

Historical Perspective of Anioma Struggle for Identity in Nigeria Since 1951

©Daniel Olisa Iweze

Department of History and International Studies, University of Benin, Nigeria



Abstract

This paper explores the trajectory of Anioma's struggle for identity which dates back to the 1950s through the 1960s when the people submitted several memoranda for the establishment of a West Niger Province. Instead, the Midwest Region was established in 1963 incorporating Aniomaland and other non-Yoruba-speaking areas in the old Western Region. The aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War and post-war years appear to have fostered interethnic tensions between the Anioma and non-Igbo ethnic groups which increasingly renewed the Anioma people's agitation for a state of their own from the 1970s until 1991 when Delta State was established. The people expected that the making of Asaba the capital of Delta State would rapidly stimulate the social and economic development of the area; instead, virulent interethnic politics ensued with the Urhobo's alignment with the Isoko, Ijaw and Itsekiri ethnic groups and systematically dominated the affairs of the state. Anioma people became marginalized and played second fiddle in the governance of the state until when Ifeanyi Okowa from Aniomaland was elected the Governor of Delta State from 2015 to 2023. The Anioma state movement despite being the oldest movement for state establishment in Nigeria is yet to realize its objective of having an Anioma State established for the Anima people. Data for the paper were drawn from primary and secondary sources.

Keywords: Anioma, Western Igbo, Identity, Midwest, Delta State, Dennis Osadebay

Introduction

Geographically, the Anioma (Western Igbo) people are found in the eastern section of the defunct Midwest Region later renamed the Midwest State. Anioma is territorially marked off from non-Igbo neighbors such as Bini (Edo, Urhobo, Isoko, Ijaw and Esan). The name Anioma was coined by Chief Dennis Osadebay, a prominent son of Asaba and the Premier of the defunct Midwest region. He was the founding father of the Anioma State movement in the 1950s. Anioma is a political construct, which literary means "people of good and prosperous land". Anioma was formed by taking the first letters of the names of the former four local government areas of Aniocha, Ndokwa, Ika and Oshimili which was polished with

the letters “M” and “A” from Oshimili and Aniocha in recognition of the council areas being at the vanguard for the cause of Anioma people. The name was derived from the geopolitical identity of the Igbo-speaking people that make up the nine local government areas of the present Delta State comprising Oshimili-South, Oshimili-North, Aniocha-South, Aniocha-North, Ika North-East, Ika South, Ukwuani, Ndokwa-East and Ndokwa-West local government Areas.

Anioma comprises people of diverse origins, who over the centuries have had political, economic and social contacts with one another and developed a unique culture distinct from the Igbo east of the Niger as well as their neighboring ethnic groups such as Urhobo, Isoko, Benin and Esan, Ijaw and Itsekiri. Anioma is located at the crossroads of diverse influences. It has a diverse tradition of origins derived from the Igbo, Igala, Benin and Yoruba corpus. The contagious pattern of their settlement made them develop cultural homogeneities and share common identities and values. Since the 1950s, Anioma has remained the preferred indigenous name the people collectively refer to themselves. Given the preceding background, this paper examines the historical perspective of the Western Igbo people’s demand for the establishment of the Anioma State which spanned over six decades since 1951.

The agitation for establishing regions in Nigeria during the British colonial administration began with Richard’s Constitution which divided the country into three regions (Anifowose, 1982). In the 1950s, the Anioma people’s representatives in the Western Region House of Assembly led by Hon Dennis Osadebay demanded the establishment of Oshimili province and later West Niger Province out of the then Asaba and Aboh Division (Utomi, 1995; Ashibudike, 1996; Orewa & Halim, 1996). Nonetheless, the British colonial administration did not grant self-government to any region in the country. The clamor for self-determination became a contentious issue in Nigerian politics with the minority group’s fear of domination and marginalization by the major ethnic groups. To allay the minority fears, the Midwest Region was established out of the Western Region in 1963 with Chief Dennis Osadebay as the Premier and Benin-City as the capital. With its establishment, other minority groups in the Midwest feared domination by the Edo-speaking peoples making the non-Edo ethnic groups to agitate for separate states such as Delta, Warri, and Anioma (Ashibudike, 1996).

During Yakubu Gowon’s military regime, state establishment topped the agenda of the Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference in September of 1966. The Anioma people led by their traditional rulers submitted the proposal for the establishment of Onitsha or Niger State to the conference (Ashibudike, 1996). The outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War in 1967 disrupted the movement for state establishment. At the end of the war, the horrible post-war experiences of the people gave rise to a resurgence of the demand for the establishment of the Anioma State. During General Murtala Mohammed’s regime, the people submitted a memorandum for the establishment of Niger State to the Justice Ayo Irikefe Committee (*The Proposal for the Establishment of Anioma State*; Okocha, 1994). General Murtala Mohammed established seven states in 1976, but no state was established out of the Midwest State.

In the Second Republic under President Shehu Shagari, the people continued the agitation for the establishment of Anioma State out of Bendel State in the 1980s. In the 1990s, during General Ibrahim Babangida’s regime, the people submitted their proposal for the establishment of Anioma State to Justice Samuel Cookey’s led Political Bureau (Ashibudike, 1996). In August of 1991, General Babangida established Delta State with

Asaba as the capital. Although Anioma State was not established, making Asaba the capital of Delta State to some extent satisfied the yearnings of the people; yet, they felt marginalized by the Urhobo and other ethnic groups in the state. The justification for Anioma people's marginalization is premised on the view that since the establishment of Delta State in 1991, Anioma had not produced a Governor of the state until the past political dispensation when Ifeanyi Okowa was elected the Governor of Delta State from 2015 to 2023.

Given the preceding background, this paper is guided by the following objectives: (a) present the historical trajectory of the Anioma people's agitation for a separate province in 1951, (b) explore the nature of the people's agitation for the establishment of a separate region from 1951 to attainment of independence in 1960, (c) examine the people's struggle for the establishment of Anioma state from 1960 to 1990, (d) ascertain the reasons for the people's renewed agitation for the establishment of Anioma state in 1991 when Delta State was established with Asaba as the capital, and (e) ascertain whether the election of Arthur Ifeanyi Okowa from Anioma satisfies the aspirations of the people or not for the establishment of Anioma State from 2019 to 2023. Accordingly, the paper provides answers to the following research questions: When did the Anioma people's agitation for a separate identity in Nigeria begin? What was the nature of the people's agitation for a separate region from 1951 to 1960? What was the pattern of the agitation for the establishment of Anioma State in the post-independence period from 1960 to 1990? What were the causes of the people's renewed clamor for the establishment of Anioma State from 1991 to 2019? To what extent did the election of Ifeanyi Okowa as the Governor of Delta State from 2019 to 2023 satisfy the people's demand for the establishment of Anioma State?

