

**From labour settlement to cosmopolitan city:
Dynamics of migration and urbanisation in Enugu's development, 1915-1990.**

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Abstract

Enugu city, one of the 'new towns' of tropical Africa which arose as a result of contact with Europe, witnessed an 'unprecedented' population growth right from its colonial origins well into the post-colonial era. Immigration into the city was unrestricted, uncontrolled and undirected, and involved peoples of diverse cultures and varied areas of life. The resultant effect was dramatic cosmopolitanism and urbanisation. This paper explores the historical sociology of development of Enugu city, southeastern Nigeria. It interrogates the trends and patterns of migration, and the dynamics of urban development that engendered change and eventually led to the expansion and growth of a hitherto unknown colonial labour settlement into a coalescence of a cosmopolitan city with significant locational importance. Indeed, the nature of the interactions between migration and urbanisation in Enugu's development draws attention to the complex socio-economic relations between and among migrants and the government, be it colonial or indigenous.

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Introduction

Migration is the permanent or semi-permanent change in the residence of an individual or group of people, and can occur within countries (internal migration), and between countries (external or international migration), and on almost any spatial scale, from very local to intercontinental. Migration is typical and natural physical phenomenon of animals, including humans, and human beings have migrated since their emergence as a species. A person, or group of people, may migrate because of some adverse condition in the home environment or in response to the lure of a more favourable region. In some other instances, a combination of these conditions could necessitate the migration of a person or group of people (MEEE, 2006). In general, voluntary migrants move in an effort to improve their lives in some way, such as to get a better or more secure job, to avoid taxation, to improve their access to basic social amenities such as schools or hospitals, to live in a better climate, or to escape the problems and stresses of rural or urban life.

Research interests in human migration as an area of study is primarily due to its fundamentality as a determinant of the size and structure of an area's population. Moreover, as human migration represents a spatial redistribution of people, it is likely to have important consequences for the use and development of the area's resources, for living conditions, for the availability of jobs, and, possibly, for political, social, and economic stability.

Enugu is the city-capital of Enugu State in Southeastern Nigeria. It has been a major and well-known urban, coal-mining and commercial centre since 1915. "Enugu", which means "Hill Top"¹ indicates the topography of the city – about 763 feet above sea level (MIHA, 1972; MIC, 1991; Udo, 1981). It is also euphemistically referred to as the "Coal City" because of the significance of the industry for the city's foundation and development. As the oldest urban area in the Igbo-speaking world, it has recorded some important landmarks in the political and administrative history of Nigeria in the past nine decades. Among these, it was the administrative headquarters of the Southern Provinces in 1929, and the capital and administrative headquarters of the short-lived secessionist state of the Republic of Biafra (1967-1970). The city is located within 4½ driving hours from Abuja and 7 driving hours from Lagos, the administrative and commercial headquarters of Nigeria respectively. Its economy is largely dominated by trading, commerce, and small-scale industry. Enugu city had an estimated total population of about 465,000 in 1991 (NPC, 1991) and 28 residential settlements (Ikejiofor, 2004).

¹ Or "the top of the hill."

As a new colonial station, Enugu was originally intended primarily for white officials, and if need be, a few native (indigenous) migrant labourers whose services were absolutely essential – colliers, railway men and domestic servant² – were encouraged to settle (Hair, 1954)³. However, due to the pressing need for labour and services in this settlement, diverse migrants flowed into the area from different parts of the world as never before. These had significant implications for Enugu’s demographic development and historical sociology. This paper examines the conditions, patterns and dynamics of migration that engendered change and eventually led to the growth of a hitherto colonial migrant labour settlement into a cosmopolitan city with significant locational importance.

Pre-1915 Human Contacts: A Hindsight

It is a historical fact that a great deal of voluntary movement took place in distant past, long before this type of human traffic became a part of the historical record. As Shack (1979:39) notes, “Africa is replete with examples of individuals and groups who formed settled communities of occupational specialists in societies other than their own... They came one day and were gone the next. Some, however, remained”. The pre-colonial *Igbo*land region, including the Enugu area, was not an exception to this situation. Hair (1954:3) reports of the pre-colonial presence of such migrants around what later became Enugu:

Before the coming of the white man, major trade...was in the hands of two groups of 'foreigners'. The Aros, a branch of the Ibo tribe [sic] from Arochuku in the south, and the Hausa from Northern Nigeria...

