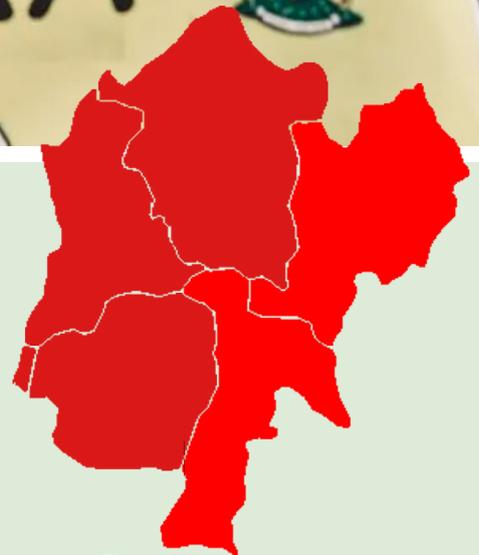




Perception and Impact

of IPOB-ordered Sit-At-Home Protests





DISCLAIMER

The data contained in this report is only up-to-date as of Monday, 23 August 2021. Some of it is subject to change during the natural course of events. SB Morgen cannot accept liability in respect of any errors or omissions that may follow such events that may invalidate data contained herein.

Our researchers employed desk research to collate the available data. Our publicly released reports are formatted for easy and quick reading, and may not necessarily contain all the data that SB Morgen gathered during a given survey. Complete datasets can be made available on request.

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BACKGROUND

As part of its efforts to see its ambition to secede from Nigeria through, the Independent Peoples' of Biafra (IPOB) has been employing sit-at-home protests in the South-Eastern region of the country. These have been carried out at specific times for different reasons, such as protesting the arrest of its leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu by the State Security Services in 2015, or celebrating the Biafra Day, in commemoration of the declaration of the secessionist Republic of Biafra, an event which sparked off Nigeria's civil war on 30 May 1967.

Following the rendition of Nnamdi Kanu back to Nigeria in the last week of June 2021, IPOB ordered¹ a sit-at-home protest to start on Monday, 8 August 2021, and to hold every Monday in the region. The reason for this sit-at-home was to protest Kanu's detention and to force the government to release him. Relative to previous sit-at-home protests, however, this has been enforced with greater violence. On the first Monday, two commercial transport vehicles were burnt and as many as four people were feared killed in Imo State, while four others were killed in Anambra State.

On 14th August, the group's spokesman, Emma Powerful announced that "following a direct order from Nnamdi Kanu", it had suspended² the weekly sit-at-home exercise. But since that announcement, activities in the region have still come to a halt on Mondays, and violence is still visited on those who attempt to go out and work. For example, on 6 September 2021, a truck carrying mattresses from Onitsha in Anambra State to Orlu in Imo State was stopped and set ablaze³ at Kootu Road, near Orlu. On the same day, a trailer loaded with motorcycle spare parts was set on fire⁴ at Eluagu Obukpa, in Nsukka LGA of Enugu State. Both attacks and arson cases were conducted by unknown persons who claimed to be enforcing IPOB's sit-at-home order. In Eke Okposi, Onicha LGA of Ebonyi State, on the same 6 September, a businessman and some of his apprentices were killed⁵ by IPOB enforcers

¹South-East states, police kick as IPOB issues sit-at-home order (Punch)

²IPOB's suspended sit-at-home still grounds businesses in South East (Guardian Nigeria)

³Truck conveying foam in Anambra stopped, set ablaze for violating 'sit at home' order (774 via YouTube)

⁴Suspected IPOB supporters set trailer ablaze in Enugu (Premium Times)

⁵Enforcers of IPOB sit-at-home kill six in Ebonyi - 774



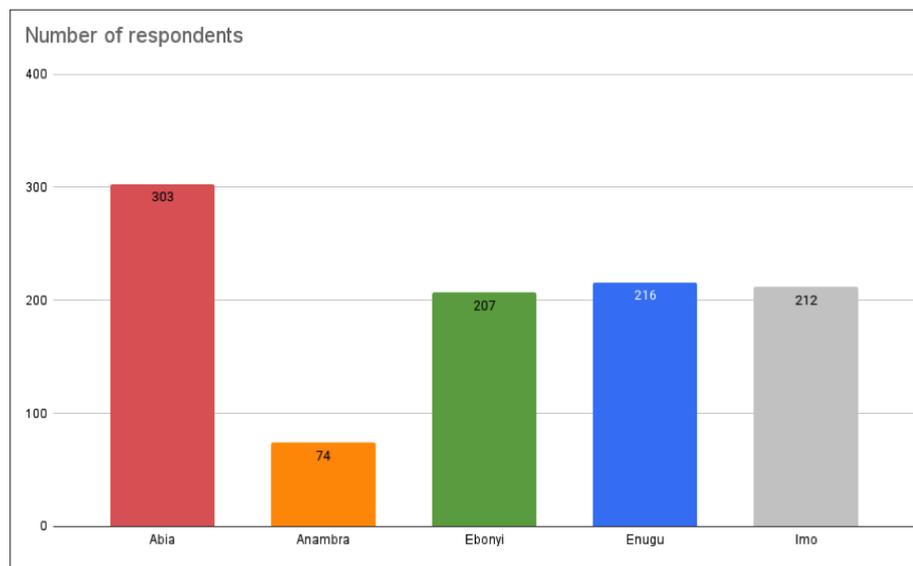
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With this level of violence, it has been unclear if the level of compliance with the sit-at-home order is a reflection of the support that IPOB enjoys within the South-East or if it was due to fear of the repercussions of disobeying the order as alleged by an increasing number of voices from the region. To this end, in the week between 20 and 26 August 2021, SBM Intel conducted a survey in the region and spoke with a few experts who have not been named for their safety.

The Impact of IPOB-ordered Sit-At-Home Protests

The survey was held across the five states in the South-East geopolitical zone to ascertain the level of compliance of residents. Because of the sensitive nature of the topic, our researchers were instructed to ask respondents about their willingness to take part in a survey of this nature only once. The survey had a target of 1000 respondents in all five states, a total of 200 in each, again because of the sensitivity of the topic, and the limited time we allotted for it.