Methodology and Sources

This paper adopts the qualitative research methodology which is designed to explore and analyze detailed and comprehensive people's experiences by fundamentally reporting them in a non-numerical form. It entails the collection of data from primary and secondary sources. It comprises the use of non-numeric data such as archival materials, oral interviews, government publications, field observations, ethnography and different kinds of secondary data.

Primary data were collected through oral interviews with selected informants comprising prominent civilians, retired military officers, opinion leaders and other resource persons of Anioma extraction who are knowledgeable about the decades-long Anioma struggles for identity since the 1950s. The collection of oral information was vital to gain useful insights as not all the information was available in written sources. Oral information also helped in corroborating, validating or refuting information from written sources. Other kinds of primary data sources were the Federal Government and Delta State Government's publications as well as those from social movements in Anioma. The oral sources provided useful information that complemented the extant literature. Secondary data included published works like articles in journals, edited chapters, unpublished dissertations, conference papers, and media reports. The secondary sources were critically scrutinized and complemented with oral information to present an authentic account of the dynamics of the Anioma people's struggle for an identity. Primary and secondary sources were critically analyzed to obtain their validity or debunk some perceptions as regards the people's demands for a separate state within the Nigerian federation.

Conceptualization of Identity

Identity as a sociopolitical concept is conceptualized to mean “a person’s sense of belonging to a group if (it) influences his political behaviour” (Erickson, 1968 as cited in Jega, 2000, 12). Identity entails a “commitment to a cause,” “love and trust for a group,” “emotional tie to a group,” and “obligations and responsibilities” relating to membership of a group with which a person identifies. Jega contends that “identity is not only about individuality and self-awareness, but also and especially about identification with, and commitment to, shared values and beliefs, in a social collectivity into which a person belongs” (Jega, 2000, 12). Identity is also defined as any group attribute that provides recognition or definition, reference, affinity, coherence and meaning for individual members of the group, acting individually or collectively (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). Identity politics is therefore defined as “politics either starting from or aiming at claimed identities of their protagonists” (Calhoun, 1994, 16). It is about national political struggles over access to the state and to avenues of accumulation. It involves the mobilization of identity consciousness to establish a mass base of support for the ruling classes, and the elite generally, in their factional struggles in the accumulation process (Jega, 2000). Identity has been significant in Nigerian politics right from the colonial to the post-colonial era. In the 1950s, a ‘minority’ identity emerged and the issue of ethnic minorities became prominent in Nigerian politics (Mustapha, 2000).

There is a plethora of scholarly works on identity politics in Nigeria such as Nnoli, 1978, Anifowose, 1982; Otite, 1990; Osaghae, 1984; Suberu, 2001; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005; Jega, 2000, and Ukiwo, 2005. Other works that focused on ethnic minority politics in Nigeria include Alagoa and Tamuno, 1989; Adejuyigbe, 1989; Adejuyigbe, Dare & Adepju, 1982; Suberu, 1996, 1999 & 2001; Ekeh, 1996; Mustapha, 2000; and Ukiwo, 2005. The works that concentrate on state establishment include Adejuyigbe, 1979; Ellah, 1983, Okpu, 1986; Akinyele, 1990, 1996; Ashibudike, 1996; and Nwadike, 1991, among others. Despite the extant literature on identity politics and the ethnic minority question, the (Anioma) Western Igbo struggle for identity from the pre-independence period in the 1950s to the contemporary period has not been given adequate scholarly attention. It is this neglect and knowledge gap in the people’s decades-long struggles for identity within the Nigerian federation that this study seeks to explore.

Agitation for State Establishment by (Anioma) Western Igbo People, 1951-1960

The agitation for the establishment of regions in Nigeria began during the period of British colonial administration when, as aforementioned, Richard’s Constitution divided the country into three regions and subsequently entrenched regionalism (Anifowose, 1982). The drive for self-determination has been a contentious issue in Nigerian politics which predated the attainment of independence in 1960. It emanated from the minority specter of political, economic and social domination and marginalization by the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. Before the establishment of the Midwest Region, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Dennis Osadebay under the platform of the National Council of Nigeria Citizens, (NCNC) moved the motion for the establishment of Midwest Region. The establishment of the Midwest out of the Yoruba-dominated Western Region with Dennis Osadebay as the Premier and Benin-City the capital later gave rise to more agitations by other minority ethnic identities in the Region and other parts of Nigeria. In the wake of the establishment of the Midwest Region, other

minority groups expressed fear of being dominated and marginalized by the Edo ethnic group that emerged as the new “majority” group. This development led to an upsurge in the clamor by the marginal ethnic groups in the region for separate states of their own. Among the states agitated for establishment in the defunct Midwest Region (later Midwest State) were Delta, Warri, and Anioma (Anifowose, 1982).

In 1951, a political awakening was brought to the Western Igbo people following years of neglect. As a result, the people’s representatives in the Regional Assembly such as Honorable Dennis Osadebay representing Oshimili, Honorable F. H. Utomi representing Aniocha, Honorable Agbogidi Obi of Akwumazi representing Ika, Honorable Frank Oputa Ututu and Honorable Oki both representing Ndokwa, they jointly moved a motion in the former Western House of Assembly to seek “a separate province” for Western Igbo people, who previously had been balkanized and merged with Benin and Warri Provinces by the British colonial administration. This merger was neither by referendum or choice, nor by consent, but by coercion meant to satisfy the imperial interests of the British (Utomi, 1995; Osia, 2008).

The demand for the establishment of a separate province for the Western Igbo people dates back to 1954 when the people requested the then British Colonial Secretary, Right Honorable Lennox Boyd in London to establish a West Niger Province for them. According to Chief Dennis Osadeba,

:

I moved a motion in the Midwestern House of Assembly and the same motion in the Midwestern House of Chiefs calling for the establishment of five provinces in the Midwestern Region. The motion was unanimously passed by both Houses. I had suggested that the new provinces should come into being on the first of April 1966...But the provinces were not to be for on January 15, 1966, the soldiers took over power from the civilian governments of Nigeria (Utomi, 1995, 29).

One of the five provinces proposed by Chief Dennis Osadebay was Oshimili. The others were Ubiaja, Benin, Delta and Urhobo. Oshimili was to satisfy the yearnings of the Western Igbo people for the establishment of a separate province formed by the former Asaba and Aboh Division of the then Warri (Delta) province of the Midwestern Region (Utomi, 1995).

This early heightened awareness was because the Anioma people were autonomous clans before the incursion of the British colonial administration, independent of their neighboring ethnic nationalities such as Isoko, Urhobo, Itsekiri and Ijaw. The deliberate balkanization of the proposed West Niger Province by the British for administrative convenience by placing the Aboh Division in Warri Province and the Asaba Division in Benin Province could be a result of independence. No response was made to this request because at that time the British government was too preoccupied with the granting of self-government to the regions in Nigeria, as the West Niger Province (Western Igbo) was equally involved in the demands for self-government for the regions even up to 1963 (Ashibudike, 1996).

