
CLAIMS OF MARGINALIZATION AND UNFAVOURABLE GOVERNMENT POLICES AND THE AGITATION FOR SECESSION BY THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BIAFRA (IPOB)

Nnaemeka Gabriel Obiegbunam

Nnaemekaobiegbunam@gmail.com

Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

&

Dr. Nobert C. Abah

ncabah@unizik.edu.ng

Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract: *The Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria has a history of agitation for separation from Nigeria. The Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970 was an effort and a consequence of the agitation. The war ended and Nigeria remained one country. However, the desire for separateness seems to have remained an everyday reality among the Igbos ever since. The agitation was rekindled by IPOB when Muhammadu Buhari took office in 2015 on the bases of unfavourable policies of the government and inequitable distribution of the country's resources as well as lopsided appointments of public officials. This study sought to interrogate the validity of the course of IPOB. The study was built around the relative deprivation/Frustration-Aggression theory of Ted Robert Gurr. Relying on both documentary material and data obtained through a field survey and analyzed statistically, the study concludes that the overwhelming majority of Igbos may never be satisfied with the Nigerian project whatever the reforms that may attend government policies in response to the agitation of IPOB. Hinging on findings and conclusion, among others; the paper recommended that the Nigerian government cum Federal Character Commission should take necessary steps to curtail the perception of marginalization by ensuring that the principles of equity, Federal Character and quota system are always considered in revenue allocation, recruitments, appointments, infrastructures etc. among the diverse nations that make up the state. In essence, this enable the marginalized Igbos change their orientation and believe about the political system since their interest will equally be protected. More so, there should be a sincere dialogue between the representatives of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the stakeholders in the South-East region, with the motive of identifying the underlying reasons for the resurgence of agitation in the area, and consequently, making sincere efforts to address such grievances. Just like the national conference of 2014, the federal government should be more intentional on implementing these resolutions.*

Key words: IPOB; Marginalization; Nepotism; Secession; True Federalism

Introduction

In a country; particularly, a plural society like Nigeria, where minorities or certain region cum geo-political zone experience marginalization arousing from economic discrimination, inequalities, unfair and inequitable distributions of national values cum unfavourable government projects and policies, such country can never be free from experiencing ethnic conflicts and crisis. In view of Saleh (2013), conflicts and quest for secession occurs when the dominant ethnic community in a country exercises an unfair control over all economic opportunities, thereby leaving members of other geo-political zones, ethnic groups or tribe disadvantaged, thus this tends to increase the likelihood of social cum political violence, ethnic tensions, agitations among others which has over the years claimed to be the major reasons for quest for secession of the Igbos cum IPOB among other ethnic groups from the Nigerian political system which is presumed unfavourable to them.

Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) was formed as pro-Biafra by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu resurfaced the issue of independence of the Indigenous Biafra population from Nigeria after Uwazuruike's Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) went more or less cold in its agitation. Mazi Nnamdi Kanu who has dual British and Nigerian citizenship created IPOB after he has gained fame through his broadcasts on Radio Biafra established in 2009. The radio station is situated in London and broadcasts messages that call for freedom of Biafrans and criticized Nigerian government for being corrupt. The rural grazing area (RUGA) programme was approved by the Buhari led government on 11th of May 2019, and was meant to provide grazing or settlement areas for the Fulani cattle farmers. Albeit, this policy was accepted by governors from the north out rightly, the same cannot be said of their south eastern counterparts who were more or less diplomatic in handling this particular issue. Based on this, the IPOB squarely rejected the policy on the ground that no part of south east should be given to the same set of people who have constantly caused havoc to South Easterners. These unfavourable policies and its similar kinds have continued to fuel protests by the IPOB, which in certain cases turned bloody, resulting to loss of lives and property. Consequently, the Federal government has on several occasions resorted to militarization of the south east. Operations Python Dance I and II, and Operation Crocodile Smile are typical examples of such militarisation.

Many Federal government appointments have been made, particularly since 2015 with little or consideration for the Igbos. As reported by Opejobi (2020), service chiefs in Nigeria were appointed by the Buhari-led federal government with no single one coming from the South-eastern region cum secret recruitment into the Department of State Services was made with the North and South having 535 and 90 slots allegedly thus in negation of the federal character principles as this has been obtainable since the inception of the current administration. Also, discriminatory admission criteria has also been evident in the country, to keep the hope of getting on the admission list alive, the cut-off mark system requires candidates from states in the South-East and South-West to score significantly higher marks than their counterparts from the North, or those states dubbed educationally disadvantaged. In other words, a pupil from the South seeking admission into any of the unity schools must score at least 140 points out of a possible 300 to stand a chance of securing admission. But a candidate from the North doesn't need to stress himself as such in order to be considered for admission (Lawal, 2019).

The foregoing among others such as unequal distribution of national values cum marginalization of the Igbos which has manifested from Nigerian Federal government empowerment programmes (Particularly, Npower), appointment in Central Bank of Nigeria,

(CBN), numbers of Local Government per geo-political zones, ministerial appointments have presumably led to the agitation cum clamouring of secession by the IPOB members who believe they have been cheated since the existing political system to them is oppressive. It is against this background that the paper attempted to ascertain the extent/how the treatment of the South Eastern region cum Igbo dominant zones through Federal government policies and the how these have awakened the IPOB to the right consciousness of secession.

Methodology

The paper is descriptive in typology; this paper built upon an array of quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitatively, it employed documented evidence such as journal articles, reports, media publications, and textbooks among others and on the other hand, it made of questionnaires in fetching data from the respondents. The qualitative data gathered through secondary sources cum documented evidence were contently analyzed thematically using tables and textual tools while data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Relative Deprivation theory cum Frustration and Aggression Analysis of Ted Robert Gurr was employed as a theoretical guide in explaining the relationship between the two major variables.