However, because the area was of ‘no consequence’ at the time and the population of these migrants was insignificant, no attention was paid to these migrations.

Post-1915 Migrations and Developments

The rise of Enugu as a modern city began with the active penetration of Nigeria’s hinterlands by the British colonialists in the first quarter of the twentieth century – a move propelled by the progress of the industrial revolution, which necessitated an urgent need for new sources of raw materials and new markets for mass-produced goods from Europe (Mabogunje, 1976). The towns which emerged out of this adventure were largely mining or trading centres, for collecting raw materials for export and for distributing imported manufactured goods. Enugu was one of such towns. The first step towards its development was the establishment, in 1903, of a

² These were mainly for the white colonial officials, resident in Enugu at the time.

³ This was in agreement with Frederick Lugard’s political memoranda, which stressed the evils of town life for the indigenous populations and contended that they were better off in the countryside (Hair, 1954:15).

Mineral Survey under the auspices of the Imperial Institute, to explore the mineral resources of Southern Nigeria (*Imperial Institute*, 1941:36). In 1909, a discovery of rich seam of sub-bituminous coal was accidentally made (while in quest for silver) in Udi and Okoga areas, east of Ngwo village in the Udi Ridge of the then Udi Division by a geological exploration team led by Mr. Kitson, a British mining engineer and scientist. When the survey ended in 1913, it was confirmed that extensive deposits existed in commercial quantities (*The Mining Magazine*, 1917:45). Indeed, Enugu owes its origins as a significant 'human community' to this 1909 accidental discovery. Prior to this, Hair (1954:284) suggests that no real human life and/or activities were noticed in the area:

If a person had been standing on top of Milliken Hill ... in the year 1900, he would have had good reason to doubt that a township of about 140,000⁴ could ever find a home below. Before him to the east and south lay a plain, 500 feet below the ridge top, intersected by small streams. The smoke rising from the tiny village of Ogui-Nike...was the only visible sign that human life existed.

What Mr. Kitson discovered in 1909 was later to stimulate development in the area and transform it into the only significant coal mining district in West Africa (PPV, 1966). Almost five years after the discovery was communicated to the colonial superiors in London, Mr. W.J. Leck, in the company of some other whites and a few indigenous peoples from Onitsha led by a certain Alfred Inoma, came to stay. To this group must go the honour of being the first permanent inhabitants, and indeed, 'founders' of Enugu city. Ready to commence mining operations there, the colonial authorities negotiated for the acquisition of lands in the area, persuading land owners to cede, "without charge, freely and voluntarily...all such lands that may be required... for the purposes of a station and a colliery" (Isichei, 1976:203; 1983:426; Akpala, 1965:336).⁵ The acquisitions concluded, at least to the satisfaction of the colonial administration, Mr. Leck and his white assistants made their first home in temporary "bush-housing"⁶ situated on the top of the Milliken Hill ridge, while the indigenous peoples established mud-house settlements, later known as "Alfred's Camp"⁷, for themselves on a spur about 200 feet up the ridge (Hair, 1954:1). Both settlements (those of the whites and the indigenous peoples) were the very first houses to be set up in Enugu, and became the nucleus of the present-day city.

⁴ This was the official estimate at the time. Another study (PPV, 1966) placed this figure as high as 170,000.

⁵ The initial land grant was made in 1915, while further grants were made in 1917 and 1924 for both the Colliery and the development of what has become the Enugu Township. (See Akpala, 1965). The transactions between the local men and the colonial government over the said pieces of land were shoddy: though the colonial administration paid compensations for the acquisitions, these were a source of bitter regret on the side of the native peoples. "It was called 'one of the greatest land swindling acts recorded in the history of West Africa'" (*Lagos Weekly Records*, 1923: 4-11; 18-25).

⁶ These were European/colonial synonyms for traditional mud-houses.

⁷ Another source (Ikejiofor, 2004) has the name as "Ugwu Alfred" (which means 'Alfred's Hill'), evidently in reference to its location on the hill. However, today this settlement is known as "Alfred Camp", while the hill on which it sits is called "Ugwu Alfred".