In 1956, the Western Igbo held a convention at Ama in (Ndokwa) now Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State to deliberate on the need for the Igbo-speaking people to have a separate province. At the end of the convention, “they submitted a request to the

Colonial Secretary in London for the establishment of West Niger Province consisting of the then Asaba and Aboh Divisions of Western Nigeria” (Orewa & Halim, 1996, 1). The movement was temporarily abandoned in favor of the movement for the establishment of the Midwest Region because Chief Dennis Osadebay, the leader of the movement, responded to the call of Obi Obika Gbenoba 11, the Obi of Agbor, Chief Oweh and Chief Odiase to lead the movement for the establishment of the Midwest Region.

Anioma Agitation for State Establishment in the Post-colonial Period, 1960-1990

The establishment of the Midwest Region in 1963 did not satisfy all the aspirations of interest groups in every part of the region. The minority ethnic groups comprising Ishan, Akoko-Edo, Ijaw and Igbo expressed fears of domination by the Edo ethnic group. But it was a welcome development in Benin, Estako, and Afemmai Divisions as well as in Urhobo and Isoko Divisions. The Western Igbo people had some reservations since Dennis Osadebay was the Premier of the newly established Region (Ashibudike, 1996). Nevertheless, a section of Western Igbo people looked forward to having a region or province that would be Igbo rather than joining the Igbo east of Niger. Their grievances ranged from the conventional fears of domination, intimidation, marginalization and oppression. There were also complaints of political, economic and social domination as well as discrimination in the allocation of resources and distribution of social infrastructure and monopoly of development projects by the dominant ethnic groups.

At the Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference convened by General Gowon on September 12, 1966, the issue of state establishment dominated the military regime’s agenda. This made the prominent traditional rulers such as Asagba of Asaba, Obi Onyetenu, Obi of Agbor, Obi Obika Gbenoba and others hold a meeting at Issele-Uku on September 27, 1966 to deliberate on the issue of state establishment. At the end of the meeting, it was resolved that a petition should be submitted to Gowon indicating the desire of the Ika Igbo people to join their kith and kin across the River Niger in the event of a decision to establish more states in the country (Eliagwu, 1986).

The movement was disrupted in 1967 when Gowon dissolved the regional arrangement and established 12 states on May 27, 1967. The state establishment exercise in 1967 did not affect the Midwest State; it was left intact, while states were established out of other regions. Gowon further announced that any group that felt dissatisfied with the exercise could seek redress and promised to set up a Boundary and Delimitation Commission to look into the case of readjusting the boundaries of the new states (Federal Military Government View on Report, 8). Expectedly, these official pronouncements opened a floodgate of agitations for state establishment and boundary adjustments from all parts of the country including the Midwest State.

The movement for the establishment of Delta State was one of the vocal state movements that emerged to comprise Urhobo, Isoko, Ijaw and Itsekiri. The leaders wanted Delta State to be carved out of the then Delta Province due ostensibly to the neglect the area had suffered in the defunct Midwest State. Another strong agitation was from the Western Igbo people who demanded the establishment of Onitsha or Niger State (Ashibudike, 1996). Nevertheless, this movement was disrupted by the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War in 1967. At the end of the war, the traumatic experiences of the war and the horrifying post-war conditions on the people brought about the resurgence of the movement for the establishment

of a separate state for Western Igbo people

One of the outcomes of the implementation of the post-civil war programs was the exacerbation of intergroup relations between the Western Igbo and the non-Igbo groups in the Midwest State. The punitive and obnoxious measures inherent in the reconstruction programs enunciated by both the Midwest State and federal governments fostered interethnic friction and prejudice which was one of the aspects that vitiated the reconstruction programs. As a result, the injustices meted out to the Western Igbo which manifested in the economic and political domination by the non-Igbo ethnic identities made the people seek self-determination and increasingly renewed their clamor for the establishment of Anioma State.

The heterogeneity of the then Midwest and the events of the Biafran incursion into the area made reconciliation tasking. Both federal and Midwest State governments, to some extent, did relatively well in the aspects of reconstruction of damaged infrastructures and resettlement of displaced persons but did miserably little in reconciling the Western Igbo with other sub-nationalities in the state despite Colonel Samuel Ogbemudia and General Yakubu Gowon's official pronouncements to that effect. Nevertheless, the pragmatic aspect of the reconstruction program came from the resilience of individuals and the communal efforts of the people. One of the failures of the reconstruction programme was in the area of reconciliation. The program, to some extent, alienated the Western Igbo people whose area was devastated by the civil war and turned them into marginalized peoples. The Midwest State came out of the reconstruction era a highly divided people and this provided an opportunity for the exploitation of sectional interests which endangered ethnic harmony and fostered distrust, suspicion and hatred by other groups against the Anioma people.

The agitation for self-identity and movement for the establishment of the Anioma State gathered momentum in the immediate post-war period, giving rise to the formation of the Anioma State movement in various parts of the country and the Diaspora. In this regard, the Obi of Onitsha, Obi Onyejekwe, petitioned the federal military government to establish Niger or Onitsha State to comprise Asaba, Agbor, Aboh, Onitsha, Ogbaru Divisions and some parts of Anambra basin. He and other leaders appealed to the federal government to consider the plights of the people who were believed to have a common origin, outlook, temperament, aspirations and interests (Utomi, 1995). The demand for self-determination was predicated on the need for the people to determine their destiny and to get allocations from the federal government to reconstruct their residences and physical infrastructures damaged during the war.

The Anioma articulated their position in a three-page advertisement captioned "An Humble Memorial to His Excellency, General Yakubu Gowon, on the Establishment of the Niger State," dated January 18, 1975, and duly signed by 17 representatives of Asaba, Ika and Aboh Divisions. The petitioners pressed for the inclusion of the areas in the proposed Niger State to include Onitsha. Nonetheless, the Ndokwa section of Anioma rejected the idea of merging with Onitsha for fear of being dominated and marginalized by the Onitsha people.

On assumption of office as the new head of state after the overthrow of General Gowon in 1975, General Murtala Mohammed, because of the many demands for the establishment of states by minority ethnic groups, constituted a Five-Man Panel under the chairmanship of Justice Ayo Irikefe to look into the contentious issue of state establishment and boundary adjustments. The panel received petitions from all parts of the country, including the Midwest State for the establishment of Delta State, Warri Autonomous Province State and Niger State, and the merger of the Western Ijaw with the River State for

consideration (Federal Military Government, 1975, as cited in Adejuyigbe, 1989). Chief Nduka Eze, a renowned Anioma Labor Party activist and other Western Igbo leader sent a memorandum for the establishment of Niger State to the Justice Ayo Irikefe Committee. The committee was so satisfied with the Anioma case that it described it as “the most scientific proposal of all” (*The Proposal for the Establishment of Anioma State*; Okocha, 1994). The panel dismissed all the requests for the establishment of a state out of the Midwest State but recommended that the state should remain as it was constituted except for minor boundary adjustments. Although the panel did not recommend the establishment of a state out of the Midwest State, it observed that one of the reasons for the agitation was the result of bad governance. It further found the various state governments culpable of financial impropriety coupled with gross neglect of the minority areas in appointment to positions in the state and resource allocation. Nevertheless, the panel agreed that the political stability of the country could not be guaranteed if new states were not established (Federal Military Government Report, 10). Given these recommendations, on February 3, 1976, General Murtala Mohammed announced the establishment of an additional seven states bringing the number of states in Nigeria to 19.

