs (Eze, Pondell, & Agu, 2015). During a Conditional Grants Scheme to Local Governments Areas (CGS-LGA) project monitoring and scale-up exercise to Enugu State in 2012, the researcher who led a team to Igboeze LGA, recalls how community leaders asked to meet with the team. Community leaders advocated for more projects directed towards their communities as they had actively participated in MDGs project planning and development for neighbouring communities and believed they had the necessary capacities to reflect it in their communities. Consequently, this research argues that the MDGs development plan period brought with it similar pre-civil war infrastructure competition witnessed across Igboland.

Another positive impact of the MDGs development plan epoch in Southeastern Nigeria and its association with community participation is the level of success of programmes covering health, education, water and sanitation. Unlike other programmes introduced in post-civil Nigeria (like the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure –DFRRI), which adopted a "top-down" approach to infrastructure planning, development, and implementation, the MDGs epoch saw significant and active participation from host communities at different stages of social infrastructure projects. Demonstrative of this, a field survey conducted by researchers that focused on community participation in MDGs programmes in Awka North LGA, Anambra State supports this view. Agu-Aguiyi, Onyia, Anigbogu & Umebali (2018) in their study of ten communities in Awka North LGA (Amansea, Mgbakwu, Ebenebe, Oba Ofemili, Isuaniocha, Achalla, Urum, Ugbene, and Amanuke) showed statistical evidence that communities in this local government were actively involved in MDGs programmes which included: involvement in project evaluation and procurement of project materials; provision of land and labour for MDGs projects; involved in supervision, maintenance, and advisory services; and contribution to project fund. They further showed that such increased community participation ensured the success of MDGs projects and reduced project abandonment, encouraged local content in MDGs programmes, and enhanced effective and timely delivery of quality projects and the attainment of MDGs using specific indicators (Agu-Aguiyi, *et al*, 2018).

Additionally, such projects implemented under the MDGs development plan further motivated numerous communities to embark on self-help efforts and channel finance further into socio-economic sectors of healthcare, education, water and sanitation. It can be argued that while post-civil war Igboland from the 1980s had increased self-help efforts under various institutionalised systems, the MDGs development plan period also saw a renewed effort by people in the Southeast to reignite that same spirit of unity, cooperation, and support that existed immediately after the civil war, towards the development of these social infrastructures. This period sought to improve the spirit of "*Onye Aghana Nwanneya*" (i.e. be your brothers' keeper)

as this was again reflected with the creation of the Association of South East Town Unions (ASETU) in 2013 to be an umbrella platform for all Igbo Town Unions geared towards the reconstruction and provision of infrastructure in Southeastern Nigeria. Such organisations subsisting on the various social infrastructure development progress recording in the MDGs epoch continued to mobilise the Igbos both at home and in the diaspora to embark on such infrastructure development where government interventions were minimal. The Southeast communities, both at institutional and individual levels saw a significant increase in the provision of healthcare systems, education infrastructure, toilets, and water for its people following the pattern and precedent set by MDGs implementation.

In Anambra for instance, communities like Awka Etiti, Neni, Adazi-Nnukwu, and Oraukwu continued to intensify efforts that were reminiscence of post-civil war years all geared towards achieving the status of “Small London” (Vanguard NG, 2020). Additionally, Mbagwu, Mannir, Ewelum, & Ezema, (2016) evaluated communities in Nsukka LGA, Enugu State, and showed the extent of such community self-help efforts in the health sector immensely benefited from youths. Their study uncovered that increased youth participation and the 'free-hand' role given to youths in the execution and planning of community health projects, reduced significantly the level of abandonment of such healthcare projects and the levels of rural-urban migrations. Clearly, besides the significant increase of healthcare projects, the post-MDGs development plan epoch saw the indirect impact of such projects on the social life of host communities.