A second group of people migrated into the area in 1915, when the first mine was opened and the district prison, formally at Udi, was moved to Enugu. The prisoners were set to work on the mine (MIHA, 1972:4). However, bereft of mechanical devices in its early days, the coal industry relied mostly on manual labour, thus, the need for recruitment of more labourers, most of which were got from the towns, villages and hamlets surrounding Enugu (Ikejiofor, 2004; Ogbuagu, 1961). By late 1915, consequentially, several hundreds of “local tribesmen” (natives) had migrated into the new settlement and were already at work in the mine, while many hundreds more were applying for jobs (Hair, 1956:1). With this kind of influx into “Enugu”, Alfred Camp had to be expanded, and it was necessary to construct bush houses on the south side of Obwetti (*Obeti*) stream. This settlement initially known as “Native Location” later came to be known as “Coal Camp” (PPV, 1966; Hair, 1954). From this time forward, the mine was staffed mainly by local tribesmen: In 1925, about 60% of the miners came from Udi Division; in 1938 about 75%, and in 1953 about 78%.⁸ A proportion of these local men moved into the fast-growing settlement, more or less permanently, and the size of this proportion increased each decade (Hair, 1956).

As coal mining developed, the need for the export of its products became obvious to the colonial government. The railway was the most reliable and convenient means for the products’ transportation. To this effect, construction work on a railway line to link the coal fields with the coast at Port Harcourt for this purposes started from the latter’s end. The railway reached Enugu in late 1915 also, and the first permanent railway personnel, mostly educated and skilled, made their homes in Enugu in early 1916. Being in government service, they were transferred involuntarily to Enugu, and many of those who came on such transfers often brought their family and domestic servants with them. The two establishments, the coal industry and the railway, laid the foundation for the eventual growth and economic take-off of the city. Together with other socio-economic activities they ‘caused into being’ in Enugu, they stimulated a vibrant socio-economic life in the area. These resulted in tremendous changes not only in the relative locational importance of the new-emergent urban space, but also in its internal characteristics and sociology. These encouraged migration of persons from the hinterlands and other places for settlement in the budding township for employment purposes (ECSTC-MI, 1973; MIC, 1991; ESDIC, 1993; MEEE, 2001; Udo, 1981; Mabogunje, 1976).

Due to its fast pace of urbanisation, development and the consequent unprecedented immigration, Enugu attained second-class township status in 1917, just two years after its foundation, with the name “Enugu Ngwo”.⁹ This was under Lugard’s Township Ordinance¹⁰

⁸ E.S. File – Croasdale Report. The 1953 figure was P.E.H. Hair’s (1954) calculations from the Colliery records.

⁹ The name “Ngwo” is the name of the nearest village on the ridge where Enugu was founded. In 1928, “Ngwo” was dropped to distinguish the township (Enugu) from Ngwo village (Ikejiofor, 2004; Hair, 1954).

(Ikejiofor, 2004; Hair, 1954). A plan of Enugu drawn up in 1917 showed that the town's main features were an "African Quarter" which was established the same year on the Coal Camp site and an almost empty "European Reservation Area", which was further extended north and east, occupying most of the land between the *Obwetti*, *Asata* and *Aria* streams (PPV, 1966). The African and European quarters were separated by a stream and open stretch of land, in keeping with the then colonial policy of segregating blacks and whites, ostensibly "for health reasons" (Hair, 1954). Indeed, buttressing this fact of rapid growth, an administrative report of 1919 simply notes that "Enugu was...improving fast".¹¹ By 1919 too, some foreign trading firms had begun moves towards settling in the budding town. The 'native location' (African Quarters) had to be extended: there were now over 500 bush-houses on the site and it became necessary for the colonial officials to impose a layout. By 1920, the first European firms arrived in Enugu – one banking concern and five trading concerns, all British, except for one French trading concern (Hair, 1954). In a few years afterwards, several European firms took over plots in the European Reservation Area, while the colliery and the railway were also building permanent quarter for their white staff in the same reservation.¹²

Each of the events associated with the development of the mining and railway sectors in Enugu added to its population growth. For instance, until 1929 when Enugu became the administrative headquarter for the southern provinces of Nigeria, the only labour employers in Enugu were the colliery and railway. Thus, with the opening and expansion of every new coal mine, the population of miners grew rapidly. Similarly, the importance of the railway in Enugu transcended its original role as a means of transporting coal to the seaport at Port Harcourt. As it became the operational headquarters of the Railway Corporation in Eastern Nigeria, there was tremendous population movement into the town. Again, the 1928 opening of the Enugu – Kano railway line boosted the migration and settlement of northerners in the town.¹³ The railway also stimulated the development of other transport tributaries and feeder roads needed to bring migrants and wares to Enugu, thus linked it by road to all the major population centres in Nigeria (Ikejiofor, 2004). Furthermore, the activities of these two establishments overtime also kept attracting other categories of migrants – diverse service providers – to the town.