With the return to civil rule in 1979, which marked the Second Republic, President Shehu Shagari promised to consider the issue of state establishment. One of the strongest agitators in the Midwest State (which was later changed to Bendel State in 1976) was the movement for the establishment of Anioma State to include all the Igbo speaking people in the state. In 1977, Western Igbo people resident in Benin led by Mr. Israel Amadi-Emina convened a conference in Benin City to discuss the case for the establishment of Anioma State. After the meeting, Mr. Israel Amadi-Emina presented the issue of the establishment of Anioma State to the 1977-1978 Constituent Assembly for consideration under the provisions of the 1979 Constitution for the establishment of more states in Nigeria (Orewa & Halim, 1996). The Western Igbo people’s agitation for the establishment of Anioma State continued in 1980, 1983 and 1989 until 1991 when Delta State was established with Asaba as the capital.

On January 5, 1980, the Anioma State movement was launched at Ika Hall in Agbor with Senator Nosike Ikpo as the Chairman and Mr. S. Ogbechie as the Secretary. A Central Working Committee was set up comprising of five members from the four local government areas—Oshimili, Aniocha, Ika, and Ndokwa—and they were charged with the responsibility of establishing awareness among the people and extending the campaign to the grassroots. The first and second rallies of the movement were held at Kwale, consecutively on January 26 and February 1980. The elected representatives from the four Igbo-speaking local government areas of Bendel State endorsed the demand for the establishment of Anioma State which was submitted to the National Assembly in Lagos on March 17, 1980, according to section (8) of the 1979 Constitution.

The Anioma State movement satisfied the pre-requisites of the House of Representatives Committee on the Establishment of States. The committee subsequently toured the proposed Anioma areas from October 24 to 28, 1980 to authenticate the veracity of the supposed mass support and validate the signatures. Having fulfilled the constitutional requirements, the committee recommended that the establishment of Anioma State should go for a referendum. The movement gathered momentum in the 1980s and the leaders and other members of the Central Working Committee mobilized the people and educated them on the need for the establishment of a separate state. Different branches of the Anioma State

movement were launched in Benin City, Lagos, Ibadan, Port-Harcourt, and various other parts of the country and beyond. The branches of the Anioma State movement popularized the name and pressurized both the Bendel State and federal governments to establish a state for the people (Ashibudike, 1996).

This development gave vent for the strengthening of the Anioma State movement under the auspices of Bendel East Leaders of Thought with Chief Israel Amadi-Emina as the National Chairman; Chief F. C. Halim, National Secretary; and Dr. G. O. Orewa, as National Coordinator. The Anioma State movement sent a memorandum to the Federal House of Representatives on June 18, 1980 and on November 21, 1980, and the Federal House of Representatives approved the establishment of Anioma State and Delta State out of Bendel State.

The National Assembly Conference Committee in its final report on the request for the establishment of States in 1983 recommended Anioma State as one of the 14 states that would go for a referendum having fulfilled all the constitutional provisions. The State Establishment Bill was signed by President Shehu Shagari on November 15, 1983, with the directive that the proposed new states approved for establishment should go for a referendum. The referendum scheduled to take place in 1984 did not hold because Shagari was overthrown in a coup d'état on December 31, 1983 (*The Proposal for the Establishment of Anioma State*, 2010). The issue of state establishment was proscribed by General Muhammadu Buhari and Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon. With the prescription of the Anioma State movement by General Buhari-led military government, the movement was nominally sustained and it emerged in different sociocultural organizations, unions and clubs such as the Odu-Oma Club of Nigeria, Ambassador Club, and others.

On August 28, 1985, on the assumption of office as the new head of state, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida gave state establishment priority attention. He subsequently constituted the Five Man Political Bureau headed by Justice Samuel Cookey to look into the transition to civilian rule and also make recommendations on state establishment (Ashibudike, 1996). In 1986, when the federal government lifted the ban on partisan politics, petitions for the establishment of new states were received from different parts of Nigeria. In the defunct Bendel State, prominent among the agitators was the movement for the establishment of Delta State and Anioma State. Chief Israel Amadi-Emina and other members submitted a petition to the Justice Cookey-led Political Bureau of 1986-1987 (*The Proposal for the Establishment of Anioma State*, 2010). The demand for the establishment of Anioma State was the consequence of the proposal that the country should be reconstituted to enable the Igbo to have five states in the federation. The establishment of Anioma State would comprise Oshimili, Aniocha, Ika and Ndokwa local government areas.

The Justice Cookey Political Bureau observed that state establishment will strengthen ethnic loyalty, mutual suspicion and hatred among the people. Nonetheless, despite these inherent tendencies, it recommended the establishment of additional six states for justice and fair play to reign. The states recommended for establishment were Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Sarduna, Wawa or Enugu, Katsina, and Kogi. Delta State was to comprise Bomadi, Ughelli, Okpe, Isoko, Burutu, Ethiope, Warri and Ndokwa Local Government Areas with the capital at Warri. When Babangida announced that he would establish more states in the country in 1987, the people were elated and expectant. On September 24, 1987, Babangida announced the establishment of Akwa-Ibom and Katsina States out of the proposed six states. No state was established out of Bendel State as the people had expected (Ashibudike, 1996).

The failure to establish a state out of Bendel State in the previous exercises made the people opt for the establishment of Lower Niger State. The movement for the establishment of the Lower Niger State was led by Chief Israel Amadi-Emina, with Mr. Francis Halim as Secretary. Other leaders were Chief Patrick Odiete, Dr. Esiri, Chief Ike Clark, His Highness the Orodje of Okpe, and Chief Manoba, while Chief Edwin Clark and Dr Orewa were co-coordinators. They petitioned and lobbied the federal government for the establishment of the state (Orewa & Halim, 1996). On April 1, 1989, Mr. Francis Halim, who was an elected member of Oshimili Federal Constituency, moved a motion at the Constituent Assembly for the establishment of Lower Niger State (Okenyi, 2007). The newly proposed state would consist of Isoko Okpe, Ughelli, Burutu, Bomadi, Warri and Oshimili, Aniocha, Ika, and Ndokwa local government areas in Anioma and Delta States that were previously proposed to the Justice Cookey Political Bureau in 1987. The proposed capital of the state was to be located either in Warri, Kwale, Ughelli, Sapele, or Abraka.