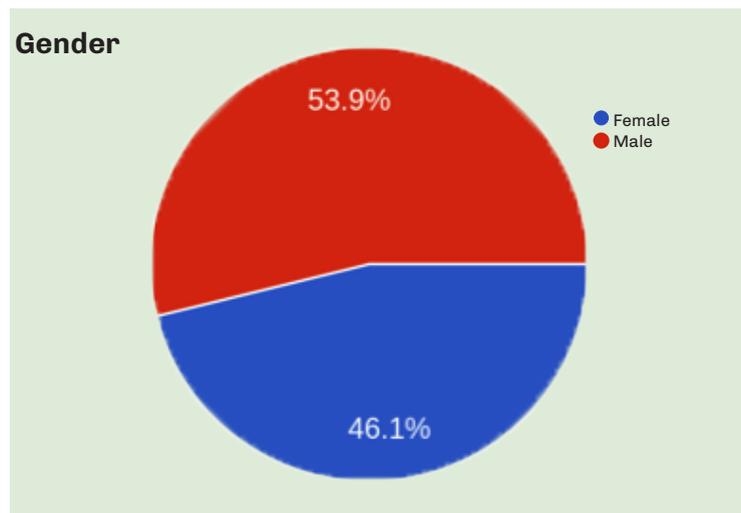


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All field researchers received warnings to desist from the survey with the most severe warnings in Anambra and Enugu states. The warnings in Anambra escalated to threats to life, which was responsible for the state failing to meet its target number of respondents. As a result, researchers in other states were asked to question more people in order to meet the target number of respondents. In the end, the total target was exceeded, with 1012 people responding to the survey across all five states.

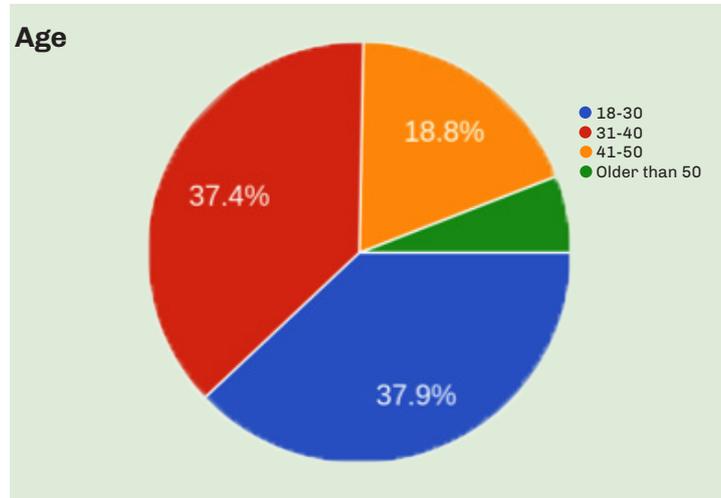
Of our total respondents, 545 (53.9%) were male and 467 (46.1%) were female.



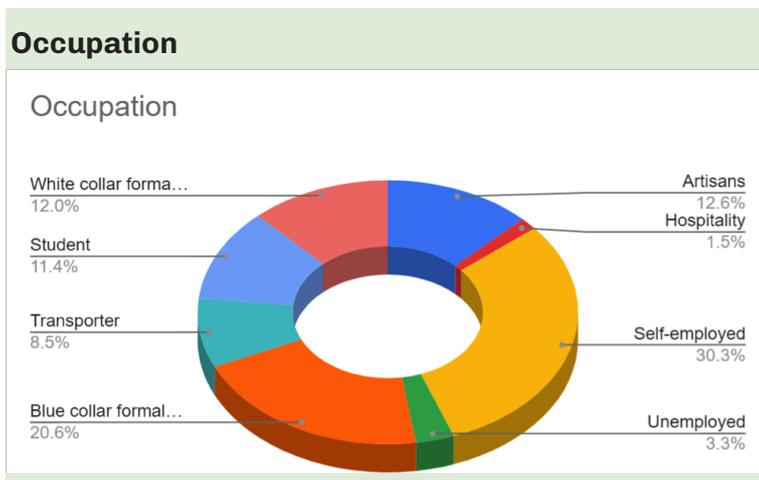
Our questionnaire was targeted at people across all adult age groups. The ages of respondents ranged from 18 - 30 (37.9%), 31 - 40 (37.4%), 41 - 50 (18.8%) to older than 50 (5.9%).



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Respondents came from all walks of life with 19 distinct occupations mentioned. In addition to that, there were 12 retired respondents (including a retired soldier), 109 students, six housewives, and two people who admitted to being unemployed. Based on similarities in economic activity, we grouped the various engagements as follows: artisans, blue-collar formal sector workers, white-collar formal sector workers, hospitality workers, transporters, self-employed people, and students.



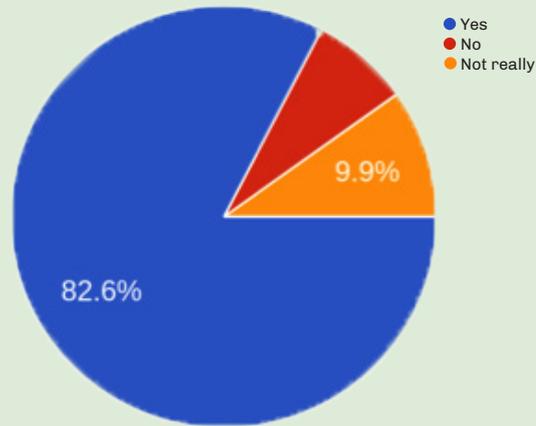


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In what follows, the results of the survey are broken down into general responses across all respondents and specific responses across categories like age, gender, states, and occupation. The breakdown of the results across these categories gives us a clearer picture of where the sit-at-home protests get their biggest support - by state, age group and occupation.

Was the Sit-At-Home observed in your locality on August 9th?