Exponents of the theories include Claude Welch, John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer, Robert Sears and Leonard Berkowitz (Dollard et al, 1939). The central idea of Relative Deprivation theory rests on the assumption of Ted Robert Gurr who argued that “the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the “ought” to be and the “is” of collective value satisfaction and this disposes men to violence” Robert cited in Salleh (2013). From this assertion, it is evident that relative deprivation is the disagreement cum discrepancies between what people want their value expectations and value capabilities. Accordingly, he maintained that people are likely to revolt when they lose hope of attaining their societal values and the intensity of discontent/frustration with the severity of depression and inflation. In essence, the higher the degree of frustrations which emerge from the Marginalization of the Igbos by the Nigerian Government unfavourable projects cum policies, the higher the political instability and quest for secession. The choice of Relative Deprivation theory can be justified with its enriched capabilities in explicating why the Igbos cum IPOB is agitating for secession from the Nigerian political system which they claimed to be oppressive. Thus, the failure of the Nigerian government to equally meet the Igbos’ people value expectations which they IPOB members believed they are rightfully entitled has recently led to dis-cum re-orientation and discontentment or dissatisfaction on the part of the Igbos (IPOB) towards Nigeria as a country.

In Ted Robert Gurr’s frustration–aggression theory cum analysis, otherwise known as the frustration–aggression–displacement theory, he contended that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's efforts to attain a goal. This theory tends to give explanations for the cause of violence. Dollard and colleagues see aggression as the situation which exists when there is an obstruction towards goal attainment. The theory also posits that though frustration is the cause of aggression, there could be a different target of the aggression if the source of the frustration cannot be challenged. Employing the theory to the subject matter, Back from the retrospective journey into one of the major causes of the Nigerian Civil War in a quest to point out the basic tenets of Frustration-Aggression theory as it relates to the subject matter, it is imperative also to note that the South Eastern part of Nigeria has been facing different levels of marginalization and this could be seen as the fuel that drives the quest for self-governance through referendum as championed by IPOB. Accordingly, the frustration-aggression theorist cum exponents and analysts believed that

societal threats arise in a variety of ways cum forms but they are categorically four; physical threats such as injury, death, pains; Economic threats arising from destruction of properties, marginalization and denials of access to work or resources; Threats to Rights such as denials of civil liberties and threats to positions (political appointments). In essence, the disagreement cum discrepancies between the IPOB cum Igbos' expectations and what they can actually attain consequently led to the agitation for secession. Since Relative Deprivation theorists bothered themselves on any perceived discrepancy between People's expectations and their capabilities to fulfil those expectations, for this reason; the greater the intensity of deprivation and marginalization of the Igbos by the Federal Government, the greater the magnitude of violence, quest cum agitation for secessions by the IPOB.

The Remote and Immediate Causes of the Nigerian Civil War

The Nigeria-Biafra war was the outcome of the January 15, 1966 coup d'état and the counter-coup that was staged mainly by the Northern Nigerian officers who murdered over 185 Igbo officers, together with the massacre of thirty-three thousand Igbo and Easterners in pogroms that started in May 1966. In retaliation, scores of Northerners living in the East were set upon by irate refugees from the North. Subsequently, over a million refugees returned to the East from other parts of the Federation and 'non Easterners' were expelled from the East thus, polarized the Nigerian crisis into Eastern Region-Federal Government conflict. In this clue, all efforts towards settling these crises failed and the most prominent of these efforts was the meeting in January 1967, of the Nigerian Supreme Military Council at Aburi, Ghana. In this meeting, some agreements were reached particularly as they raised hopes of settling the crises. Surprisingly, these agreements were interpreted differently by the two parties which led to the hopes being shattered. According to A. Nwankwo, events became so deteriorated that on 27 May 1967, Gowon promulgated a decree dividing Nigeria into twelve States (Nwankwo, 1981).

As observed in Chikendu (2003), when the Nigerian army struck and seized political power in January 1966, many Nigerians felt relieved that the Messiah had come at last. There were jubilations on the streets, particularly in the southern cities of Nigeria. Political parties without exception were frantic in their competition to dispatch telegrams of solidarity and support for the military government. The euphoria of the citizens was perhaps not unexpected given the fact that the country was virtually in a state of suspended animation: in the western region various act of brigandage were the order of the day; for more than a month after the parliamentary elections in that region no government was formed, lives and properties were wantonly destroyed without any authority to put a check to it; the whole nation was in highly tensed mood. When therefore the military stuck, a sense of relief ran across the nation. It was widely hoped that sanity would return and that normal life would be restored.

The political lines drawn up in 1914 by the British colonial rulers had little regard for the vast diversity that existed within the new boundaries of the colony. Different groups united under artificial constraints, had very little in common in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion (Okpaga, 2006). The first remote cause of the civil war was the alleged rigging of the Western election of 1965. The crisis that erupted from the alleged rigging acted as the last straw that broke the back of the first republic. The fear of one tribe dominating others resulting from the January 15, 1966 first military coup in Nigeria contributed remotely to the civil war as well, the abolition of federation in place of the unitary system of government as contained in decree No. 34 of 1966 by General J.T.U Aguiyi-Ironsi was another catalyst that sparked off the civil war. The refusal of General Ironsi to bring the January 15, 1966 coup plotters to book also played a part in causing the civil war. The ambition of some army officers to catapult themselves to power also contributed immensely to the outbreak. The

infusion of ethnicity into the Nigerian army by the politicians of the first republic played a role in causing the war as well (Anyaele, 2003).

In line with postulations of Johnson Ugoji Anyaele, the massacre of the Igbos in Northern Nigeria which made the then governor of the Eastern Region, Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu to recall all easterners and expel others living in the Eastern part, the intention of the Eastern Region to control the oil discovered in that part of the country, the personality clash between Gowon and Ojukwu who believed that Gowon is not the most senior to take over leadership, the personal belief of Ojukwu that violence is a means to an end, the unilateral division of the country into twelve states by Gowon and the divergent interpretations given to the meeting Ojukwu and Gowon held at Aburi, Ghana were the immediate causes of the civil war (Anyaele, 2003). In the meeting at the instance of the then Ghanaian Head of State, General Ankrah, Ojukwu scored an intellectual diplomatic victory which could have made the regions very strong at the expense of the centre. On returning to Nigeria, Gowon was advised to denounce the agreement. Negotiations hence gave way to exchange of fire which consumed millions of Nigerians in a fratricidal war caused by diplomatic blunder on the part of two friends – Gowon and Ojukwu hence a play-out of governance deficit. The Easterners chanting war songs beckoning on the then military governor – Ojukwu to give them guns to fight massaged the ego of Ojukwu which in turn gave way for the belief that violence was essential at that point (Achebe, 2012).

