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Population, Politics and Power: An Investigation into the Tribal Systems Governing Nigeria's Democracy after the 1967 Civil War

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Population, Politics and Power: An Investigation into the Tribal Systems Governing Nigeria's Democracy after the 1967 Civil War

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Abstract

Nigeria is the most populous Black nation in the world but economically underperforming relative to its huge natural resources. The 1967 civil war that divided Nigeria was a war fought for economic reasons and it was inspired by tribal grievances towards the Igbo people. These grievances were set in place by the British Colonizers.

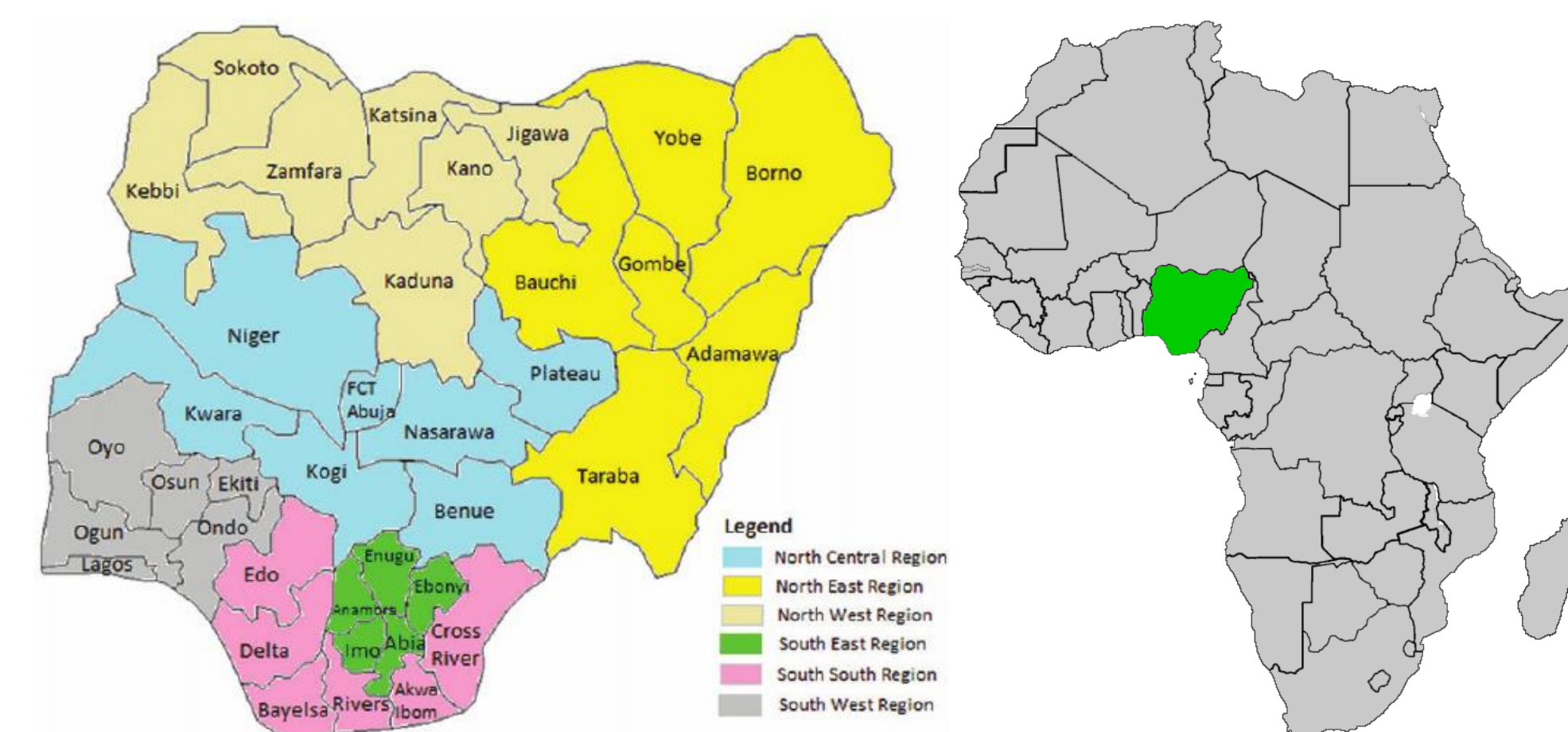
I interviewed my father, Dr. Peter Ogudoro, a respected Nigerian educationist who shared how his family has suffered painful disadvantages as a result of the war. His family was displaced from the Northern part of the country because people of Igbo descent were being massacred. Following this displacement, millions of families like Dr Ogudoro's were forced to the very bottom of the economic and social ladder because they had lost all their economic capital.

Dr. Ogudoro and some other highly respected Nigerians are, however, using their social platforms to preach ethnic reconciliation in pursuit of national progress. Nigeria's road to recovery, therefore, serves as proof that progress is possible and can be viewed as a beam of hope for other countries in similar situations.

Reasons for the Nigerian Civil War

- Tribal Grievances and suspicions that were incited by the British Colonizers in order to divide and conquer the different tribes
- The Nigerian state could not allow Biafra to successfully secede as most of the revenue-generating oil wells were located in the South-Eastern part of the country (known as Biafra during the war).
- People of Igbo descent were beginning to amass substantial economic and political success and this growth worried the other major tribes
- A badly organized coup had painted the Igbo tribe as wanting to seize power forcefully even though this was not the case. This failed coup was followed by retaliation from the Hausa tribe which massacred about 30,000 Igbo individuals

Map of Nigeria



Effects of the Nigerian Civil War

- About 2 million people lost their lives during the two and a half years that the war took place
- Millions of families were displaced and were forced to the very bottom of the social and economic ladder because they had lost their jobs and economic capital.
- Millions of people of Igbo descent suffered from starvation and are still affected disproportionately by severe health challenges.
- Billions of dollars were lost during the war as most of nation's economic production was put on hold.
- Continued discrimination and political manipulation by the other tribes has left the Igbo tribe without adequate representation in government agencies.
- Due to continued discrimination, Nigeria continues to lose out on the creativity and economic potential of the 32 million individuals who are of Igbo descent

Lessons for the Future

- There is a huge need for strong and unified political institutions that delegate positions based on skill and not tribal affiliation
- Those Nigerians of Igbo descent who were disproportionately affected by the war need to be provided with economic platforms that allow them to contribute productively to the nation's future.
- Nigeria should set up a reconciliation committee that will investigate the war crimes committed against Igbo civilians. This committee will be comprised of experts from all tribes who will determine the best reparations for the injustices done.
- Discrimination and ethnic tensions need to be avoided at all cost as they instill unnecessary fear and hate.
- Nigerian youths need to be educated about the war in middle school. This will require a change to nation's current history syllabus
- It's important to acknowledge that the legacy of colonization does not end after the colonizers have left
- There is hope for good progress but it requires both government intervention through policy changes and individual contribution

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