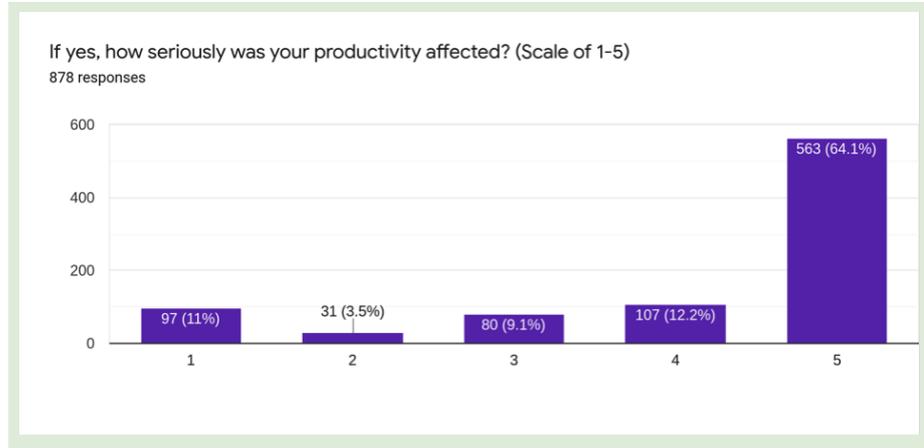
When asked if the 9 August sit-at-home protest was observed in their locality, a huge majority of respondents (82.6%) said it was observed

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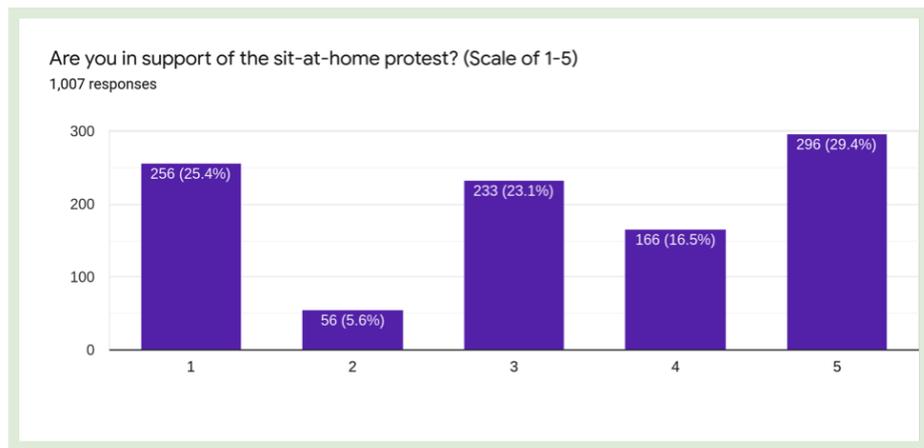
Of the 878 people who acknowledged that the protests were observed in their locality, 64.1% said that their productivity was “very affected”, while 11% said their productivity was not affected at all. It was interesting to note that half of the 97 respondents who said that they did not suffer any productivity loss were teachers and students, and this was probably because the survey took place during the summer vacation period (schools resume in the first two weeks of September for a new academic year in Nigeria).



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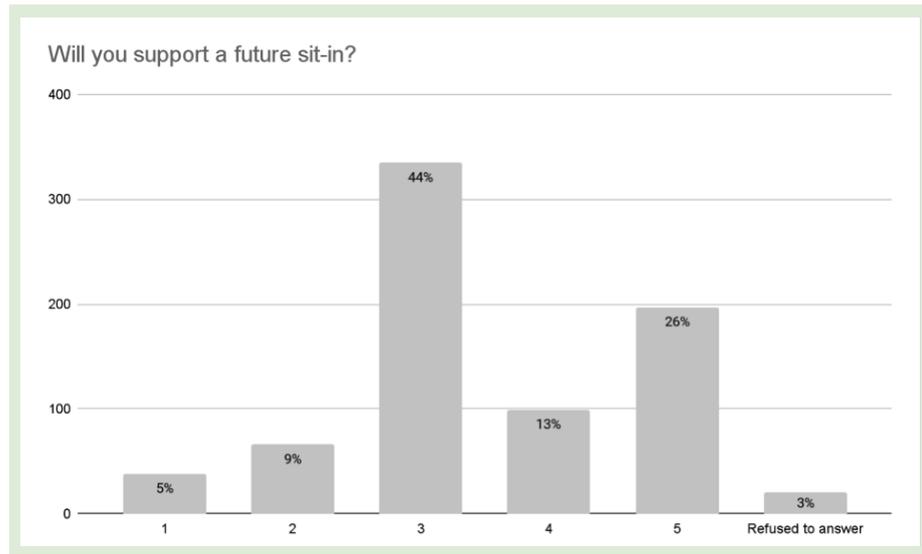
Interviewees were asked if they were in support of the sit-at-home protest action carried out by IPOB. The responses showed a split population, with 464 respondents more supportive of the sit-at-home action, and 312 less supportive. 233 (23%) were lukewarm towards it. At the extreme ends of the spectrum, 29% are in full support, while 25% are not in support. Interestingly, five respondents opted not to answer this question at all, and all five refused to be drawn on an answer.



The follow-up question to that was directed at only those who showed some form of support for the protests, so the 25% who said they did not support were not asked if they would support future sit-at-home protests.



The respondents who showed some form of support (scales 2 to 5 of the previous question) were asked if they would show support or are supportive of a future sit-at-home protest.



26% of those who had some support for the first sit-at-home protest insisted that they'd completely support future sit-at-home protests, while 13% would still support with some reservations. 14% of those who were in support had dropped off. But tellingly, the bulk of those who were earlier in support, 44% had become lukewarm about the idea of a future protest, indicating a shift in mood away from support for the idea.

The group that had earlier noted that they are not in support of the initial sit-at-home protest were asked if they would resist such protests in future, 23% said they'd mount a strong resistance to the group and such orders in the future, 37% said they'd be a little resistant and 41% told our researchers that although they do not support the order, they would not do anything to resist future orders. Some of them quietly told researchers that fear of possible reprisals meant they preferred to be quiet, indicating that amongst those who aren't in support of the protests in the South East, there is fear about the possibility of violence or harm that IPOB sympathisers may carry out on those who are not in support of the movement.



Results at a glance



34% of men support the sit-at-home



24% of women support the sit-at-home

Support by age group

37%
18-30yrs

52%
31-40

49%
41-50

57%
Older than 50

Effectiveness by state

Ebonyi State was most affected economically by the protest with as many as 84% of the respondents admitting so, followed by 74.42% of respondents in Enugu State. Anambra and Imo were tied at 55% of respondents' economic activities being affected by the protest, while Abia State had the least disruption to economic activity with only 42% of respondents affected by the protest.

