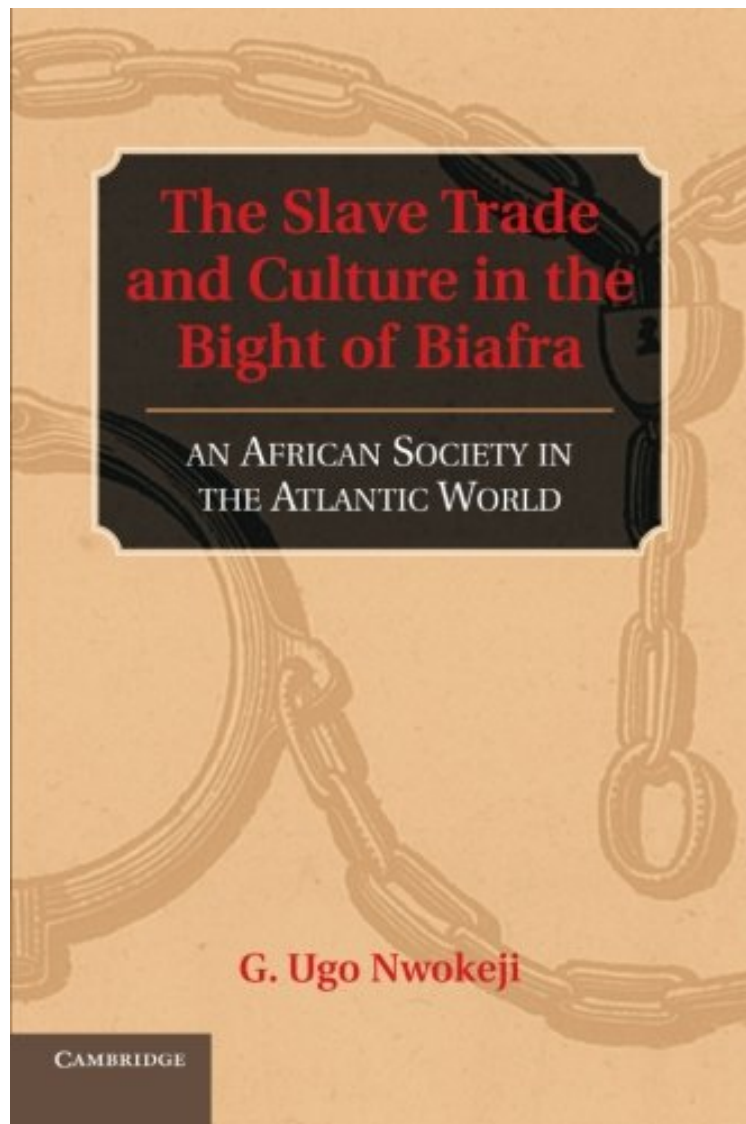


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## The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World

*G. Ugo Nwokeji*

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the Aro as a merchant group, their strategy for expansion without actual warfare, their interactions with other groups and nations, and their role in human traffic of the day. Highly readable, it's indispensable as an insight into the development of the slave trade in the hinterlands. This book is finely researched, highly logical, detailed and yet sweeping in its implications. Its tight focus on the Aro and their neighbors gives tremendous insight. If you care about this subject at all, it's a real page-turner!

The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra dissects and explains the structure, dramatic expansion, and manifold effects of the slave trade in the Bight of Biafra. By showing that the rise of the Aro merchant group was the key factor in trade expansion, G. Ugo Nwokeji reinterprets why and how such large-scale commerce developed in the absence of large-scale centralized states. The result is the first study to link the structure and trajectory of the slave trade in a major exporting region to the expansion of a specific African merchant group - among other fresh insights into Atlantic Africa's involvement in the trade - and the most comprehensive treatment of Atlantic slave trade in the Bight of Biafra. The fundamental role of culture in the organization of trade is highlighted, transcending the usual economic explanations in a way that complicates traditional generalizations about work, domestic slavery, and gender in pre-colonial Africa.

"The best analysis yet of the interaction between the demand for African captives in the Americas and an African society that, relatively late in the slave trade era, came to generate many of those captives. It largely resolves the problem of how a stateless society with no tradition of sending slaves out of the region could be drawn into a highly significant role in the largest coerced migration in history. This is a major contribution to both Atlantic and African history and is a compelling read." - David Eltis, Emory University

"Nwokeji has written a much-needed and masterful account of the intricacies of human trafficking as they pertain to the Bight of Biafra. Refreshing and innovative, his work breaks new ground. Original in perspective and interpretation, The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra is essential reading for the history of West Africa and the transatlantic slave trade." - Michael A. Gomez, New York University

"Nwokeji treats the Atlantic slave trade as an interactive process among supply and demand, cultural features, and local institutions. This is an important, innovative, impressive work." - Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, Rutgers University

"Nwokeji's greatest accomplishment is his interweaving of these internal dynamics of Biafra histories with those of the greater Atlantic world." - James H. Sweet, American Historical

"...Nwokeji's book is social history at its very best. It should be indispensable for scholars and students of slavery and the Atlantic slave trade. It will serve as a model for future work on the mechanics of the slave trade within Africa....Well written and well documented, this is a book I look forward to teaching and to returning to for many years to come." - Walter Hawthorne, Journal of African History

About the Author  
G. Ugo Nwokeji is Assistant Professor of African American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. His research focuses on the cultural history and political economy of Africa since 1500, with particular focus on international commerce in the Nigerian Niger Delta and its hinterland. Professor Nwokeji is the author of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy's The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and the Development of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry: History, Strategies, and Current Directions (2007) and multiple journal articles and book chapters, as well as co-editor of Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria (2005).