The Establishment of Delta State in 1991 and the Resurgence of the Anioma State Movement

In 1991, President Babangida assured Nigerians that new states would be established and it came to fruition on August 27, 1991. In a national broadcast, Babaginda announced the establishment of nine states along with Delta State with Asaba as the capital. The choice of Asaba as the capital of Delta State was contrary to the expectations of the Urhobo, and to a lesser extent the Isoko, Itshekiri and Ijaw groups, and it caused a lot of furor. The perception among the non-Igbo groups, especially the Urhobo people, was that Asaba was made the capital because it is the home town of the President's wife, Maryam Babaginda. This view was based on assumption and unfounded. A historical and development-based explanation for making Asaba the capital of Delta State by a public affairs analyst goes as follows:

At the time Asaba from which the Royal Niger Company once managed all of Nigeria by the authority of the Royal charter from Britain, could have been chosen as the capital of the Midwest region. Mature politics resulted in the choice of the historic city of Benin. It would seem that the Ibo leaders did not make any push to have the capital located in the Igbo speaking areas. Unfortunately, the communities of the Niger Delta were locked in apparently irresolvable and cantankerous arguments on where the capital should be, Warri, Sapele, and so on, creating a problem of choice that the Federal government solved by opting for Asaba. In choosing Asaba as capital the Armed Forces Ruling Council remained consistent with a trend of locating capitals in areas of lower concentration of development, this pattern may have been advised by the need for even development to reduce the pressure for creating additional states (Utomi, 1995, 22).

The historical and development-based thesis of making Asaba the capital of Delta State put forward also applies to making Lokoja the capital of Kogi State. Like Asaba, it was once the administrative headquarters of the Royal Niger Company and later the seat of the British Colonial administration of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria. When the British colonial administration was transferred from there to Zungeru and later Kaduna, Lokoja

remained neglected and did not attract any significant development until 1991 when it became the capital of Kogi State.

Geographically, Delta State is bounded on the north by Edo State, on the northwest by Ondo, Anambra on the east and Rivers State on the southeast. On its southern flank is the Bight of Benin, which covers approximately 160 kilometers of the state's coastline. The state is generally low-lying without remarkable hills and has a wide coastal belt interlaced with rivulets and streams which form the Niger Delta. Delta State comprises the Urhobo, Isoko, Igbo, Itsekiri and Ijaw ethnic groups and was made up of 19 Local Government Areas. The 1991 Provisional National Population Census puts the population of Delta State at 2,570,180. With the establishment of Delta State in 1991, Group Captain (later Air Commodore) Luke Chijiuba Ochulor was appointed as Military Administrator. Four months later Chief Olorogun Felix Ibru was elected as the first civilian Executive Governor of the state. He was sworn in on January 2, 1992 and governed until the coming to power in November 1993 of the military regime of General Sani Abacha (*Hundred Days of Delta State: August-December, 1991*).

The backwardness of the area that constitutes Delta State concerning development in all its ramifications was blamed on its inclusion in the defunct Western Region, Midwest Region (later Midwest State) and Bendel State, where they were believed to have been marginalized by the Edo ethnic group who were in the majority in the state. With the establishment of Delta State in 1991, with Asaba as the capital, much was expected that the establishment of the state would accelerate the development process in terms of the provision of necessary infrastructure and ensure equitable allocation of resources.

The establishment of Delta State instead of Anioma State sought by the Western Igbo people partly assuaged the feelings and aspirations of the Anioma people. They were elated with the location of the state capital at Asaba in the belief that it would attract rapid development in the Anioma area which had suffered from years of neglect and underdevelopment. The Urhobo ethnic group emerged as the new majority and dominated the economic and political affairs of Delta State, while the other ethnic groups, particularly the Anioma Igbo, started developing some sense of insecurity in the new state, even though the capital was seated in Asaba.

The political domination of the state by the Urhobo endangered interethnic relations and fostered and intensified bitter ethnic rivalries among the ethnic groups in the state. This development reinforced agitations by the minority groups which believed that having a state of their own would be the panacea for their quest for self-determination. This gave rise to the virulent and vociferous clamor for the establishment of more states out of the present Delta State. Various movements emerged for the establishment of Anioma State, Warri State, New or "Real" Delta State, and Toru-Ebe State.

Delta State is multiethnic and comprises Isoko, Ijaw, Urhobo, Itshekiri and Igbo, but it is politically dominated by the Urhobo who strongly believe that the state capital is supposed to be in their geographical area. The Urhobo and other non-Igbo groups see themselves as culturally and linguistically different from the Anioma people and, as a result, their leaders such as the eminent legal luminary Professor Itsay Sagay, a renowned historian, Late Professor Obaro Ikime, Mr. Temi Akporhonor and other members of the Urhobo Historical Society openly campaigned for the relocation of the Delta State capital from Asaba to Warri. Mr. Temi Akporhonor reinforced this position of the Urhobo people in an interview contained in the *Guardian* newspaper of August 15, 2002, when he called for a political arrangement whereby the governorship position will remain in what he tagged the "Real

Delta” because the state capital is located in the Igbo-speaking town of Asaba (*The Guardian*, August 15, 2002; *Nairaland*, September 23, 2015). The vociferous responses of the Urhobo to the choice of Asaba as the capital of Delta State proved to be the most impolitic of all reactions to the state establishment exercise in 1991. Professor Patrick Utomi articulates this Urhobo diatribe in this way: “This impolitic response drove politicians from Urhobo communities into a tight corner. Having allowed themselves to be boxed in by a reaction that was fashioned strictly out of arrogance and bad taste as if any group is entitled to host capitals and others ordained by God to the contrary, they lost the option of flexibility” (Utomi, 1995:22).

With the establishment of Delta State in 1991, the first and second elected Executive Governors of the State, Chief Felix Olorugun Ibru and James Labour, were from the Urhobo ethnic stock. Their partisan style of leadership aggravated the existing poor interethnic relations between the Anioma people and other groups, particularly the Urhobo. For instance, Chief Felix Ibru blatantly refused to build the Delta State Government House at Asaba and preferred governing the state from his residence at Agbara-Utor in Ughelli Local Government Area. Another manifestation of his display of unbridled partisanship was the movement of Delta State Television equipment from Asaba to Warri. Besides, Ibru ensured that most of the strategic positions in the state’s ministries, boards and parastatals were chaired and dominated by the Urhobo, Isoko, Itsekiri and Ijaw ethnic groups (Ashibudike, 1996). For example, during James Ibori’s administration, out of the 16 top positions in the Delta State Civil Service, 11 were held by people from Delta-Central District—that is, the Urhobo and Isoko; five were held by Delta-South, comprising Ijaw and Itsekiri; and none from Delta-North (Anioma). Out of the 42 roads constructed by the Delta State Direct Labour Agency between 2003 and 2007, 22 were located in Delta Central, 15 in Ijaw and Itsekiri area, and five in the Western Igbo area. In addition, the head of Delta State Civil Service, Chief Judge of the State, Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Finance and Economic Planning, Education, Land and Survey, Works and Housing, the State Accountant-General, Auditor-General, Chief of Staff, Government House, Chairman, Delta State Independent Electoral Commission, Director-General, Direct Labour Agency, among others, were dominated by the Urohobo ethnic group. The Secretary to the State Government was Dr. Emmanuel Udughan, Ibori’s maternal cousin, although an Itsekiri, was formerly a Commissioner for Health and later became the Governor of Delta State (Ase, 2011). Table 1 reflects the fealty.