Occupations

Transporters (73.3%), those in the hospitality industry (71.4%), self-employed persons (73.9%), artisans (62.1%), blue-collar formal sector workers (64.5%), students (47.6%), and white-collar formal sector workers (49.53%) note that the sit-at-home protest of the 9 August 2021 had a serious effect on their productivity/ economic activities.



Gender

When the responses are broken down by gender, it shows an almost equal impact felt by both male and female respondents to the sit-at-home order with 83.7% of women and 81.7% of men attesting to the sit-at-home order being observed in their locality. About 60% of female respondents indicated that the sit-at-home order affected their productivity compared to 67.9% of men, while 12.9% of women said their productivity was not affected by the sit-at-home order compared to 9.42% of men.

The sit-at-home protest was more popular with men, with 34% of the male respondents expressing more support compared to 24% for women, while 22.15% of men were opposed to it compared to 29.25% of women.

Out of the respondents that expressed support for the protest, only 19.7% of women and 23.34% of men indicated support for future sit-at-home protests, while 19.42% of women and 17.51% of men said they will offer no support to future protests.

Out of the respondents that indicated they did not support the protest, only 23.24% and 21.56% of men and women expressed a desire to resist future sit-at-home protests; 44.34% and 37.43% of men and women said they will not resist future protests.

In terms of the impact on productivity of the sit-at-home protest across age groups, more than half of all four age ranges surveyed admitted to having their productivity very affected by the protest. On the other side of the scale, 7% of respondents between 31-40 and 41-50 said that



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Age groups

The age group support has socio-economic indicators with more people unemployed, and thus disenfranchised, likely to be in the 31 - 40 age group than in the 41 - 50 age group because of the impact on their productivity. Respondents older than 50, who are more likely to be retired, showed the largest share of support for the protests (40%), while the protests enjoyed the least share of support among young people between 18-30 years with only 23.1% expressing support for it. This is contrary to the general perception which had indicated that IPOB's strongest support comes from young people who do not have the lived experience of the Nigerian Civil War and the years succeeding it.

Although the respondents in three age groups from 30 had at least 30% indicating support for the sit-at-home protests, only those between 41-50 and older than 50 indicated support for similar protests in the future, with 31.21% and 28.81% respectively affirming so. The bulk of the respondents indicated a level of support for similar protests in the future.

In the same vein, the strongest sign of resistance to future protests among those who never supported it in the first place is among persons 18-30 with 25.65% of



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the respondents indicating that resistance. On the other hand, only 8.70% of persons older than 50 indicated a willingness to resist future sit-at-home orders. Importantly, the overwhelming possible response to future orders by those who never supported the previous one is that at least, 36% of each of these groups indicated no interest in resisting future protests.

States

Of the five states in the South East, the sit-at-home order was most effective in Ebonyi State with 98.07% of the respondents affirming that it was observed, followed by 97.17% in Imo State, 96.30% in Enugu State and 83.78% in Anambra State. The sit-at-home protest was observed the least in Imo State where only 51.82% of the respondents said the order was followed through.

Not surprisingly, Ebonyi State was most affected economically by the protest with as many as 84% of the respondents admitting so, followed by 74.42% of respondents in Enugu State. Anambra and Imo were tied at 55% of respondents' economic activities being affected by the protest, while Abia State had the least disruption to economic activity with only 42% of respondents affected by the protest.

Although the sit-at-home order was most effective in Ebonyi State, the highest support for the protest comes from Imo



Not surprisingly, Ebonyi State was most affected economically by the protest with as many as 84% of the respondents admitting so, followed by 74.42% of respondents in Enugu State. Anambra and Imo were tied at 55% of respondents' economic activities being affected by the protest, while Abia State had the least disruption to economic activity with only 42% of respondents affected by the protest.



State with 37.1% of the respondents expressing strong support, followed by Ebonyi State with 35%. About 29% and 27% of respondents in Anambra and Enugu States expressed support for the protests, while only 21% of respondents in Abia State showed any support for the protests.

This trend repeats itself with regard to support for future protests, with about 42% of respondents in Imo State expressing support for future protests, followed by Anambra State with 36% of respondents. Despite the protest being most observed, only 21.36% of respondents in Ebonyi State indicated a willingness to support future protests, while 14.5% and 11% of respondents in Enugu and Abia States respectively said they will support future protests.

In the same vein, at least 40% of the respondents in Anambra State who did not support the protest indicated a willingness to resist future protest directives, while only 13% of those in Abia State indicated the same willingness. Ebonyi, Imo and Enugu States had 31.25%, 27.4% and 25% of respondents who were not in support of the protest show a willingness to resist future sit-at-home orders.

Occupation groups

The effect of the sit-at-home was varied among various workgroups with unemployed people, teachers and students reporting the least effect on productivity, while transporters, those in the hospitality businesses, and self-employed people were proportionally the most affected.

The survey results analysed according to occupations indicates that transporters (73.3%), those in the hospitality industry (71.4%), self-employed persons (73.9%), artisans (62.1%), blue-collar formal sector workers (64.5%), students (47.6%), and white-collar formal sector workers (49.53%) note that the sit-at-home protest of the 9 August 2021 had a serious effect on their productivity/ economic activities.

Despite the impact of the protest on their productivity, only 39.6% of artisans, 26.6% of hospitality workers, 27.5% of



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self-employed persons, 10.8% of white-collar formal sector workers, 13.9% of blue-collar formal sector workers, 39.4% of students, 30.5% of transporters and 15.1% of unemployed persons indicated that they are not in support of the sit-at-home protest organised by IPOB.

For those not in support of the protests, when asked if they will resist future sit-at-home orders, 40% of artisans, 33.3% of those in the hospitality industry, 44.8% of white-collar formal sector workers, 41.9% of self-employed and 43.4% of unemployed persons, 33% of blue-collar formal sector workers, 48.9% of students and 35.8% of transporters noted that they will not show any resistance to a future IPOB sit-at-home order.



CONCLUSION

The relative lack of support to the sit-at-home protests in Abia State, which is IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu's home state, may be related to the impact of the three military exercises in the region since 2016 tagged 'Operation Python Dance I, II and III. Operation Python Dance I was carried out mostly in Abia State in a bid to arrest Nnamdi Kanu. There were numerous reports of clashes between the military and IPOB, as well as the military's invasion of Mr Kanu's home to arrest him.