¹⁰ This was by an Order in Council, No. 19 of 1917; and by another Order in Council, No. 2 of 1924, the new town was declared a Supreme Court Area (Ogbuagu, 1961:241).

¹¹ P.R. Files (1919) – Onitsha Provincial Annual Report, 'Town Planning, Udi Junction and Enugu'.

¹² P.R. Files (1920) – Onitsha Provincial Annual Report.

¹³ It was usually a preferred place of settlement for these northern groups due to its neutral weather, link to a 'convenient' means of transportation (the railway) and proximity to the north.

With the opening of the second coal mine, Iva mine, in 1917, the population of miners grew rapidly. As the coal mine attracted more workers, a second settlement for indigenous workers was established on the southern side of *Ogbete* stream. This formed the nucleus of present day “Coal Camp”, otherwise known as Ogbete (Ikejiofor, 2004). However, the colliery, together with the transformative effects of the railway, kept attracting waves of migrants to the new town. As the need to expand became very evident, people began to look eastwards. On the east side of Asata River¹⁴ lay the farmland of Ogui-Nike village, which was not within the township, but needed to be incorporated if expansion was to continue. It was also urged that the farmland called “Ogui Overside” be incorporated but this was opposed by administrative authorities on the grounds that the natives of Ogui-Nike could not afford to lose their valuable farmland (PPV, 1966). This feeling led to the agreement that the “Neutral Zone” be slimed down, and from there another “native location” was built on the west bank of the Asata River rather than on the east. As a result, “Ogui Overside” was left alone, while Ogui and Asata Layouts were authorised in-between the neutral zone and the Asata River (Hair, 1954). Similarly, the urgent need for accommodation also made the railway authorities to commence the building of permanent quarters for colliery workers at “China Town” in 1923 (Ikejiofor, 2004).

During the depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, when, as Hair (1954) argues, Enugu expanded little, a proportion of the townspeople ‘resigned’ and returned to the villages. Retreat *enmasse* was, however, decidedly exceptional.¹⁵ But, from 1929 when Enugu became an administrative headquarter for the Southern Province under the post-World War II constitutions, the number of government departments represented in the town increased tremendously. This development attracted diverse migrants for the many opportunities thus created. Thus, during the early 1930s, the building of houses in Ogui Layout continued as did the development of permanent colliery dwellings in Asata Layout. The desperate situation and indiscriminate nature of the build-up of these new areas led to the inauguration of a Building Ordinance,¹⁶ which was essentially for maintaining some kind of control over the situation. Also, within this period, the neutral zone was abandoned and the European Reservation was renamed “Senior Service Reservation”. Few years after, the township’s attention was once again turned to “Ogui Overside” due to population pressure and the need to find new housing areas, but not without opposition. This time the opposition claimed that its incorporation “would detach from their tribal section

¹⁴ Due to a series of agreements between the villagers and the Crown Authority, the Asata River was the boundary of the “Neutral Zone” and lay between the African Quarters and the European Reservation for “Health Reasons” (PPV, 1966).

¹⁵ Government Local Authority File “Dewhurst Census”, p.10.

¹⁶ Government Local Authority Papers, 1930-31.

and association a number of Africans who at present were subject to their traditional authorities and native laws” (Hair, 1954: 49). Notwithstanding this development, people in desperation began to filter across the river in search of housing and the situation became uncontrollable for the authorities. Consequently, in 1940, Ogui Oversight was declared an “Urban Area” (PPV, 1966).