Table 1 shows that the two ministers appointed from Delta State during Chief James Ibori’s administration were from the Ijaw and Itsekiri ethnic groups, respectively. Mr. Ray Inije, an Urhobo, was appointed an ambassador, while the commissioner who represented Delta State in the Niger-Delta Development Corporation (NDDC) was an Ijaw. The Chairman and Secretary of the newly established Delta State Oil Producing Development Commission (DESOPADEC) were from the Ijaw and Urhobo ethnic groups. The injustice and marginalization suffered by the Western Igbo people can best be gleaned from the exclusion of the people from crucial positions in the political affairs of the state, including DESOPADEC, OMPADEC/NDDC and other intervention agencies of successive federal governments to solve the lingering Niger Delta problem. The Anioma people were marginally represented in the economic and political affairs of the state; they did not fare better in the federal government appointments as well.

Table 1: Political Appointments in Delta State from 1999 to 2003

Ethnic Group	Governor	Deputy Governor	Secretary to the State Government	Speaker	DESOPA-DEC Chairman	DESOP-ADEC Commissioner	Chairman OMA-DEC
Urhobo	2	1	2		2		
Isoko				1		2	1
Ijaw				2			
Itsekiri			1	2			
Western Igbo (Anioma)		1	1	1			

Source: <http://nessti@pointblanknews.com>

When James Ibori assumed office as the second Executive Governor of the State, he continued and sustained the systematic marginalization and neglect of the Anioma area in terms of the allocation of state resources and infrastructural development. He presided over the monumental transfer of some vital and strategic Delta State projects to Warri and other non-Igbo areas including his town, Oghara. There was also duplication of some of the state's projects that were supposed to be placed in Asaba, the state capital. Most of them were transferred to Warri in the belief that in the future the capital of Delta State would be relocated to Warri and Warri would assume the capital of the "New Delta State." For example, he built the Delta State Government House annex at Warri where most of the weekly State Executive Council and State Security meetings were held. The Asaba stadium that was taken over by the state government was abandoned and a new ultra-modern stadium was built at Oghara, his home town, where most of the state, national and international sporting events were held. There was the duplication of commissioners' quarters and two equipped state radio and television stations at Warri. This action, technically speaking, makes Delta State have two state capitals: Asaba, the official capital; and Warri, the "unofficial" capital.

This marginalization of the Anioma people and other subtle discriminatory policies pursued by the Delta State government made them become despaired and disillusioned, and this reinforced their clamor for the establishment of Anioma State that would comprise the present nine local government areas in the present Delta State: Oshimili-South, Oshimili-North, Aniocha-South, Aniocha-North, Ndokwa-East, Ndokwa-West, Ukwuani, Ika North-East, and Ika-South.

The leaders who revived and championed the movement for the establishment of Anioma State out of the present Delta State included Mr. F. C. Halim, Dr. G. O. Orewa, Mr. Dan Okenyi, and Senator Nosike Ikpo. Other prominent leaders who formed the nucleus of the Anioma apex sociocultural organization and clubs such as the Odu-Oma Club and Izu-Anioma included Chief Mike Okwechime, Chief Awele Nwaezeigwe, Ogbeunyi Onwordi, Chief F. C. Ozomah, Brigadier-General Fred Chijuka (Retired), Mr. A. O. Emefine, Engr. M. P. O. Ilechie, and others (Interview Okwechime, 2010). The traditional rulers who identified with the Anioma state establishment movement and who were at the vanguard of its actualization included the Asagba of Asaba, Professor Chike Edozien, Obuzor of Ibusa, Obi

Professor Nwaoboshi, Obi of Ogwuashi-Uku, Professor Chukwuka Okonjo, Obi of Ubulu-Uku, Obi E. A. Ofulue (*The Proposal for the Establishment of Anioma State*). The Anioma State movement also had wide support of prominent politicians from all levels of government ranging from the local, to the state and national assemblies. Several apex sociocultural organizations and interest groups such as the Ambassador Club and Anioma Political Forum and those in the Diaspora such as the Anioma Association in the United States of America, Umu Anioma Foundation founded by Prince Ohai in Georgia, United States of America, and other branches had collectively mobilized the people for the establishment of Anioma State.

In 1994, the Anioma State movement submitted a request for the establishment of Anioma State to the 1994/1995 National Constitutional Conference and the Arthur Mbanefo Panel (Ashibudike, 1996). The movement also sent a memorandum to General Sani Abacha for the establishment of Anioma State out of Delta State and the agitation continued in 1999, 2002, 2005 and 2006, and the subsequent years.

Renewed Struggle for Western Igbo (Anioma) Identity, 1991-2019

The post-civil war resurgence of the movement for the establishment of the Anioma State which emanated from the political and economic marginalization, discrimination and domination of the people by the non-Igbo sub-nationalities was also predicated on the need to have a separate identity within the federating unit of the country. Historically, Anioma people comprise individuals of diverse origins, who for centuries and due to cultural contact have developed a unique culture distinct from those of their immediate neighbors. Located at the crossroads of very diverse influences, Western Igbo has diverse ethnic origins but has developed a syncretic culture. These cultural homogeneities and values brought the people together and they now share a common identity.

Several Anioma scholars such as Orewa, Halim, Professor Kanirum Osia, Senator Nosike Ikpo, Emma Okocha and others had noted in their writings that apart from the ripples of the post-civil war reconstruction experiences, the drive for the renewed clamor for a separate state by the Anioma is anchored on the search of an identity for the Western Igbo. After independence in 1960, various ethnic groups, including the Western Igbo, desired their own identity separate from the coercive colonial political arrangement. As waves of demands for state establishment in the post-civil war era particularly in the 1970s permeated the Nigerian political landscape, included in this movement was the yearning of the Western Igbo people to have a separate state, although this is yet to be realized. Since 1991 with the establishment of Delta State, the Anioma people have renewed this agitation following announcements by the National Assembly that more states will be established in the country to establish balance among the various geopolitical regions in the country.

The Asagba of Asaba, Obi (Professor) Chike Edozien, led the delegation of eminent politicians, businessmen, professionals and traditional rulers from the nine local government areas in Delta North Senatorial District to the National Assembly in Abuja in June of 2010 in the quest for the establishment of Anioma State. In an interview with the *Vanguard*, he maintained the following:

The impetus for this fresh move has come from the majority of the Igbo speaking people on the West of River Niger who have been requesting self-identity and driving for development in a geopolitical arrangement that shows

them as a distinct socio-cultural and political unit. He said the issue of the establishment of a state is to fasten infrastructural development, but for Anioma people, it is to give them a distinct political identity and a sense of belonging in the Nigerian nation (*Vanguard*, 2010, 1).