Within the MDGs development plan period in the Southeast region, the architecture of development change agents in Igboland altered. While these infrastructure projects covered important socio-economic sectors, people recognised and grew more confident in themselves as change agents and understood self-help as a veritable means for community development and infrastructure development. Demonstrative of this, a significant number of communities in the Southeast continued to look inward rather than depend solely on government finance for infrastructure development efforts. Furthermore, this period saw the effective mobilisation of town unions, community associations both at home and in the diaspora, as well as multiple individuals standing out to support infrastructure development in sectors of education, healthcare, water and sanitation. A report argues that once State governments began to see the level of mobilisation and organisation of such community self-help efforts, attempts were made to institutionalize the process (Vanguard NG, 2020). For instance, the government of Anambra began the "Community Choose your Project" initiative, which provided various communities with an additional 20 million NGN to support the further development of self-help social infrastructures.

Another characteristic of the MDGs development plan period is the diaspora effect towards infrastructure development in the Southeast region. Many demand push and supply pull factors have caused many Nigerians to migrate out of the country. Statistically, information from the Global Migrant Origin database compiled by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) suggests that from 2000-2010 more than 1 million Nigerians (estimated 0.6 percent of the country's population) had migrated out of the country (IOM, 2009). While official demographics from government sources remain patchy, it is the understanding of many that feature peculiar to these Nigerian migrations are: they are among the most educated thus specialising in various fields; they contribute significantly to remittances back home; a significant percentage of these migrants are from the Southeast region. Concerning post-civil war social infrastructure development within the MDGs period, these migrants (Igbo in diaspora) have further mobilized

themselves into groups to add towards social infrastructure development in the Southeast region. This feature is particular to Igbo migrants in developed countries in Europe, America as well as developing countries in Africa. As such, organisations like the *Umu Igbo Unite* (UIU) group based in Boston, Massachusetts and United People for Africa Congress in Washington, D.C all in the United States of America (USA) –but to mention a few –were created within the period under review. These groups as well as many others have successfully mobilized their members to support social infrastructure development projects in the Southeast region. In 2015, for instance, a Nigerian-American and an Alum of Northeastern University, Boston, Claudia Okonkwo, was featured in a local daily newspaper for her efforts in raising over 17,000 USD to build three boreholes and other community development efforts in Anambra State (Onyeneho, 2020). Such a link between the diaspora and home within this period has further renewed the commitment of *Ndi Igbo* towards post-civil war infrastructure development efforts.

Contemporary Challenges in a Post-Civil War Development Plan Period

While significant progress has been recorded towards social infrastructure development in the region, there exist many challenges and issues which have the potential to disrupt the progress recorded from the MDGs period. Furthermore, these challenges also can distract the level of self-help efforts while reducing the government's capacity to finance and sustain infrastructure development. This section reviews some of these challenges and relates them to how they impact post-civil war development planning and infrastructure development progress.

The issue of corruption has continued to plague every facet of life in Nigeria and also poses a threat to social infrastructure development in the Southeast region. The impact of corruption as it affects post-civil war social infrastructure development can be considered in two folds. Firstly, from the government side and its continued support infrastructure development. The information shows that various State governments in the region, in a bid to support the progress recorded in infrastructure development, have intensified efforts to support town unions in various communities. However, the government has also attempted to control the pace of such progress with the appointment of their political lackeys into the leadership of most town unions. Consequently, some of these political appointees to town unionships are "corrupt and consider their position as an opportunity to make more money for themselves and cronies (Obasi Jerry quoted in Vanguard NG, 2020). Additionally, to further assert their political control of their State, some Governors resort to supporting the candidacy of "questionable characters" as traditional leaders and base further provision of social infrastructure finance on political patronage. This situation slows and(or) halts the pace of infrastructure development while also entrenching corruption and diversion of public funds. Additionally, such a situation creates crises and dis-unity thus making development planning and implementation difficult. Consequently, the spirit of community brotherhood support which some infrastructure projects subsist on becomes eroded.

Secondly and closely related to the government's political control, self-help efforts have dwindled because a significant number of individuals who can support self-help efforts are distraught with corruption and the handling of community finances. As Igwe Edward Okonkwo of Ogulogu Olo Autonomous Community in Ezeagu LG, Enugu State believes that age grade, with individuals who can help community development efforts, have scattered leaving community development to corrupt traditional rulers and town unions. This situation, therefore,

alienates specific persons who have enormous potentials to improve community infrastructure either by finance or service.