The non-cooperation of the native land owners in permitting a planned layout led to government authorities, especially the medical department, refusing to approve all the buildings that had been erected in the area. Theoretically, building in the area should have stopped, but the acute shortage of housing and accommodation made such a ‘theoretical postulation’ unfeasible.¹⁷ This was, however, not the situation in other parts of the city; indeed, it was the diametrical opposite. “Organised town planning was systematically carried out with the result that good housing was erected and streets were well laid” (PPV, 1966: 12). The make-up of most of the housing in these other areas was what one would expect of a budding colonial city at the time – well made, permanent and semi-permanent buildings. Between 1940 and 1945, the town experienced a ‘war-boom’ due to the World War II. Increased activity on the railway and in the colliery and a great increase in the military estate brought tens of thousands of new migrant-settlers to Enugu. These increased the demand for housing and as a result, the natives began to lease their lands more freely, and since the township building regulations were not applicable to native lands, an unorganised and unpleasant slum emerged¹⁸ (Hair, 1954:4).

Although the colliery and railways provided residential quarters for its staff, these could only accommodate a small proportion of their employees. This, together with the need to house increasing numbers of other migrants, added to the demand for more housing land in and around Enugu and thus, the development of other residential settlements (Ikejiofor, 2004). Disturbed by the rate of over-crowding in the town, the Local Authority took ‘a one-man count’ – the “Dewhurst Census”¹⁹ – in 1945, which put Enugu’s population at 35,000. And when it became evident that this overflow population was going to create more “Ogui Oversights”, arrangements were promptly made for a new layout to be established. Conceived in the early 1940s, the area, now called Uwani Layout, was acquired in 1947 (Hair, 1954: 49).

From 1949 onward, a period during which the town was the capital of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, a boom of ‘official buildings’ hit the town as the emerging city took a new immigration turn: the Secretariat and the adjoining offices were extended and modernised; various other new government buildings were erected, new Railway Quarters were built, more Colliery Quarters were constructed and a Government Trade Center was opened in 1949. In 1952, a Women’s Teachers-

¹⁷ Government Local Authority Papers, 1940-51.

¹⁸ This has also been noted as the most striking feature of the war-time expansion of Enugu town. See PPV (1966).

¹⁹ Government Local Authority File “Dewhurst Census”.

training College (WTC) was opened, while the College of Arts, Science and Technology²⁰, and Queens School were established in 1954. By these developments, the ‘army of bureaucrats’ became larger than ever before, while new crops of students for the newly-established schools moved into Enugu. These meant great population movements. For instance, the 1953 census figures of Enugu shows that in eight years (since 1945), the population had increased from 35,000 to 63,000, mainly due to the increase in government activities. But Hair (1954) argues that this is probably not as great as that between 1939 and 1945. Following these developments, substantially built private houses started appearing in Coal Camp, Asata and Ogui, while Uwani, Enugu’s newest housing site at the time, had expanded by 1953 to over 100 houses with accommodation for about 5,000 people (PPV, 1966: 13). The town also benefited from the general prosperity of Nigeria. Production at the colliery was stepped up and more workers taken on; and the railway handled a new high volume of traffic.²¹

Although some migrants intended to return to their home villages, Hair (1954) suggests that an increasing larger proportion did not. Several hundred young men and women lived all their lives in Enugu, adopting new family life styles and children were being born in Enugu, representing the third generation of the migrant-settlers in the city. Thus, amid the drift of population into Enugu, a core of permanent settlers/settlement emerged. And with general progress and economic stability, Enugu’s population kept growing through the 1950s to the mid 1960s. For instance, between 1953 and 1966, the city’s population doubled and its expansion led to the development of new housing areas such as the Independence, Achara, New Haven and Ogui New Layouts (PPV, 1966).

By the mid 1960s, Nigeria experienced dislocating political crisis which affected the population of Enugu city. One outcome of the crisis – an “Igbo pogrom” in the north – led to a panicky massive ‘home-coming’ of the Igbo from other regions to a safer *Igboland*. In this regard, Enugu, its first and biggest city, was the primary ‘choice destination’ of most of these urban home-comers. Conversely, people of non-Igbo stock resident in Enugu emigrated, in many cases, to cities/towns in their own regions which seemed safer in the crisis and confusion of the time. In other words, while Enugu witnessed an inflow of great magnitude by Igbo refugees during this period, it also experienced, as never before in the country’s history, an ‘exit-migration’ of all non-Igbo settlers. The crisis eventually snowballed into the gruesome 30-month Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), during which period Enugu witnessed no migrations, except if one is to consider the indiscriminate flows of displaced persons who sought safety from the perils of war. Additionally,

²⁰ Since 1961 this became the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus.