The effectiveness of the sit-at-home order in the various states might be as a result of the use of force by IPOB in enforcing it, particularly in Imo State which saw an increase in violence in the months leading up to the sit-at-home order. Although IPOB has refused to take responsibility for any of the attacks on police stations, paramilitary agencies and individuals including the murder of former presidential aide Ahmed Gulak, the government has continued to blame the attacks on them.

IPOB's popularity in the South East has been the subject of debate, as some believe that the group's resort to violent tactics is serving to increasingly alienate them from people in the region. Even the group itself is no longer speaking with a single voice as evidenced by the fact that despite Emma Powerful's statement ending the sit-at-home on 14 August, almost a month later, some people are still violently enforcing it.

In March, an SBM report showed⁶ that there are various factions within the group. This is in addition to several other groups such as the Biafra Zionist Movement who have divergent approaches towards the same goal of establishing a separate and sovereign country called Biafra.

⁶What does the split in IPOB mean? – SBM Intelligence



Despite the announcement of the suspension of the order, residents of Enugu, Imo and Anambra remained at home on Monday, 29 August⁷. It is not clear if the decision was made voluntarily or out of fear of backlash from IPOB. In summary, the jury may always continue to be out.

Respondents in Abia and Imo remarked to our researchers that they were in support of the sit at home order when it was initially announced, but the manner of enforcement--the use of force--left a lot to be desired. Some of these people who have IPOB sympathies admitted that they support the group, but will not admit to saying that publicly for fear of arrests by government forces. The older respondents we spoke to in both states expressed passive support for the sit at home order because of their stated abhorrence for violence which has increasingly coloured IPOB's tactics.

In Abia, the people across the board who we spoke to expressed minimal support purely for economic reasons - such orders are bad for businesses especially as the sit-at-home is scheduled on the first workday of the week.

Analysts resident in the region have told us that compliance should be seen as a combination of factors, most of which are public sympathy for the secessionist cause, consideration of personal safety and security in response to violent clashes between IPOB and security agents, as well as the group's resort to brutality as a means of enforcement. They also believe that these factors at best contributed in no small measure to the "success" of the sit-at-home order. These would also be factors that would affect the effectiveness of the upcoming sit at home order on 14 September. Coupled with this is the fact that the Imo State government arbitrarily sealed off⁸ commercial banks in the capital Owerri on Tuesday 7 September "for not having approved building plans". The word on the street, however, says a different story. Residents who spoke to us stated that the government's move was in response to the banks (UBA, First Bank among others) is not unconnected with

⁷Imo, Anambra Enugu residents still observe sit-at-home order (The Guardian Nigeria)
⁸IPOB's sit-at-home: Customers stranded as Imo govt shuts banks (Punch)



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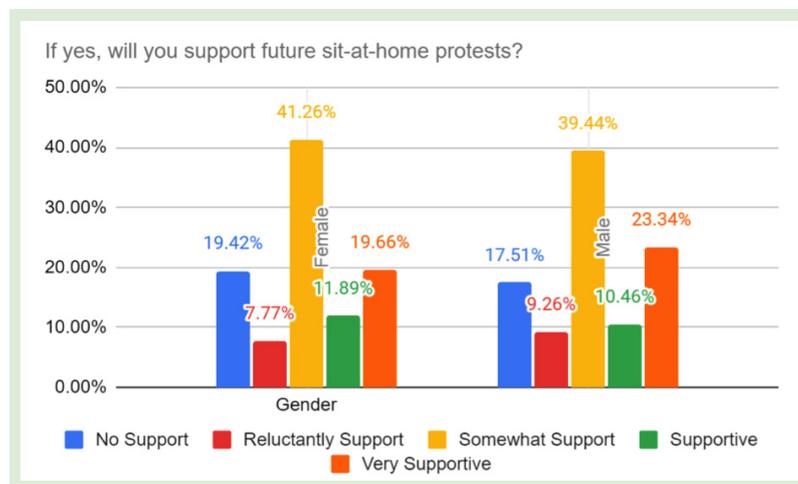
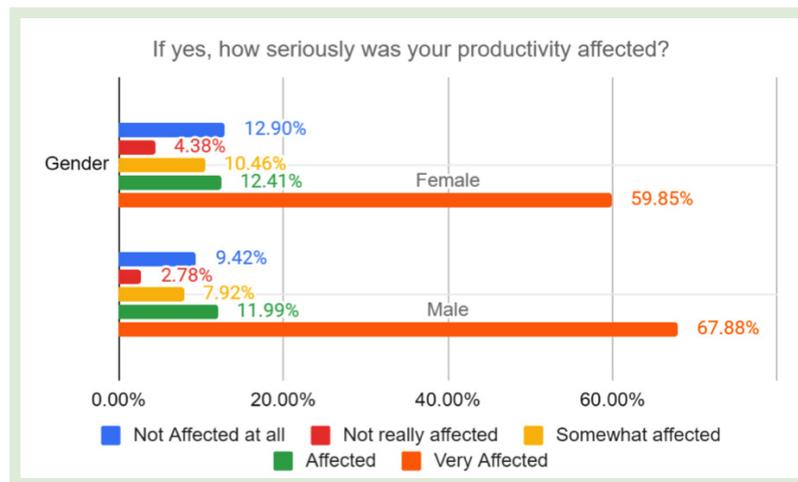
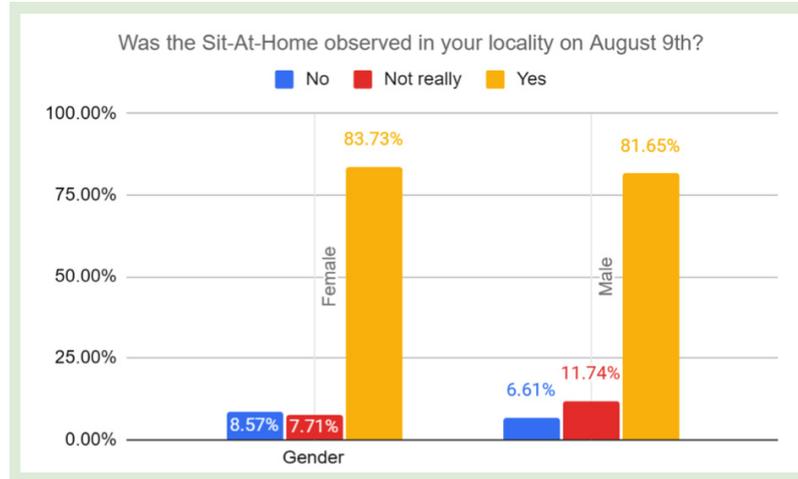


the fact that the banks were sealed because they refused to open on Monday in fear of attacks from IPOB. This sends a clear message to the business community in the state on one hand that doing business in the state has become a more difficult task, which may make them vote with their feet. On the other hand, it puts the business community at a fix on who to appease in order to operate in these areas.