In an effort to find peaceful solution to various political crises that engulfed the country which made the civil war imminent and even when the war broke out, a lot of negotiations and conferences were held. The irony with these peaceful negotiations and conferences was that none of them could stop the outbreak of the civil war. One of the conferences held in Lagos and it lasted for two days, August 9 and 10, 1966. The meeting which was held in order to stop the bloodshed that was on going in the country especially in the Northern Region was attended by representatives of all the regions of the country. The meeting which was opened by Gowon had a lot of recommendations but unfortunately none was implemented (Anyaele, 2003).

Consequences of the Civil War

The civil war lasted for thirty horrific months and with the capitulation of Biafra on January 15, 1970, Nigeria once again regained her poise and position as the largest black nation in the world. General Gowon's pronouncement that there was no victor and no vanquish provided the need psychological atmosphere for the implementation of his programme of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. But subsequent events however show that there was in fact a victor and as well as a vanquished. Thus, the Igbos have not been fully integrated into the various sectors of the nation. They are conspicuously absent in the upper echelon of the army, the police, the bureaucracy etc in spite of the fact that they are one of the three major ethnic groups in the country (Chikendu, 2003). This gross abnormality is still inherent in the present day government of Nigeria and forms part of the grounds upon which IPOB keeps clamouring for secession. The first consequence of the civil war was the loss of inestimable lives and properties. The war reduced the population of Nigeria drastically. Many people who died in the war did not die in the battle field but were killed by hunger. The war reduced also the population of the Nigerian soldiers. Many of the soldiers are able bodied men who could have been used for a more profitable developmental venture. The war bestowed a lot of hardship on the people, many families lost their breadwinners and sources of livelihood during the civil war. The civil war also disrupted the educational system in many parts of the country. The Eastern part of the country was mostly affected as schools and

many institutions of learning were destroyed during the war and this caused a serious setback in the academic pursuit (Anyaele, 2003).

The economy was not less affected by the civil war. The war brought economic activities to a halt as both internal and external trade came to a stop in many parts of the country. Many factories and industries stopped production as a result of the war. The war also pushed the country into problems resulting integrating people that got displaced during the war. The war led to the division of the country into twelve states. Though abatement of administrative difficulties was given as the rationale for this division, the political rationale which is the reduction of the strength of any region to avoid waging a war against the centre is glaring as the Eastern region was able to wage the war as a result of its size (Madiebo, 1980). The war brought huge disrespect to Nigeria which was hitherto respected in Africa and other parts of the world because of its population and wealth. The war largely disrupted the peace and tranquility of the country and this to a reasonably large extent halted development.

Apart from the fact that the Igbos were and are still made to feel the full weight of defeat because they were said to have brought about the civil war (during the second phase of Gowon's administration) Gowon's post-civil war administration was characterized by great hopes and lost opportunities. In the early 1970s, the price of petroleum skyrocketed to an unprecedented level, this helped Nigeria not only to recover speedily from the dent made on her economy by the civil war but also to finance any well thought out economic development programme she wanted to undertake. This gave birth to the second national development plan whose aims and objectives were to achieve thus:

- a. A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- b. A great and dynamic economy
- c. A just and egalitarian society
- d. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens and
- e. A free and democratic society (Koinyan, 1989, 6 quoted in Chikendu, 2003: P.68)

The above aims were indeed noble and desirable given to Nigeria's enormous human and material resources. Unfortunately, bad governance, corruption and profligacy on the part of the military leaders militated against these. These set of maladministration was emphasized by Murtala Muhammed as the propelling force for his coup against Gowon. The subsequent governments could be exonerated of bad governance and profligacy to the extent that even the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) was medium for gulping of millions of naira that could have been used for agricultural development and rural reforms (Chikendu, 2003). According to Dudley, 'Festac was estimated to have cost Nigeria #800 million which in the year 2003 amount to about 1.4 billion naira. It is therefore clear that the much talked about oil boom of the seventies was frittered away by the military administrations after the civil war; attracting the sobriquet oil doom'.

History of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a pro-Biafran group that agitates for self-determination of their people from the Nigerian government. IPOB as a group was established by a Nigerian British citizen, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu in the year 2012. IPOB has become the outstanding pro-Biafran group that agitates for self-determination despite the existence of other pro-Biafran groups such as Biafran Zionist Movement (BZM), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Biafran Liberation Front (BLF), Biafran Independent Movement (BIM), and Biafran Actualization Forum (BAF). Studies have shown that agitations of a group may receive support or rejection from their people in particular and the larger society in general (Khan, 2017; Porto, 2003).

Kanu was a relatively obscure figure until 2009 when he started Radio Biafra, a station that called for an independent state for the Igbo people and broadcast to Nigeria from London. Though he grew up in Nigeria's south-east and went to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Mr Kanu moved to the UK before graduating (Hegarty, 2017). The call for a sovereign state for the Igbo ethnic nationality is not a new phenomenon. The emergence of IPOB is an attempt to resurrect the struggle for self-determination waged by the Igbo of South East Nigeria that led to gruesome thirty months' civil war that claimed the lives of over a million people and displaced several others; and also the perceived inefficiency of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). The movement wants a group of states in south-east Nigeria, made up mainly of people from the Igbo ethnic group, to break away and form the independent nation of Biafra (Adonu, 2017).

The vitriolic civil war which followed the declaration of Biafra by Odumegwu Ojukwu in 1967 ended with the Biafrans submitting to the superior might of the federal military government and consequently re-united the country. Notwithstanding that victory, General Gowon the Military Head of State, declared at the end of the war that there was no victor, no vanquished and launched a programme of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation (3Rs) as a way of reintegrating the south east back into the fold of a united federal republic of Nigeria, (Chikendu, 2004). That declaration by the victorious Federal Military government, ended up as mere rhetoric because practical reality showed otherwise. In fact, the Igbo were treated purely as defeated foes by men of power who saw themselves as the heroes of the war and who had remained in power for a long time (Amadiume 2000). Marginalization of the Igbo became the keyword in post war Nigeria and this was in the form of deliberate disempowerment, politically, economically, socially and militarily by those groups that wielded political power and controlled the allocation of material and other resources at the centre (Ikpeze 2000, p.90).

The cry became glaringly clear that the South Easterners has been at the receiving end of calculated policies of marginalization since the collapse of Biafra. This view is not only held by Igbo. For instance, Adeyemo (2004) articulated some of the issues including neglect to check erosion menace in Igbo area, non-provision of industries in the area, combined with the deliberate policy of non-inclusion in the power structure of the country. Re-echoing this view, another non-Igbo, Douglas Oronto (cited in Adeyemo 2004) expressed the same line of thought in the following words;

...if you look at Nigeria prior to the civil war, you find that the Igbo occupied the top echelons of the military, the civil service and so on. But after the war, they are nowhere around the cadre of leadership. It took a very long time for the Igbo to begin to demand for presidency (p.18).