²¹ Government L.A. File “Dewhurst Census”, p.10.

the eventual capture of Enugu by federal troops during the war meant mass-killings and dislodgement/displacement of the city's core populations.

With the end of the civil war in 1970, people moved back to Enugu to seek jobs, livelihoods and new lives. Thus the city again witnessed a 'rush-migration' (Nzimi, 2001), a trend Udo (1981:14) notes as having been very rapid over a couple of years. However, this post-civil war growth was mainly an 'Igbo affair', as most of other ethnic groups' members were wary of migrating to *Igboiland* due to the disaffections and mistrusts entrenched by the war. This situation has changed a little since the end of the civil war up till 1990 (Okwudiba Nnoli; Sule Haruna; Ade Adeyelu, 2005: PC), and was further reinforced by Enugu's decline in the post-civil war era, metamorphosing from a major industrial centre to principally an administrative and educational centre. It is noteworthy that the two all-important establishments on which the city was founded and thrived went moribund: in the late 1970s, the coal industry and its mines 'died out', while the railways was almost grounded, becoming a shadow of its former status. Similarly, planned efforts to develop in the city and at various times, secondary industries around the colliery – tin-smelting, glass-works, lime-works, and so on – all collapsed (Hair, 1954).

In capturing what seems like a summary of the phenomenal nature of post-colonial migrations into Enugu city, Ikejiofor (2004:12), remarks that the city "...had grown two and a half folds between 1963 and 1986 and at about 6% *per annum* between 1986 and 1991." Buttressing this fact, Wolpe, (1974:26) notes that as at 1931 there were no Igbo settlements with a population exceeding 20,000, but by 1952, each of Eastern Nigeria's four major cities, including Enugu, possessed a total urban population well in excess of 50,000. Additionally, Coleman (1958:75-76) notes that between 1921 and 1952, Eastern Nigeria's urban growth rate of 688% far surpassed that of the country's other regions. Indeed, Enugu was primarily responsible for this statistics. This peopling of Enugu, like in the period 1915 to 1962, has been of an unplanned, undirected and unregulated nature – an operation in the old world spirit of *laissez-faire* – which has foundations in the early handling of the area, resulting in what the colonial officials referred to as a "regrettable necessity" (Hair, 1954). Two notable factors have been identified.

Firstly, there was no attempt at regulating the flow of population into Enugu, despite the fact that its officials were in regular contact with population flows at various points (Hair, 1954). In central and southern Africa, for instance, the flow of labour to the mines was generally directed by the State or the mine companies. Agents travelled hundreds of miles to recruit labourers from villages and transported them immediately to the mining settlements. Again, while these recruits were discouraged from becoming permanent residents of places of their employment through certain colonial policies, their West African counterparts, experienced a contrasting treatment (Mabogunje, 1976; Potts, 1997). Thus, people from everywhere moved into such settlements as

Enugu freely and unregulated. As Hair (1954:23) aptly puts it, “Diverse opportunities and the demand for labour [market forces] were the prime regulating factors.”

Secondly, broadly speaking, officialdom showed little interest in the peopling of Enugu as there was very little contact and/or co-operation between its colonial officials. Hair (1954) reports that the Colliery Manager recruited labour from Udi Division without referring to the District Officer at Udi, and increased the working population of Enugu without referring to the Local Authority at Enugu. Furthermore, since the peopling of the city was not instant, but happened over a reasonable period of time, one expected the authorities to closely interact and monitor the growth of the area from its inception, and if need be, put certain measures in place to regulate inflows. This was, however, not the case.

Consequences of Migrations into Enugu

One major fallout of migrations into Enugu city over time is the urbanisation of the area, the first in southeastern Nigeria, and indeed, *Igbo*land. This was quite dramatic. The hitherto ‘virgin land’, through the activities of the colliery and the railways, was rapidly and radically transformed into an urban area within two years, and twelve years after, was too significant that it became the headquarter of the southern province, well before many other urban areas which had developed decades and centuries before it. One would agree that this was a rare fit to attain. This has, however, not been without some effects. As in much of Nigerian urban settings, the city’s culture is essentially hybrid in nature – a mixture of indigenous and western socio-cultural practices. This aptly captures what Okin (1968) describes as urbanised Africans’ middle-of-the-road attitude in their search for a satisfactory new African environment, or what Ikejiofor (2004: 9) explains as a ‘syncretic culture’ “that relates to the historical development of the past and, at the same time, points to a new, modern future”.