Chief Mike Okwechime, the former National President of Izu-Anioma, underscored this identity which is premised as one of the compelling factors. He posited that the agitation for the establishment of Anioma State was meant to include all the Igbo-speaking people in Delta State who had in the past been disunited due to the inclusion of the area in different provinces which helped to scuttle the realization of the Anioma State project since the people were speaking in dissenting voices. He stated that the balkanization of the area by the British colonial administration and placing the people under the Benin and Warri Provinces was carried out for administrative convenience. This established great divisions among the people and made it difficult for them to forge a common identity in the struggle for self-determination right from the colonial period up to the post-independence times (Okwechime, interviewed in 2010).

Another manifestation of the crisis of Anioma identity is the denial of Igbo identity by a section of Anioma people during the civil war. On the arrival of the federal troops in Agbor, the traditional ruler of Agbor, Obi Ikechukwu, and his subjects declared to the Federal Army Commander that they were not Igbo but rather Edo-speaking people (Okocha, 1994). In addition, during the reconstruction era, Midwest State Governor Samuel Ogbemudia carved out Ekpon and Igbo-Akiri, an Anioma town near Agbor at the border between Western Igbo and Edo, and renamed it "Igbanke." He also removed Igbo-Akiri ("Igbanke") from Ika Division and transferred it to the Old Akugbe district in Orhionmwon Local Government Area of Edo State, thereby delimitating the geographical area of Western Igbo land (Okocha, 1994). From the earliest times, the people of Igbanke were known and called Igbo-Akiri. It was in 1967 when Ogbemudia became the Military Governor of the Midwest State that he changed the name of the town from Igbo-Akiri to Igbanke. Emma Okocha shed light on this precarious nature of being an Igbo during the series of crises that engulfed the nation from 1966 to the outbreak of the war and the post-war period as follows: "The period 1966-1970, was a dark chapter in Nigerian history when the lives of the Igbo were in danger. Changing Igbo-Akiri to Igbanke was done by Ogbemudia with the unalloyed support of his people to ensure their survival and to safeguard newly acquired positions. It would have been unthinkable at that time to reveal that an Igbo town produced the Military Governor of the Midwest State" (Okocha, 1994, 34).

Okocha's interactions with some key informants revealed that Ogbemudia is an Igbo, while his mother is a Bini woman. During the war, he allied with his mother's kinsmen and claimed Benin origin (interviews with Okwechime, Esedebe, Enemoh, Achuzia, Ndili, 2010). This denunciation of Igbo identity during the war which became more pronounced in the post-war era was also perceptible in Rivers State where the Ikwerre Igbo areas in Port-Harcourt such as Umuola, Umuokute, and Umu-Igbo were changed by adding the prefix (Ro) to the original Igbo names. The names of the areas were changed to Roumuola, Roumuokute, and Roumulgbo, respectively. During Mohammed's and Obasanjo's regimes in the 1970s, the federal government constituted the Justice Nasir Boundary Adjustment Commission that transferred 17 Ukwa communities in Imo State to Rivers State. During the exercise, the Rivers State government renamed some of the Ukwa villages with Rivers State names.

Obigbo, a vital commercial Igbo community in Imo State, was changed to Oyigbo, while Umukurushi was renamed Roumoukoroshi and Umuola was known as Roumuola (Ashibudike, 1996). An eminent scholar, Francis Egbokhare, in his work titled “Nigerian Civil War and Some Linguistic Implications” observes that “The war generated a negative attitude towards the Igbo is the denial of kinship with Igbo by the Ikwerre, inspite of linguistic evidence. The Ikwerrenization of apparently Igbo names is one practical evidence of the loss of linguistic integrity of Igbo in the Niger Delta” (Egbokhare, 2002, 119).

Indeed, the civil war had a positive linguistic effect on the perception of Igbo by Igbo speakers. The post-war period served to consolidate the Igbo identity. The reflection of this positive effect was the emergence of the renewed post-war movement for the establishment of Anioma State to constitute an additional full-fledged Igbo state west of Niger.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the trajectory of the Anioma’s struggle for identity within the Nigeria federation which dates back to 1951 when they agitated for the West Niger Province. The establishment of the Midwest Region in 1963 with Chief Dennis Osadebay as the Premier led to a lull in the agitation. The Anioma people had submitted several memoranda to the successive federal governments for self-determination from 1960 and continued in the subsequent years. The post-civil war reconstruction programs of Colonel Samuel Ogbemudia’s government exacerbated interethnic relations between Anioma and other ethnic groups in the then Midwest State and fostered interethnic friction and prejudice between the Anioma and other ethnic groups. The events that took place during and after the Nigerian Civil War established a new phase in the struggle for the establishment of Anioma State. The Anioma people felt dominated and marginalized by the non-Igbo groups which galvanized them to seek self-determination and increasingly renewed their clamor for the establishment of a state of their own in the post-civil war era from the 1970s up to 1991. With the establishment of Delta State, the people expected that making Asaba the capital would bring about the rapid social and economic development of the area; but, instead, a virulent interethnic politics championed by the Urhobo and other non-Igbo groups became the majority group and systematically dominate and marginalize the Anioma people. Despite its homogeneity, an Urhobo, the acclaimed “majority,” with Isoko, Ijaw and Itsekiri groups occupy strategic and sensitive positions in the Delta State government. The political alignment among these ethnic groups consigns the Anioma people to a “minority” group. Since the establishment of Delta State in 1991, no Anioma son has governed the state; rather, the Anioma have only served as deputy governor, secretary to the state government, commissioners, advisers, aides, chairpersons of state boards, and parastatals as handouts. The Anioma State movement, although the oldest in the struggle for state establishment in Nigeria and once described by the federal government as the “most scientific of all agitations for state establishment in Nigeria,” is yet to realize its dream for an autonomous state.

The Anioma people still express optimism that if Anioma State becomes a reality, they would be better off being in a separate state within the Nigerian federation than being part of Delta State with its ‘unbalanced’ ethnic configuration. It was in the recent past political dispensation that the ruling People’s Democratic Party, (PDP) zoned the governorship slot to the Delta-North Senatorial District (Anioma) that Dr. Arthur Ifeanyi Okowa from Anioma extraction became Governor of Delta State from 2015 to 2023. Having

an Anioma son becoming a governor, to some extent, satisfied the yearnings of the people because of the great transformations the area had experienced in the past eight years. This portends that fairness, justice, equity, inclusiveness, and good governance are panaceas to development.