The actions of the Imo State government also brings to the fore the problems of the land use act which gives state governments the power to appropriate lands as they see fit. In the face of chaos caused by non-state actors, the government must ensure that its actions do not exacerbate the problem, and must always strive to find a middle ground as means of ensuring stability in areas under their control.

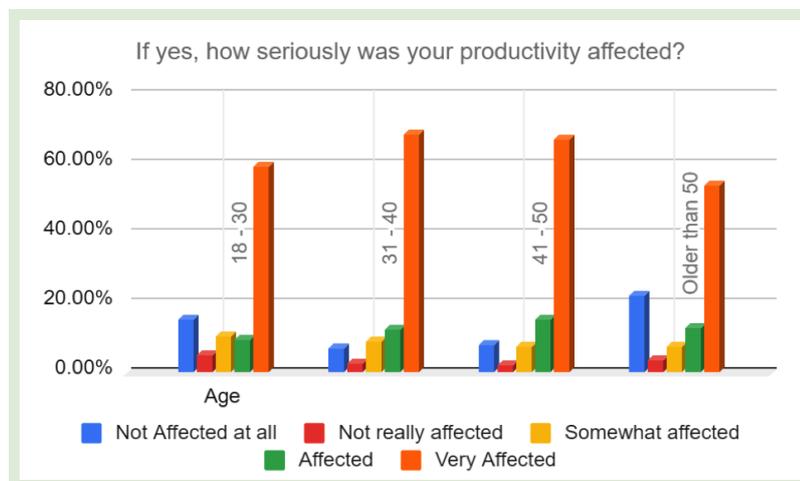
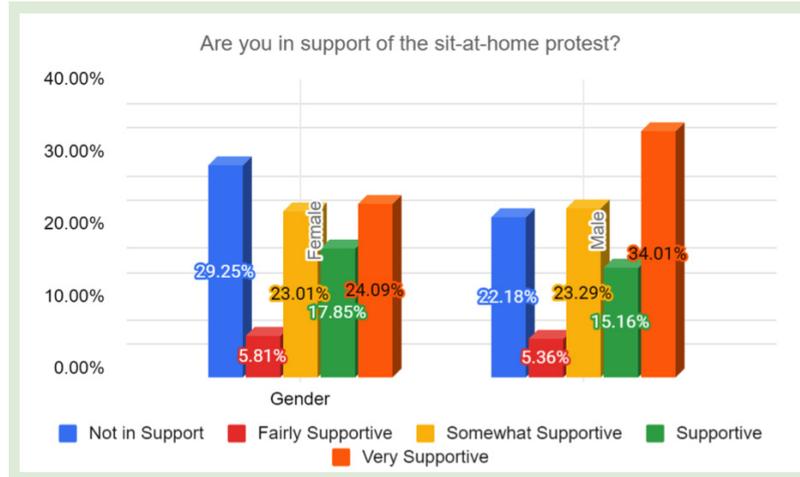
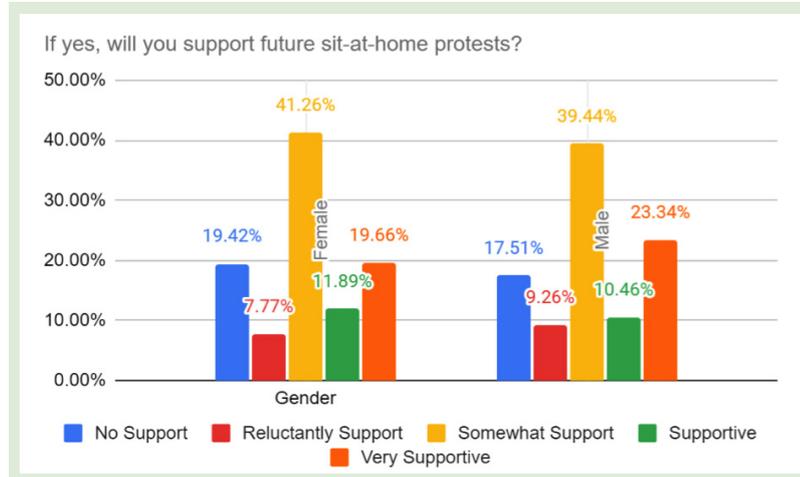