Though Enugu has always had a multi-ethnic outlook since its founding due to its colonial roots, this situation was interestingly reinforced by the sporadic flows of migrations into the area, and represents one striking feature of the effect of migrations. Apart from the Igbo, the “indigenous owners” of Enugu²², there were the Hausa and Fulani who were profoundly marked out by their peculiar culture. The Yoruba, Ijaw and Edo groups were also significant, but ‘drowned’ among their Igbo hosts due cultural similarities and accommodation preference.²³ There were also members of other ethnic minorities in Nigeria represented in Enugu, though in

²² In Nigeria, the concept of “indigenship” remains very strong, viable, and powerful, even to the extent that cities are identified as “belonging” to particular ethnic groups – “*owners of the land*” – even when they are politically subordinate there (Plotnicov, 1972:1-2).

²³ These groups’ members preferred to live amongst their Igbo hosts.

smaller numbers. For instance, in 1929, ethnic groups in the city were represented in the following proportions: All inhabitants of Enugu c.1929:

From Northern Nigeria – 2%

From Western Nigeria – 10%

From Eastern Nigeria – 87% (Coastal tribes, such as Calabar, etc – 2%; Igbo – 85%).²⁴

Similarly, Hair (1954) reports that though the 1945 count did not inquire into ethnic provenance, such figures were calculated by the Local Authority from tax returns. The results were as follows: All male inhabitants of Enugu 1945:

From Northern Nigeria - 3%

From Western Nigeria - 5%

Form Eastern Nigeria - 91% (coastal tribes – Calabar etc – 4% Igbo tribes – 63% south Iboland [sic] – Owerri, etc – 24%).²⁵

Similarly, non-Nigerian Africans and other non-Africans were equally represented. A point to note about the ethnic provenance in Enugu, however, is that in all the censuses conducted up until 1953, no one claimed to have come from, or be ‘indigenous’ to Enugu itself. Each inhabitant of Enugu city always claimed to have come (migrated) from one home district²⁶ with which s/he had very close family connections (Hair, 1954). This not only corresponds with the fact that all of its inhabitants were migrants from other areas, though the land is owned by some identifiable native groups, but had been uninhabited prior to 1915.

Another was the establishment of many organised ethnic unions/associations²⁷, fashioned to deal with the vagaries of urban life and existence – guarantying adequate welfare and security – as it affects their members (Mabogunje, 1976; Osaghae, 1994). This was due to the city’s ethnic provenances. Indeed, almost every man and woman in Enugu was a member of at least one such society. The existence of such societies is a consequence of the weakening of family roles, nuclear and/or extended, due to the exigencies of migration. The term ‘ethnic’ indicates their fundamental nature, while their functions and achievements mark them out. Mabogunje (1976:23) sheds more light:

²⁴ Government L.A. File – “Assessment and Taxation”. How the figures from which P.E.H. Hair calculated the proportions were obtained is not clear, but he suggests they may represent the result of a house-to-house census taken in 1927 when District Taxation was introduced.

²⁵ The next census in Enugu (the 1953 general census) agreed fairly with the 1945 count in finding that 87% of the inhabitants were of Igbo stock (Hair, 1954: 5).

²⁶ Hair (1954) argues here that, in fact, several hundred members of the younger generation who were born in Enugu were, in a strict sense, natives of Enugu, but each of these also claimed to come from his father’s home district, the ancestral home of his family.

²⁷ For a detailed discussion of “Migrant Ethnic Associations and/or Migrant Ethnic Empire” in Nigeria, see Osaghae, 1994.

But perhaps the most important ... in many African cities is the ethnic or town association. This consists of people who have migrated from the same ethnic group or the same area. These associations perform a variety of functions which have come to cover large areas of life of many migrants. They serve as a reception body to welcome the new migrant to the city. They help him [sic] to find accommodation and very often too, to find employment.

Ethnic unions deserve to be considered a success story in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria, as it is frequently possible to spot these associations' contributions to developmental processes. Similarly, there existed also associations for non-Nigerian African, and non-African populations, which were quite popular during the colonial and early post-colonial periods, though their membership was quite negligible (Okwudiba Nnoli, 2005: PC).