References

- Achuzia, J.O.G, (June 28, 2010). A prominent Biafran soldier, interviewed in Asaba.
- Adejuyigbe, O. (1979). Rationale and effect of state establishment with reference to the 19 states. In Akinyemi, A. B., Cole, P. D. & Ofonagoro, W. (eds.) *Reading on Federalism*. Lagos, Nigeria: National Institute of International Affairs.
- Adejuyigbe, O. (1989). Establishment of states in 1967 and 1976. In Ekeh, P., Cole, D. and Olusanya, G. O. (eds.), *Nigeria Since Independence: The First 25 Years*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Adejuyigbe, O., Dare, L. & Adepoju, A. (eds.), (1982). *Establishment of states in Nigeria: A review of rationale, demands and problems up to 1980*. Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Government Printer.
- Alagoa, E. J. and Tamuno, T. N. (eds.), (1989). *Land and people of Nigeria: Rivers State*. Port-Harcourt, Nigeria: Riverside Communications.
- Akinyele, R.T. (1990). States establishment and boundary adjustments in Nigeria, 1900-1987: A study in the approach to the problems of ethnic minority groups in Nigeria, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Lagos, Nigeria.
- Akinyele, R. T. (September 1996). States establishment in Nigeria: The Willink report in retrospect, *African Studies Review*, 39, (2), 71-94.
- Anifowose, R. (1982). *Violence and politics in Nigeria. The Tiv and Yoruba experience*. Lagos, Nigeria: Nok Publishers.
- Ase, C. (March 13, 2011). Overheating the polity of Delta State. <https://newstip@pointblanknews.com>
- Ashibudike, N. (1996). The establishment of Delta State of Nigeria and its aftermath: 1963-1996, MA Dissertation, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Calhoun, C. (ed.), (1994). *Social theory and the politics of identity*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Egbokhare, F. (2002). Nigerian civil war and some linguistic implications. In Osaghae, E. E. and Onwudiwe, E. (eds.), *The Nigerian Civil War and Its Aftermath*. Ibadan, Nigeria: John Archers Publisher Ltd.
- Eghosa E. and Suberu, R.T. (January, 2005). A history of identities, violence, and stability in Nigeria, *CRISE WORKING PAPER*, (No.6). CRISE: Centre for Research and Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Queen's House, University of Oxford, UK. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08c9840f0b652dd00141e/wp6.pdf>
- Ekeh, P. (1996). Political minorities and historically dominant minorities in Nigerian history and politics in Oyediran, O. (ed.), *Governance and Development in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Professor Billy J. Dudley*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Agbo Areo Publishers.
- Elaigwu, I. (1986). *Gowon: A soldier gentleman*. Ibadan, Nigeria: West Books Publishers.
- Ellah, F.J. (1983). *Nigeria and states establishment*. Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Ellah and Sons.
- Enemoh, J. (February 8, 2010). 85 years, a retired civil servant, interviewed in Asaba.
- Erickson, E., (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.

- Esedebe, F. C. (June 28, 2010). 83 years, a former Permanent Secretary in the Midwest State Ministry of Information. Interviewed in Ibusa.
- Federal Military Government's View on the Report of the Panel on Establishment of States*, (1976). Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Information.
- Hundred Days of Delta State* (August-December, 1991).
- Jega, A. (2000). General introduction: Identity transformation and politics of identity under crisis and adjustment. In Jega, A. (ed.). *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics Under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*, Uppsala, Sweden & Kano, Nigeria: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet and Centre for Research and Documentation, Kano, Nigeria.
- Mustapha, A. R. (2000). Transformation of minority identities in post-colonial Nigeria. In Jega, A. (ed.) *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics Under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*, Uppsala, Sweden & Kano, Nigeria: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet and Centre for Research and Documentation, Kano, Nigeria.
- Nairaland*, (September 23, 2015). Deltans are partly Igbos: Origin, Politics, Nigeria <https://www.nairaland.com/2620554/deltans-partly-igbos-origin>
- Ndili, P. (September 29, 2010). 65 years, administrative secretary, *Asagba* of Asaba's palace, interviewed in Asaba.
- Nnoli, O. (1978). *Ethnic politics in Nigeria*, Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension.
- Nwadike, A. (1991). The establishment of more states as a means of solving minority problems, B.Sc. Political Science Dissertation, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Odiogor, H. (June 29, 2010). Nigeria: Anioma people renew demand for separate state, *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/News>
- Okenyi, P. (December 22, 2007). *Odu-Oma* and the Anioma project. A paper presented at the Forum of Anioma Traditional Rulers/Elders held at the Palace of His Royal Highness, The Asagba of Asaba: Obi (Professor) Chike Edozien.
- Okocha, E. (1994). *Blood on the Niger: The untold story of the Nigerian civil war*. Port-Harcourt, Nigeria: Sunray Publishers.
- Okpu, U. (1986). Conflicts in the establishment of more states in the second republic, *Asian and African Studies*, 20, 3: (11), 329-356.
- Okwechime, M. (September 29, 2010). 77 years old, a retired military officer and the former President of *Izu Anioma*. Interviewed at *Izu-Anioma* Secretariat, 377 Nnebisi Road, Asaba.
- Orewa, G. O. & Halim, F.C. (1996). *The Aniomans: Half a century search for identity*. Agbor, Nigeria: The Author Publication.
- Osaghae, E. (1986). Do ethnic minorities still exist in Nigeria? *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 24(2).
- Osaghae, E. (1994). *Ethnicity and its management in Africa* Lagos, Nigeria: Malthouse.
- Osaghae, E. and Suberu, R. T. (January 2005). A history of identities, violence, and stability in Nigeria, CRISE WORKING PAPER (No.6). CRISE: Centre for Research and Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Queen's House, University of Oxford, UK. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08c9840f0b652dd00141e/wp6.pdf>
- Osia, K. (2008). Anioma people of the Delta. *Anioma Association USA INC*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anioma_people
- Otite, O. (1990). *Ethnic pluralism and ethnicity in Nigeria*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Shaneson.
- Subaru, R. T. (2001). *Federalism and ethnic conflict in Nigeria*. Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace.

- The Federal Republic of Nigeria, (1995). *Report of the Panel Appointed by the Federal Military Government to Investigate the Issue of the Establishment of More States and Boundary Adjustments in Nigeria*. Lagos, Nigeria: Government Printer.
- The Guardian Nigeria* (August 15, 2002). <https://en-academic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/11629887>
- The Proposal for the Establishment of Anioma State: Movement for the Establishment of Anioma State Central Working Committee, (June, 2010).*
- Ukiwo, U. (June 2005). *On the study of ethnicity in Nigeria*. CRISE WORKING PAPER (12). CRISE: Centre for Research and Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Queen's House, University of Oxford, UK. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08c99e5274a31e0001300/wp12>
- Utomi, P. (1995). Delta: Teething problems block bright prospects. *Who Is Who in Anioma: A Compendium on the People of the Area of Delta State*. Lagos: DDV Communications Ltd. & Optimum Media Ltd, 22.