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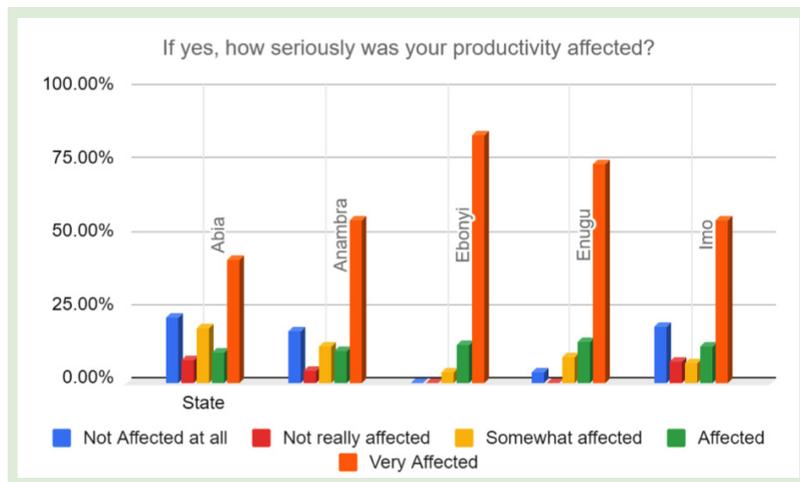
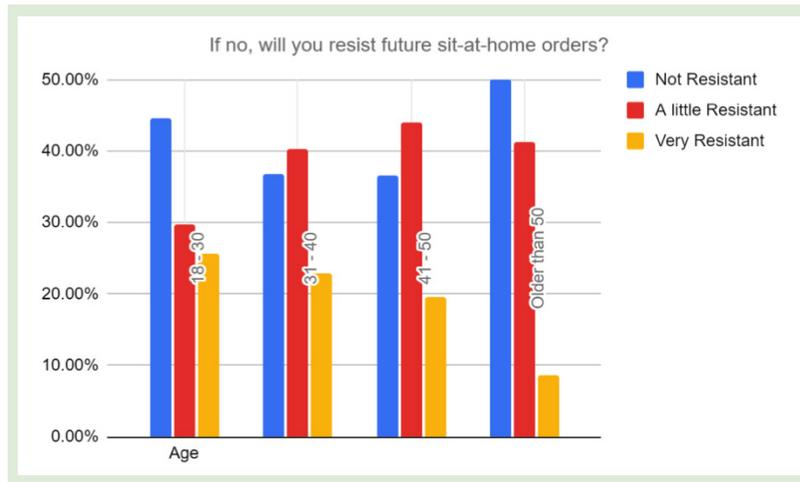
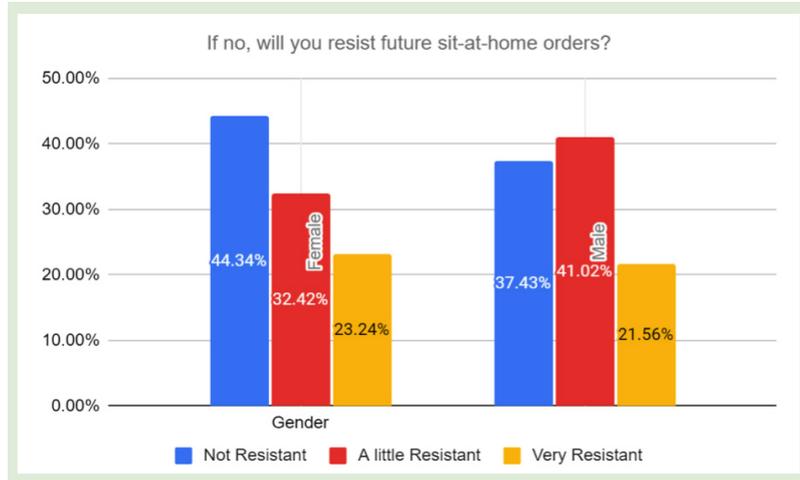


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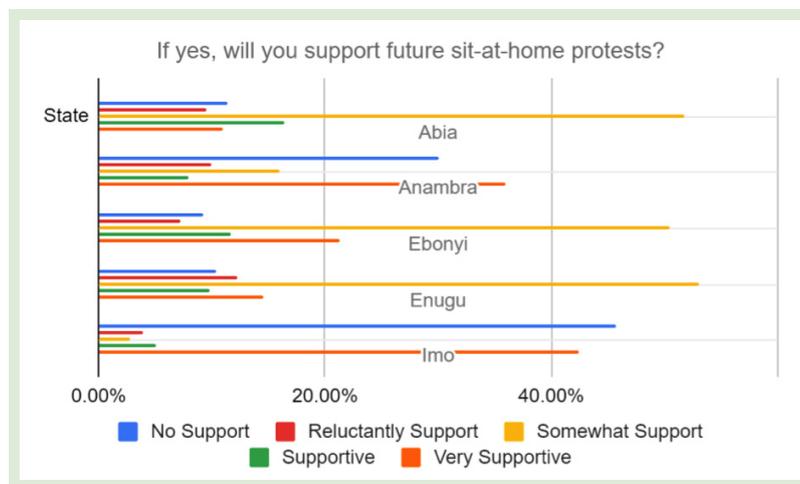
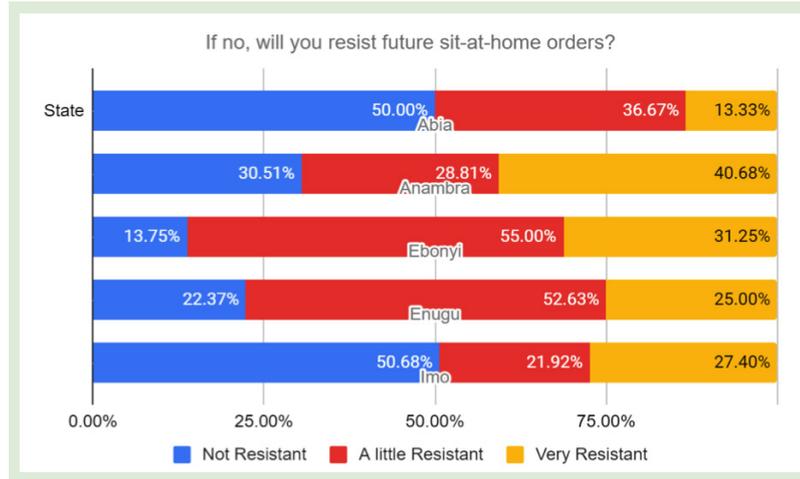
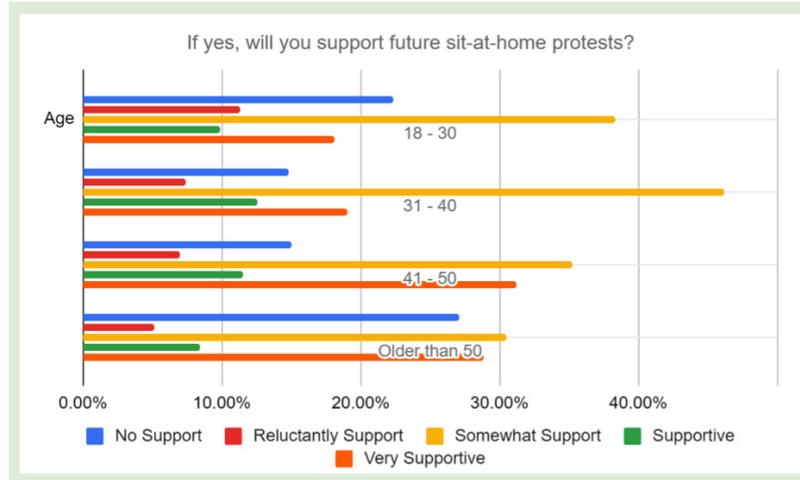