Ikpeze (2000) has made well-articulated effort at analysing the issues. According to him, the marginalization of post-war Igbo nation reflected in political power distribution and control of the allocation of material and other resources at the centre. This manifested in three dimensions; economic strangulation, politico bureaucratic emasculation and military neutralization and ostracism all tailored at furthering an objective of keeping the race very weak in the context of power equation relative to the other major groups in the country.

In view of the foregoing, some of the issues that readily come to mind include twenty pounds sterling placed on bank lodgements for every Igbo after the war no matter how much they had in banks. Analysts have interpreted this policy as a calculated attempt to neutralize the savings and capacity of Igbo to rehabilitate and re-integrate into the Nigerian economy (Amadiume 2000). Related to this is the sudden withdrawal of federal troops from the east, a

ploy that was aimed at denying the Igbo economy stimulus for recovery as people who could have been empowered as suppliers to the troops were denied the opportunity. The timing of the indigenization policy which came shortly after the war when Igbo people were financially constrained to participate also incapacitated the Igbo economically. Also of note was the deficient infrastructural development in the Igbo area resulting in the mass migration of the Igbo to other parts of the country for economic survival. This tendency results from the discrimination against the Igbo in the location of industries and the attendant benefit of linkages that come from such location (Okeke, 2018). It is also connected to the deliberate neglect of ecological problems of soil erosion leading to loss in agricultural lands and settlements. "The ecological devastation becomes obvious in relative terms when compared with the massive attention given to desertification in the north and beach erosion in the western parts of Nigeria" (Ikpeze 2000:98).

Apart from these policies that economically disempowered the Igbo, other instruments were also used to effectively exclude them from economic and political power at the centre. Such include the nepotism inherent in appointment to strategically insignificant positions, marginal presence of individuals of Igbo extraction in the administrative and headship of ministerial and extra-ministerial departments and parastatals, the distortions of the federal structure to the disadvantage of the Igbo who have the least number of states and local governments compared with the other major tribes and the indifferent response of the federal authorities and even governments of other states to uphold the constitutionally inviolable natural residency and citizenry rights of original Igbo owners as far as issue of abandoned property was concerned (Ikpeze 2000).

Decades after Biafra uprising was quelled by the Nigerian military, secessionist groups have attracted the support of many young people. There has been the Biafran Zionist Movement (BZM), the Igbo Youth Movement (IYM), the Biafra Nation's Youth League (BNYL), and the Uwazurike led Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). The philosophy behind the formation of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) was to identify with the historical and cultural origin of the Igbo so as to seek the secession of the nation from the state Nigeria. This is seen as the remedy for the perceived gross injustice and marginalization of the Igbo nationality. To achieve this, the group is calling for a referendum to be conducted in Igbo territories to settle the issue of Biafra in a civilized and democratic manner. Another strategy employed by the IPOB movement is the 'sit-at-home' protest in states in the South East in remembrance of the Biafrans that died in the 1967-1970 Nigeria-Biafra war and those that have lost their lives in the struggle for the actualization of Biafra, and also, to demand Kanu's release from detention (when he was still incarcerated). For example, residents of South-East Nigeria (mainly Igbos) were ordered to stay at home on September 23 2016, May 30 2017, May 30 2018 and May 30 2019 (Nwaiwu 2016; Okafor 2017; Chukindi 2018, Ugwu 2018; Okeke 2018 and Chiomaet. al 2019).

Against this backdrop Thompson, Ojukwu and Nwaogu (2016), stated that IPOB's grievances are that the Igbos have been "politically, socio-economically, and culturally marginalized in the Nigerian project". Thompson et al. (2016) described IPOB as "a faction" of MASSOB and indicated that Kanu "fell out" with the former leader of MASSOB in 2009, and "emerged as the leader of IPOB in 2012".

IPOB states that they are a movement to help Biafrans achieve self-determination within the framework of the law through diplomacy, civil rights activism, human rights movement, mass media, political and every other legitimate process. Though some statements from its leader Nnamdi Kanu for example, his famous remark: "We need guns and we need

bullets,..." negates this strategy of pursuing the group's objectives. However, IPOB spokeswoman Amarachi Chimeremeze argued that this was not a literal call to arms but that it was a metaphor, to tell the people we are going to fight for this (Robyn, 2016).

The Membership and Leadership of IPOB

The leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra is Nnamdi Kanu who is a dual British and Biafran citizen. He created IPOB after he initially gained fame from his broadcasts on Radio Biafra, which was established in 2009. This was a radio station from London that broadcast messages that called for "freedom of Biafrans" and criticised corruption in the government of Nigeria. Radio Biafra catalysed Kanu's rise to the public scene, as he was previously an unknown figure. Kanu was arrested by Nigerian security forces on 19 October 2015, on charges of "sedition, ethnic incitement and treasonable felony. The membership of the group according to the leader of the movement Nnamdi Kanu, is not limited to the Igbo ethnic group. Okeke (2018 p.3) observed *inter alia* that "the defunct Republic of Biafra was the name for the entire Eastern region of Nigeria as at May 30, 1967, which comprised of 8 provinces namely: Port Harcourt Province, Calabar Province, Ogoja Province, Abakiliki Province, Enugu Province, Onitsha Province, Umuahia Province, and Owerri province." Five out of these eight (Abakiliki, Enugu, Onitsha, Umuahia and Owerri) were/are homes for the Igbo ethnic group, while the remaining 3 Province (Port Harcourt, Ogoja and Calabar) were/are homes for the Ijaw, Efik, Ibibio, Ikwere, Ogoni and few other ethnic groups (Okeke 2018). According to Kanu, all the inhabitants of these provinces are members of IPOB.