The existing impact of corruption on social infrastructure development goes antithetical to the accountability needed for development planning and project execution. While years of corruption and distrust between government and people in this region have created a significant trust deficit, accountability could restore the commitment and motivation needed towards the improvement of such infrastructure. Likewise, to improve accountability in the execution of these community development projects, consultations with relevant stakeholders, transparency at every level of development planning and execution, in addition to increased monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can reduce corruption levels and ensure accountability for any social infrastructure.

Over the period of the MDGs development plan and beyond, the calls for political and economic reforms have intensified across Nigeria. In the Southeast region specifically, many people have called for the implementation of 'true federalism' and re-sharing of revenues, further State and local government creation, as well as the implementation of equitable policies which demonstrates social justice and reduces marginalisation. While some, if not all of these demanded reforms are germane, they have the potential to distract the focus and effort geared towards social infrastructure development in the region. Such calls for reforms have corresponded with a time when community infrastructure development efforts in healthcare, education, water and sanitation have also dwindled. This study claims that these issues are closely linked and have the potential to erode the progress of development occasioned by the MDGs period, by increasing the focus on politics and political issues to the chagrin of social sector investment needed. Additionally, such issues can engage the people enthusiastically while further deepening the scars that is the Nigeria-Biafra War, ultimately distracting them from the focus of continued infrastructure development in the Southeast region with or without government assistance. It is the position of this paper that requests for necessary reforms to improve government's functionality and improvement of post-civil war social infrastructure can go in tandem, as one should not be considered more important than the other.

Lastly, insecurity and security concerns remain a huge challenge to the development of social infrastructure in the region. The spite of crime and security threats in the region remains an issue of concern to many and governments have intensified efforts to solve these challenges. However, development planning is usually a wholesome activity that should also include security concerns when necessary. Since the MDGs period, community policing reminiscent of the pre-civil war period has been undertaken. While every tier of government has a role to play, it should be emphasised that the provision of social infrastructure without commensurate security could retrogress the region further. People cannot use social infrastructures if they do not feel safe in their communities. As such, going forward, development plans should make adequate adjustments for security concerns peculiar to the Southeast region.

The levels of gap indicated via socio-economic indicators in the region show that there is still more work to be done by everyone (government inclusive). While remarkable progress has been recorded since the turn of the century, the above challenges could significantly distract such progress recorded.

Conclusion

Investments in healthcare, education, water and sanitation were most needed in the Southeast region after the Nigeria-Biafra war. While governments' post-civil war development plans tended to the social infrastructure gap across the country, gaps in these sectors in the Southeast still existed. The MDGs period remains a significant time as it motivated further investment via various mechanisms towards these social sectors. The logic behind these investments was that such would galvanize governments to its social responsibility towards a people who suffered the dastardly effects of war in their area. Further motivation was in the re-awakening of *Ndi-Igbo* towards community efforts saddled on the wings of brotherhood and unity. No doubt the MDGs was partially successful as some characteristic features of it included: improved community participation in social infrastructure development planning and execution, an upsurge in projects covering healthcare, water and education across the five states in the Southeast, increased awareness and competition among communities for projects, willingness to provide necessary inputs needed for project execution (in some cases funds), among other things.

The impact of this MDGs development plan period extends further even after the termination of the programme in 2015. The Southeast region has recorded improvement in community self-help projects motivated by individuals or diaspora groups who adopted the MDGs model of social infrastructure development. Clearly, the success of their effort even motivated the government to recognize the importance of this model thus providing support for it. However, while these projects have slowly declined, the author argues that issues associated with corruption, political and economic reforms, and accountability in the region have limited its success post-MDG. With the issue of insecurity, *Ndi-Igbo* appears to be distracted from the primary focus which most saddled upon themselves after the civil war (i.e. the infrastructure development of the region).

It is the view of this paper that there is a need to renew the focus and direction towards the improvement of healthcare and health systems, construction of schools while equipping them adequately, continued sinking of boreholes, and construction of public toilets where needed irrespective of government support or finance. The post-war days and period of infrastructure development can be restored if much attention is given to the fact that this region needs such infrastructure because the civil war disrupted her progression. While political-economic issues and reforms might be germane, the wholesome improvement of the region should still be paramount for both the region's individuals and the government.

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