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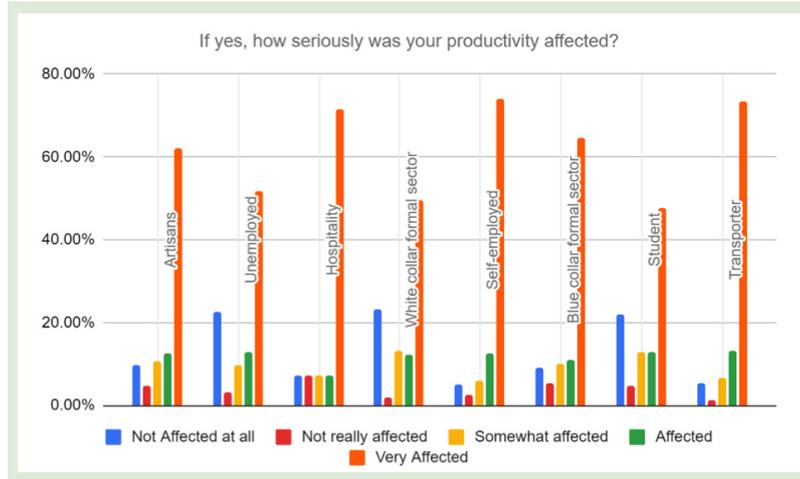
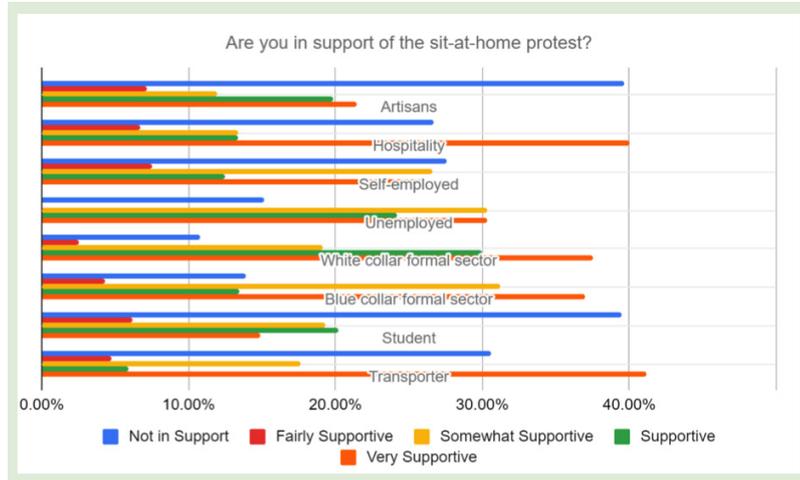


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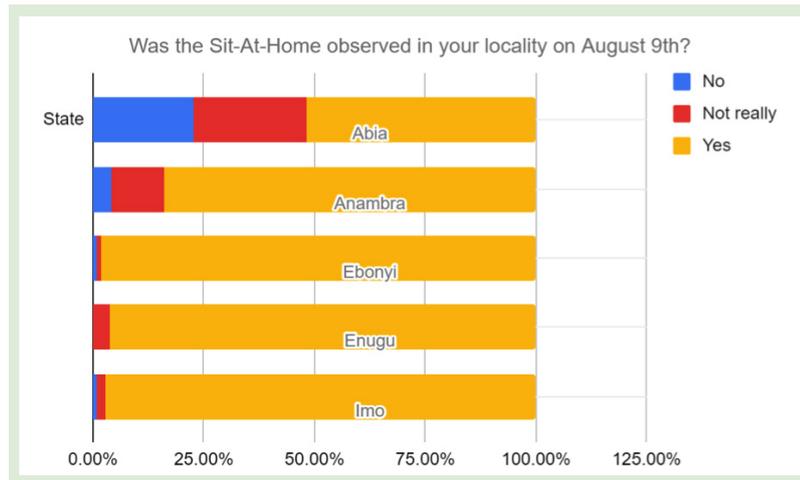
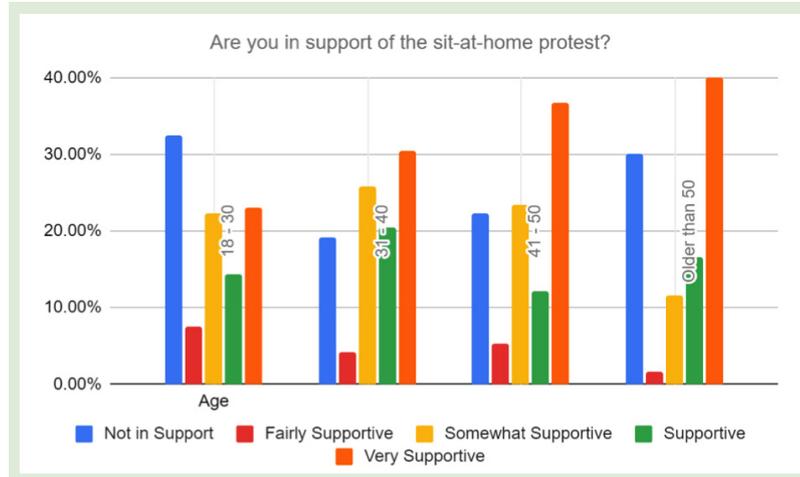


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ABOUT SBM

SBM Intel is an Africa focused geopolitical research and strategic communications consulting firm focused on addressing the critical need for political, social, economic and market data, and big data analytics. We employ various methods of data collection. Our Data Collection Methodology team advises on data collection methods for all ONS social and business surveys. With clients both within the business and the wider government community, we aim to provide expert advice on data collection procedures and carry out research leading to improvements in survey quality.

Since 2013, we have provided data analytics and strategic communication solutions to clients across various sectors in Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, South Africa, the UK, France and the United States.■