In line with the above, the leader of IPOB disclosed that the federal government of Nigeria offered him Biafra Republic while in prison with only the five South East states as the component parts but he rejected it (Chioma, Anayo, Alaribe and Nwaiwu, 2017). Though some cultural leaders in some of the provinces outside the South east states has come forward to reject Kanu's proposal that they belong to Biafra, for example the Igala Socio-Cultural Group expressed disgust over their inclusion in Biafra. The leadership structure of the IPOB movement is amorphous but media sources have cited several persons holding positions in the movement. Mr. Nnamdi Kanu is the undisputed leader of the group, Mr Uche Okafor-Mefor the Deputy leader, Mr. Anayo Chukwu-Okpara, spokesman (AFP, 2016; Al Jazeera 1 June 2016), Mr. Emma Powerful, Media and Publicity (The Advocate 2016; National Mirror, 2016), Emma Nmezu and Clifford Iroanya, spokespersons (The Sun, 2016).

Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and quest Secession

Chukwudi, E, Gberebvic, D. E, Abasilim, U. D and Imhonopi, D. (2019) did an empirical investigation on the effects of IPOB Agitation on Political Instability in Nigeria. The study used Group theory as its analytical framework and also employed survey research design that made use of instruments of data collection such as a questionnaire in addition to interviews administered to IPOB members, IPOB leaders, community leaders, government representatives, police, and IPOB Lawyer from selected areas. The collected data were analyzed using quantitative data analysis software – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 32. The study revealed that the support gained by IPOB promotes continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB and will lead to a decrease in political stability in Nigeria. The paper concludes that it is common for people to always identify with and support the group they belong to especially when they are fighting for a common cause that will be beneficial to all. In alliance with the findings, the suggestions from the paper are that policies of inclusiveness, where different groups as IPOB will be part of an entity without seeking for a separate country, should be supported either internally or externally. This will also raise the confidence IPOB with their group and various groups that are engaged

in different types of agitations in Nigeria and furthermore will promote political stability in Nigeria.

Oni (2017) in his work “Re-thinking Biafra ideology of self-determination in Nigeria” examined the dynamics of politics in modern Nigerian state particularly in relation to the clamour for the creation of the sovereign state of Biafra by two ‘radical’ groups of same ideological position– Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB). It attempted to investigate what informed the resurgence of Biafra ideology in contemporary Nigeria after its initial foray in pursuing self-determination agenda of the Igbo in 1967. The paper interrogated the methodology of the groups in pursuing their demand and proposed some alternative measures that could be adopted to enable them realize their dream. The study employs primary and secondary methods for data collection which encompass critical review of journal articles, books on related study area, newspapers, magazines, and electronically downloaded materials. It also relied on review of official documents and reports on Biafra, the Nigerian civil war and the activities of IPOB and MASSOB. Data analysis was descriptive and analytical. The study adopts the Relative Deprivation theory and Frustration-Aggression theory as its theoretical framework. The study recommended the Igbo nation should brace up and take the bull by the horns by employing their enormous potentials, talents, population, virtues, creativity, dynamism and resilience to their own political advantage. The study also suggested the need for the Igbo ethnic group to rehabilitate its psyche, redirect its vision, reprioritize its values, and review its methods and approaches to politics so as to regain their equilibrium and get back on their right track.

Ibeanu and Iwuamadi (2019) carried out an investigation on causes, consequences and remedies to Biafra separatism. The study used both primary and secondary data which include documentary sources (desk reviews), opinion survey using questionnaire, interviews and reports in newspapers. The study employed evaluation of relevant literature on Nigerian politics and society particularly those relating directly to Biafra war, its onset, formation and post-war peace building. The study found out that extant explanations for the recurrent agitation for Biafra fall into three main strands namely; those that focus on ethnic divisions and competitions, those that focus on economic competitions and those that focus on state-society relations. The study also suggested that what ties all the existing explanations for IPOB agitation and separatism together is the level of feeling of collective victimization in separatist movements. The study also proposed that during periods when there is a high feeling of collective victimization and low sense of inclusion, separatist agitation tends to be high. The study also revealed certain policies and actions of the Nigerian government which are perceived to disadvantage the group, act of violence seen to be targeting the group and the rhetoric of Igbo elites as well as those of other Nigerians as the major factors which have helped to sustain and reinforce this sense of victimhood and further recommended establishment of an independent commission of inquiry, prosecution of those responsible for killing of Biafra supporters, open and fair trial of Biafra agitators in detention, establishment of peace and reconciliation commission, tuning down of threats on IPOB and its supporters among others.

Udibe (2018) investigated the extent to which ethnicity and political exclusion could be seen as the propelling force for the resurgence of separatism in South-Eastern Nigeria. The research made use of theory of Relative Deprivation as its theoretical framework. The paper exposed the plural nature of Nigeria and the environment of ethnic consciousness as the causes of victimization and the political exclusion especially as it relates to wealth and power

sharing. Using documentary methods of data collection and content analysis, the study exposed how ethnicity and political exclusion has contributed to the current wave of secession in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. It further recommended among others that restructuring of Nigeria should be tailored around equitable distribution of the country's wealth and power among the ethnic nationalities. Similarly, Nduba (2019) carried out a study on nationalism and ethnic agitation in Nigeria using the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) as a case study. The focus of the study was the examination of nationalism and ethnic agitations in Nigeria with the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) as a case study. Adopting Group theory and Instrumentalism as its framework of analysis, the research employed both descriptive statistical technique and thematic analysis in analyzing data sourced from the questionnaire and focus group discussion. From the analysis of data and test of hypothesis, the study revealed that perception of marginalization, the consciousness to a nation cum ethnicity and aggressive response of government are significantly responsible for ethnic agitations in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study also showed that there is significant relationship between the search for separate nationhood and the operations of IPOB. Finally, the study revealed that the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) enjoys the support of the masses. Against this backdrop, the study recommends that government should take necessary steps to curtail this perception of marginalization by ensuring that the principles of equity and justice are always considered in revenue allocation, appointments, infrastructures etc. among the diverse nations that make up the state. Also that the government should look into the resolutions of the 2014 Nigerian National Conference committees on Devolution of Power and Political Restructuring with the aim of implementing the resolutions as well as employ peaceful means in dealing with ethnic militias so as not to exacerbate the situation.

Governance deficit in Nigeria.