Of interest also is the nature of and trends in migrants' family/household organisation. Contrary to certain views, migrants' movement to Enugu never meant a sharp break with rural communities of origin; instead, they lived in 'dualism', characterised by one family, but two households. Enugu migrants continued to regard themselves as part of their original households in the rural areas, where they visited frequently, filled some obligations in assistance to those left behind, and planned to eventually return to permanently. This fact guided Ouchó's (1996) conclusion that urbanisation in Africa divided families into two geographically separated but mutually supportive households; one in the urban and the other in the rural. In fact, Enugu migrants, in their politics as in their personal and social lives, were instrumentally oriented to material advantages of the city, but remained expressively oriented to their communities of origin and to their rural-centered kinship ties and institutions. Even as urban jobs became increasingly a lifetime commitment, Enugu migrants never gave up their rural ties; they were composed of a transient population constantly on the move between the city and their home towns.

Equally significant in Enugu was the development of 'quasi migrant enclaves'. Such enclaves were strictly the affairs of the Hausa and a few other 'Hausanised groups', and was reflective of the pre-colonial traditional Hausa residential segregation, otherwise known as the *Sabon Gari* system. This was used to prevent, as much as possible, the pollution of Islam by *Kafirs* (unbelievers) (Albert, 1993a/b; Osaghae 1994). Thus, the motive for the Enugu enclaves was not to emphasise cultural differences, but primarily to safeguard these migrants' cultures from undesirable pollution (Sani Mohammed; Sule Haruna, 2005:PC). These Enugu enclaves go by such names as *Garki*, *Ama Amusa*, and *Hausa Quarters*, and their quasi nature stemmed from the fact that they existed in the midst of their hosts, thus, not radically segregated, as is the case in *Hausaland*.

Finally, one of the most pervasive consequences of migration into Enugu is the divisive "indigene – settler" politics in inter-ethnic relations, which has of recent hardened into a theory of ethnic exclusion and exclusiveness. The "indigene/settler dichotomy" in Nigeria is within the

realm of citizenship, and is characterized by contradictions between indigeneity and citizenship in the constitutions (Nnoli, 2003).²⁸ Indeed, this is a domain of permanent contestation and conflicts, as “indigenes” seek the exclusion of those categorised as “settlers”, while those being excluded on the grounds of “settlement” resist it on claims of long residency and/or citizenship of the Nigerian State (Danfulani, ND; Egwu, 2005:12). In part, this shows most Nigerians see politics as a ‘zero-sum game’, where benefit to one equals harm to the other(s). However, this trend, a country-wide phenomenon, has acquired vast acceptability in the country.

Conclusion

Unlike most other Nigerian cities, Enugu is typically a ‘colonial construction’, and its history as a human community is entirely a history of migrations with diverse trends, and not unconnected with an accidental discovery in the area close to a century ago. The coal industry, together with the railway that was established to service it, laid the foundation for its eventual economic take-off and was responsible for the uncontrolled influx of migrants from different parts of the world. These, together with other socio-economic activities they ‘caused into being’, engendered growth and development, transforming Enugu from a ‘labour settlement’ into a cosmopolitan city. As a District Officer once put it in a colonial report of the late 1940s: “Enugu, like Topsy, has ‘just grow’d. Its population growth in each decade (except perhaps the first) has been unplanned and largely unpredicted” (Hair, 1954:13). Indeed, its astronomic population growth, largely migration-based, is clearly indicated in its census figures over the years:

1916 – ±400;

1926 – 3,200;

1931 – 13,000;

1939 – between 18,000 and 23,000;

1945 – 35,000;

1953 – 63,000;

1963 – 138,500;

1986 – 342,800; and

1991 – 465,000.

Thus, over time, Enugu widened in scope, accommodating different peoples, contrary to the expectations of many.

²⁸ For instance, Section 147 of the 1999 Constitution, among other provisions governing the appointment of Ministers, states thus: “Provided that in giving effect to the provisions aforesaid, the President shall appoint at least one Minister from each state, who shall be an indigene of such a State.” However, Section 25.1(a) clearly defines a citizen of Nigeria as “every person born in Nigeria on or before the date of independence, either of whose parents or any of whose grand parents belongs or belonged to any community *indigenous* to Nigeria.” See FRN (1999).

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