Onyia and Aroh (2020) conducted a study of the Cabal metaphor in the presidency and Governance Deficit in Nigeria's democracy. The study was designed to establish the nexus between the Cabal metaphor in the Presidency and Governance deficit in Nigeria's democracy. The central argument in the study was that weak political leadership at the Presidency creates a lacuna in governance. This lacuna in turn throws up a Cabal that surreptitiously hijacks the day to day administration of the government while, ostensibly acting in the President's name. Using the Capture Theory of Politics as a theoretical framework, the study argued that once a Cabal captures the soul of the Presidency, the President loses control of governance. Actions taken in his name even without his knowledge are presented to the public as having Presidential endorsement; reduced to a lame duck, the ship of state flounders. Being a qualitative study, data was generated through documentary method and analyzed using content analysis. The study recommends that for the Cabal contraption to be eliminated from the Presidency, the President has to demonstrate strong leadership by being in effective control of his government. With this done, no lacuna will be left for Cabals to exploit. Murana and Bakare (2020) investigated the nexus between Governance deficit and Nigeria's Security Quagmire. The study pointed out that Nigeria is currently troubled with a security challenge that poses a threat to the continuing existence of the country as a united corporate entity. Bad governance pioneered by military dictatorship but sustained in the post-military era has been advanced as a major cause of the perennial security crisis. The study also hinted that the aforementioned trend has robbed the nation of peace and security, which are necessary ingredients for sustainable development. The paper employed secondary data and qualitative analysis in the examination of issues involved in using good governance as an antidote for peace and security. The study revealed that good governance remains a viable instrument for achieving peace and security in the country and other developing nations of the world.

Onolememen (2015) studied the impact of Leadership on the Governance of Infrastructure Development in Nigeria. The study documented Nigeria's leadership crisis since its independence from Great Britain in 1960. This crisis corresponds with political instability and infrastructure weaknesses, which have resulted in crime, corruption, poverty, lack of social cohesion and personal freedoms, environmental degradation, gender inequities, and deteriorating conditions of public works. The study employed qualitative case study which purpose was to investigate this phenomenon in Nigeria between 1960 and 2010. The theoretical framework comprised Burns' and Bass' theories of transformational leadership, and Davis' and Toikka's theories of transformation and transition in governance. Data were collected through personal interviews with a purposeful sample of 13 past presidents of Nigeria, public officials, and infrastructure development experts, and by reviewing secondary data on leadership and development in Nigeria during the period 1960-2010. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method to identify patterns and themes. Findings showed that (a) political instability and the Nigerian civil war have been obstacles to infrastructure development and implementation; (b) military dictatorships implemented improvements, although they neglected rural areas; (c) a new national infrastructure plan must be funded, developed, and implemented; (d) corruption must be combated in awarding project contracts; and (e) Nigeria's governance should be based on a pragmatic-visionary form of leadership. The implications for positive social change include informing policy makers about the importance of infrastructure development in Nigeria in order to improve economic growth and the lives of citizens.

Omotala (2007) conducted a study of Democratization, Good Governance and Development in Africa with greater emphasis on the Nigerian experience. The study was a contribution to the debate on democratization, good governance and development in Africa. It examines the nexus among the 'embattled trinity,' using a contextual analysis of the Nigerian experience under the fourth republic; but within a broader framework of African democratization hurdles. It argues that whereas democratization, defined as the process of transition to a stable/consolidated democracy, could be a harbinger of development, with good governance as the link in the chain; much of it would however depend on its time-spell, depth and the context within which it is pursued. It is argued that the present state of democratization in Africa gives cause for concern, as it tends towards the direction of disempowerment. Issues such as democracy dividends; the travails of presidentialism; ethno-religious conflicts were critically examined, leading to the basic question of whether Africa (Nigeria) has really democratized. While democratization has been on course, it has not taken a firm root, because it has so far been pursued and predicated on alien institutions. Given this scenario, the paper argued for an urgent need for a reversal of the trend, if democratization must be genuinely nurtured and sustained in Africa. In the circumstance, the study considered social mobilization in all its ramifications as a highly useful and pivotal option.

Table 1: Service Chiefs appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015

S/N	Name of Appointee	Office/Position	Geo-political zone/State
1	Major-General T.Y Buratai	Chief of Army Staff	North East (Borno State)
2	Air Vice Marshal Sadique Abubakar	Chief of Air Staff	North East (Bauchi State)
3	Major-General Babagana Monguno(rtd.)	National Security Adviser	North East (Borno state)
4	Rear Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas	Chief of Naval Staff	South South (Cross Rivers State)

5	Major-General Abayomi Gabriel Olonishakin	Chief of Defence Staff	South West (Ekiti State)
6	Air Vice Marshal Monday Riku Morgan	Chief of Defence Intelligence	North Central (Benue State)

Source: Adapted from Usman (2015)

The table 1 illustrated the list of Service Chiefs appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari when he assumed office in 2015. From the table, none of the appointed Service Chiefs is from the South East Nigeria but majorly from the North while none of the appointee is from the South West. Meanwhile based on the principles of Federal Character, since the number of appointments is six (6) and Nigeria's geo-political zones is divided into six, it is believed that the resource (appointment) should be shared equally, and one per geo-political zone. In essence, this evidence of marginalization must have been one of the reasons why there is high tension by the Igbos (IPOB) towards exiting themselves from the Nigeria's political system that does not fairly take them into consideration in the allocation of values.

Marginalization of the Igbos and key appointments into the Central Bank of Nigeria

As observed in a report by Kwen (2021), in April 2021, the Presidency appointed Muheeba Dankaka from Kwara State (North-Central) as Federal Character Commission's (FCC) chairman while Muhammad Tukur from Taraba State (North-East) was equally re-appointed for the second term, thereby making both appointees from the Northern-Nigeria. In response to this, a motion was sponsored by a member of the National Assembly (Unyime Idem, from the Southern-Nigeria, precisely Akwa-Ibom); and having adopted by the House, they urged the Federal Government to act in accordance with the principle of Federal character and mandated the Committee on Federal Character to ensure equity and act in compliance with the principles of the proportional sharing of all bureaucratic, economic and political positions at all governmental levels. Subsequently, Dr. Ayuba Giwa (a member of National Executive committee, Nigerian Bar Association) had earlier lamented thus;

The appointments are lopsided and they favour the North above other parts of the country. This is quite dangerous. It is not wise for any government to ignore other sections of the country when appointment people into offices. It is unconstitutional and unjust. It is not something that any Nigerian should support. I am not a politician and I don't belong to any political party. But I am saying that what is happening is not going to do this country any good. As reported by Iyatse and Toluwani (2016, July).

The prevalent trend of inequity in the appointment into public offices necessitated the investigation of the National House of Representatives into latest appointments at the Central Bank of Nigeria (NBN) and the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and other government agencies and public offices cum parastatals. The motion for the investigation was adopted by Kingsley Chida (PDP member, Rivers State). Accordingly, he commented "...the Executive arm and the Federal Character Commission have not lived up to the aboveas there exists numerous cases of lopsidedness and imbalance in appointments and sharing of posts/offices, including the recent recruitments into the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) appointments into boards and parastatals and more recently, the nomination of ambassadors". He further maintainedthus;

.....unless urgent and positive steps are taken to check the prevailing imbalance in the appointments and sharing of federal government posts, people would continue to be discontented and despondent and this could lead to disunity and disloyalty and heightened ethnic agitations and national insecurity. As reported by Daily Trust.

Table 2: President Muhammadu Buhari's first appointments into Political offices in 2015

S/N	NAME OF APPOINTEE	OFFICE/POSITION	GEO-POLITICAL ZONE/ STATE OF ORIGIN
1	Ahmed Idris	Accountant General of the Federation	North West (Kano State)
2	Femi Adesina	Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity	South West (Osun State)
3	Paul Boroh	Special Adviser, Niger Delta Amnesty Office	South South (Bayelsa State)
4	Lt. Col. Ababukar Lawal	Aide de Camp to the President	North West (Kano State)
5	Lawal Daura	Director General, State Security Services (SSS)	North West (Katsina State)
6	Baba Haruna Jauro	Acting Director-General, Nigerian Maritime Administration, Safety and Security Agency (NIMASA)	North East (Yobe State)
7	Garba Shehu	Senior Special Assistant, Media and Publicity	North West (Kano State)
8	Amina Zakari	Acting Chairperson, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	North West (Jigawa State)
9	Umaru Dambatta	Executive Vice Chairman/ Executive officer, Nigerian Communication Commission	North West (Kano State)
10	Lawal Abdullahi Kazaure	State Chief of Protocol /Special Assistant to the President on Presidential Matters	North West (Jigawa State)
11	Habibu Abdulahi	Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA)	North West (Kano State)
12	Muhammed Kari	Commissioner for Insurance and Chief Executive of the National Insurance Commission	North West (State not verified)
13	Babatunde Fowler	Executive Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS)	South West (Lagos State)
14	Hameed Ibrahim Ali	Comptroller-General, Nigerian Customs Service	North West (Kaduna State)
15	Modesai Baba Ladan	Director, Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR)	North West (Kano State)
16	Aliyu Gasau	Director-General, Budget Office of the Federation	North West (Zamfara State)
17	Kure Martin Abeshi	Comptroller-General, Nigerian Immigration Service	North Central (Nasarawa State)
18	Suleiman Kawu	Senior Special Assistant on National Assembly (National House of Representatives) Matters	North West (Kano State)
19	Late Abba Kyari	Chief of Staff to the President	North East (Borno State)

20	Ita Enang	Senior Special Assistant on National Assembly (Senate House) Matters	South South (Akwa Ibom State)
21	Babachir David Lawal	Secretary to Government of the Federation	North East (Adamawa State)
22	Emmanuel Kachikwu	Group Managing Director, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)	South South (Delta State)

Source: Adapted from Alumona, Azom and Iloh (N.D).

The table 2 presented the President Muhammadu Buhari's first appoint into political offices in 2015. From the table, it can be seen that out of 22 political appointees, none of them is an Igbo person or from the South East Nigeria. It is expected that out of 22 political appointments, supposedly hinged on Federal Character principles, at least, a minimum of 3 appointments were to be allocated to the South East which is an exception on the list. By implication, this is an obvious marginalization of the Igbos because all other regions benefited from the appointment except the South East only. In essence, the failure of the Nigerian Federal government to fairly and equitably allocate national values cum resources has resulted to the quick consciousness of the Igbos in seceding from the oppressive political system.

Table 3: Ministerial appointments in Nigeria (2015-2019)

	Name of appointees	Geo-political zone	Portfolio/Ministries
1	Chris Ngige	Anambra State, South-east	Minister of Labour and Employment
2	Kayode Fayemi	Ekiti State, South-west	Minister of Solid Minerals
3	Rotimi Amaechi	Rivers State, South-south	Minister of Transportation
4	Babatunde Fashola	Lagos State, South-west	Minister of Power, Works and Housing
5	Abdulrahman Dambazau	Kano State, North-west	Minister of Interior
6	Aisha Alhassan	Taraba State, North-East	Minister of Women Affairs
7	Ogbonaya Onu	Ebonyi State, South-east	Minister of Science and Technology
8	Kemi Adeosun	Ogun State, South-west	Minister of Finance
9	Abubakar Malami	Kebbi State, North-central	Minister of Justice and Attorney General.
10	Sen. HadiSirika	Katsina, North-West	Minister of State, Aviation
11	Barr. Adebayo Shittu	Oyo State, South-west	Minister of Communication
12	Suleiman Adamu	Jigawa State, North-West	Minister of Water Resources
13	Solomon Dalong	Plateau, North-Central	Minister for Youth and Sports
14	Ibe Kachikwu	Delta State, South-south	Minister of State, Petroleum
15	Osagie Ehanire	Edo State, South-south	Minister of State, Health
16	Audu Ogheh	Benue State, South-south	Minister of Agriculture
17	Udou do Udoma	Akwa Ibom State, South-south	Minister of Budget and National Planning
18	Lai Mohammed	Kwara State, North-central	Minister of Information

19	Amina Mohammed	Gombe State, North-East	Minister of Environment
20	Ibrahim Usman Jibril	Gombe State, North-East	Minister of State, Environment
21	Hajia Khadija Ibrahim	Yobe State, North-central	Minister of State, Foreign Affairs
22	Cladius Omoleye Daramola	Ondo State, South-west	Minister of State, Niger Delta
23	Prof. Anthony Onwuka	Imo State, South-east	Minister of State, Education
24	Geoffrey Onyema	Enugu State, South-east	Minister of Foreign Affairs
25	Dan Ali	Zamfara State, North-West	Minister of Defence
26	Barr. James Ocholi	Kogi State, North-central	Minister of State, Labour and Employment
27	Zainab Ahmed	Kaduna State, North-West	Minister of State Budget and National Planning
28	Okechukwu Enelamah	Abia State, South-east	Minister of Trade, Investment and Industry
29	Muhammadu Bello	Adamawa State, North-East	Minister of Federal Capital Territory
30	Mustapha Baba Shehuri	Borno State, North-east	Minister of State, Power
31	Aisha Abubakar	Sokoto State, North-West	Minister of State, Trade and Investment
32	Heineken Lokpobiri	Bayelsa State, South-south	Minister of State, Agriculture
33	Adamu Adamu	Bauchi State, North-East	Minister of Education
34	Isaac Adewole	Osun State, South-west	Minister of Health
35	Abubakar Bawa Bwari	Niger State, North-Central	Minister of State. Solid Minerals
36	Pastor Usani Uguru	Cross River, South South	Minister of Niger Delta
37	Muhammmadu Buhari	Katsina State, North-West	Minister of Petroleum

Source: Vanguard News (2015).

The table 3 illustrated the ministerial appointments by the Nigerian Federal Government into the various ministries. From the table, it is evident that appointments were distributed to all the six-geo-political zones; supposedly distributed based on equity; out of 37 appointments, at least 6 is expected to be allocated to the South East region but unfortunately, due to the trend of marginalization of the Igbo, only 5 were allocated to the region. This is an evident of marginalization of the Igbo.

Table 4: Number of NPOWER Programme Beneficiaries per Geo-political zone/State

S/N	North Central State	Number of Beneficiaries
1	Benue	18,000
2	Kogi	12,211
3	Kwara	13,154
4	Nasarawa	12,504

5	Niger	12,776
6	Plateau	11,700
7	F.C.T, Abuja	14,116
	Total	94,461
	North East	
8	Adamawa	11,620
9	Bauchi	13,075
10	Borno	12,766
11	Gombe	10,909
12	Taraba	10,914
13	Yobe	11,296
	Total	70,580
	North West	
14	Jigawa	11,365
15	Kaduna	18,000
16	Kano	18,002
17	Katsina	13,313
18	Kebbi	10,559
19	Sokoto	10,903
20	Zamfara	10,560
	Total	92,702
	South East	
21	Abia	11,285
22	Anambra	14,116
23	Ebonyi	10,561
24	Enugu	16,542
25	Imo	12,392
	Total	64,896
	South South	
26	Akwa-Ibom	12,278
27	Bayelsa	10,561
28	Cross Rivers	11,012
29	Delta	17,810
30	Edo	12,340
31	Rivers	17,987
	Total	81,988
	South West	
32	Ekiti	10,563
33	Lagos	17,998
34	Ogun	15,563
35	Ondo	13,460
36	Osun	17,999
37	Oyo	18,001
	Total	93,584
	Sum Total	498,211

Source: adapted from NPOWER Discussion Group

The table 4 presented the allocation of Npower programme beneficiaries across the 6 geo-political zones in Nigeria. From the table it is evident that the South-East region (dominated by the Igbo) had the lowest (64,896) beneficiaries from the Federal Government empowerment cum poverty alleviation programme among the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. In essence, this is one of the evidence of marginalization of the Igbo by the Nigerian government that must have triggered their claims and agitation for secession in recent time.

Table 5: Cut-off Marks for Admission into Federal Unity Schools for all States in Nigeria

S/N	State	Male Student	Female Student
North Central			
1	Benue	111	111
2	Kogi	119	119
3	Kwara	123	123
4	Nasarawa	58	58
5	Niger	93	93
6	Plateau	97	97
7	F.C.T, Abuja	90	90
North East			
8	Adamawa	62	62
9	Bauchi	35	35
10	Borno	45	45
11	Gombe	58	58
12	Taraba	3	11
13	Yobe	2	27
North West			
14	Jigawa	44	44
15	Kaduna	91	91
16	Kano	67	67
17	Katsina	60	60
18	Kebbi	9	20
19	Sokoto	9	13
20	Zamfara	4	2
South East			
21	Abia	130	130
22	Anambra	139	139
23	Ebonyi	112	112
24	Enugu	134	134
25	Imo	138	138
SouthSouth			
26	Akwa-Ibom	123	123
27	Bayelsa	72	72
28	Cross Rivers	97	97
29	Delta	131	131
30	Edo	127	127
31	Rivers	118	118
South West			
32	Ekiti	119	110
33	Lagos	133	133

34	Ogun	131	131
35	Ondo	126	126
36	Osun	127	127
37	Oyo	127	127

Source: Adapted from Odunsi (2017).

The table 5 presented the Cut-off mark for admission into Federal Unity schools in Nigeria. From the table, it is evident that that the students from the Southern-Nigeria were being placed on high score compared to the Northern-Nigeria as demonstrated in the table. In the North East and the North West, a student can be allowed to enter into Federal Government Unity School with as low as 2 marks while the lowest minimum in the South East for any student to enter in the same school in South East is 112. In essence many children from the Northern Nigerian would have more access to western cum formal education while indirectly depriving those from the South, particularly, the South East the same opportunity; this is an indicator of marginalization of the Igbo.

Conclusion

The major thrust of the paper was to ascertain if the Igbos dominated geo-political zones, majorly the South East had been subjected to the marginalization resulting from the unfavourable government policies and also to investigate how these unfavourable government policies cum distribution of resources by the Federal government has triggered the quest for secession by the Igbos. Having embarked on data presentation and analyzes, it was established that the Igbos were being seriously marginalized as evidently showed in tables. Thus, marginalization and unfavourable government policies have triggered the quest for secession of the Igbo in recent time. Thus, the overwhelming majority of Igbos may never be satisfied with the Nigerian project and government policies which are unfavourable to them.

Recommendations

Based on findings from the previous analysis, the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ The Nigerian government cum Federal Character Commission should take necessary steps to curtail the perception of marginalization by ensuring that the principles of equity, Federal Character and quota system are always considered in revenue allocation, recruitments, appointments, infrastructures etc. among the diverse nations that make up the state. In essence, this enable the marginalized Igbos change their orientation and believe about the political system since their interest will equally be protected.
- ❖ There should be a sincere dialogue between the representatives of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the stakeholders in the South-East region, with the motive of identifying the underlying reasons for the resurgence of agitation in the area, and consequently, making sincere efforts to address such grievances. Just like the national conference of 2014, the federal government should be more intentional on implementing these resolutions.
- ❖ An opportunity for South East presidency should be created. The power rotation cum presidential zoning rather than being a rotation between the South and the North should be rotated among the six (6) geo-political zones. In essence, this will gradually bury the thoughts of secession and give more credence to restructuring as people are

more likely to have a sense of belonging when someone in power is perceived to be ones brother.

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