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AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****CIJPSIR, Volume 1, Issue 1 (2024)****Political Exclusion and the Resurgence of Ethnic Nationalism in
Nigeria: A Study Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)****Akama, Harrison Eko****Author's Affiliation**

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ABSTRACT

The widened democratic space with the inception of new democratic dispensation gave rise to renewed secessionist agitations as a result of perceived socio – political and economic repressions. Thus, ethnic nationalism resurgence was manifested in the renewed demand for Biafra by the secessionist organizations especially the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The paper examined Political Exclusion and the Resurgence of Ethnic Nationalism in Nigeria: A Study Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The theory of political instrumentalism advanced by the American philosopher John Dewey in 1949 formed the theoretical basis for this study. The study adopted survey research design. Data were derived from primary and secondary sources. The population of the study constituted the member of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the old Eastern region comprising of the current South East and South South geopolitical zones. Convenience sampling technique was used to select a sample of 400 respondents for the study. The data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Chi-square. The study found that that political exclusion of an ethnic group in the main stream politics leads to ethnic nationalism. This political exclusion provides a basis for the persistence of Igbo grievances and animosities. The study therefore contends that the resurgence of ethnic nationalism is caused by the people's perception of political inequities and injustice in the distribution of power and resources in Nigeria. The study recommends that an all, inclusive political system is the key solution. Nigeria should create an inclusive political system where ethnic and religious affiliation will no longer be a defining factor in political participation.

Keywords:

Ethnic nationalism

Exclusion

IPOB

Politics

Resurgence

A: Introduction

More than fifty years after, the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria has continued to agitate against marginalization and political inequity in Nigeria. Although there was a 'no victor no vanquished' designation to reabsorb the Igbo ethnic group into Nigeria, post-war events indicate that the former Biafrans, particularly the dominant Igbo ethnic group were reabsorbed into Nigeria as conquered people (Duruji, 2009). Some major policies were initiated to stifle and demobilize the capacity of the Igbo to make any productive engagement in Nigeria. They include the 20-pound ceiling placed on bank lodgements for every Igbo after the war no matter how much such persons had in banks; the timing of indigenization policy which came shortly after the war when the Igbos were financially constrained to participate, thereby incapacitating the Igbos economically. Other strategies of marginalization were the deficient infrastructural development in their homeland which resulted in mass migration of the Igbos to other areas of the country for economic survival (Duruji, 2009, Obiora, 2014).

The autocratic military regimes that dominated Nigerian politics for the greater proportion of its post-war history that spanned between 1970 till 1999 effectively and efficiently fostered these policies of marginalization and political inequity. The transition to a democratic dispensation has coincided with the emergence of a post-war Igbo generation who do not accept the professed marginalization of the Igbos in Nigeria. The manifestation is seen in the number of groups and movements that have emerged to demand for the resuscitation of the defunct Biafran state as a panacea to the alienation of the Igbos in the Nigerian polity (Duruji, 2009). Nnamani, (2016), noted that the Igbo ethnic group which is also regarded and treated suspiciously is stigmatized and targeted for ill-treatment. Today, the homeland of Eastern Nigeria is still redolent of the same marginalisation rhetoric, including stagnated infrastructural development, political subjugation, religious domination, insecurity of lives and property, and deep rooted hatred from other ethnic groups, particularly the Hausa-Fulani (Nwofe, 2017). The implication is a deep-rooted grievance among the Igbo ethnic group that the wave of campaigns and social movement for the restoration of Biafra continued to reverberate in recent times.

The result is the manifestation of a number of groups who are now opposed to this professed marginalization.

Nigeria is currently facing several challenges arising from unresolved national question revolving around sensitive national issues like group marginalization, political inequity, resource control, terrorism, corruption, etc. Olu (2017), noted that one major manifestation of some of these unresolved problems is the emergence of groups demanding for self-determination and political independence as witnessed among the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in South-East, the Niger-Delta Avengers (NDA) in South-South and several other groups in different parts of the country. Although, threats of secession and secessionist movements are not entirely new to Nigerian politics, the dimension they have assumed today appear not unconnected to perceived political inequity and marginalization giving rise to severe divided ethnic lines. Studies, including those of Osadolor (2004); Olufemi (2005); and Egwu (2005) have shown that many of these crises are highly rooted in age-long dissatisfaction and discontents against successive government policies and actions by the masses across the country. For instance, there were pockets of resistance and criticism against the structural imbalance of Nigeria's federalism since independence, controversial revenue sharing formula, ethnicity and ethnic politics, religious intolerance and violence, human rights abuse during the First and Second republics (Obiora, 2014). The passage of time equally witnessed mind provoking issues like agitation for resource control, complaints of political marginalization, demand for power shift and rotational presidency, etc.

The rise of ethnic and religious nationalism in Nigeria in the last two decades has led to high levels of tension that has prompted people to question the corporate existence of this Nigeria. What's behind the growing tensions might be unequal distribution of the country's political, economic and social wealth. Inequality has caused mistrust among ethnic groups in Nigeria. Nigeria has in fact been at war with itself for some time – a war that has become intensified in the last two decades.

B: Theoretical Orientation

This paper was anchored on the theory of political instrumentalism advanced by the American philosopher John Dewey in 1949. Instrumentalism stresses malleability of ethnic sentiments that depends on circumstance and the choice of the individual. This is also different from social constructivism because this choice is not hinged on the rational calculation of the individual as stressed by social constructivism but through manipulation via ethnic sentiments. The theory of political instrumentalism attributes the outbreak of inter-group conflict to ethnic entrepreneurs who capitalize on the availability of ethnic networks to mobilize masses along ethnic lines (Cohen, 1996). This especially occurs when political elites are in danger of being 'ethnically outbid' by extremists or when domestic or international challenges threaten their political survival and interests. Instrumentalism views ethnicity as the means to some specific political end when identity is circumstantially played up (Joireman, 2003). Instrumentalism therefore stresses malleability of individuals through the whipping up of ethnic sentiments. The instrumentalism perspective to the study of ethnicity posits that ethnic identities are important because of the circumstances or the role of elites in manipulating identity.

Ethnicity disappears once its utility is no longer required. This simply shows that ethnicity is both pervasive and deeply rooted because it is politically useful. Instrumentalism sees ethnicity as a dependable variable, controlled according to its strategic utility for achieving more secular goods (Conversie, 2006). It hinges on the affiliations of individuals to the community which are economically and politically beneficial to them. That is to say they are based on rational awareness and not closeness as in the case of primordialism, but the need for socio-political and economic protection or common interest.

Young (1986) opines that the instrumentalist perspective saw ethnicity as a vehicle for socio-political and economic competition, hence as political contingent, situational and circumstantial. He further posits that ethnicity is salient only in so far as it serves to orient people in pursuit of other interest vis-à-vis other people who are seen as holding contractive ethnic identities. A contractive ethnic identity is shaped by the unequal distribution of

political power and resources; where political and economic powers have been constructed around the dominant ethnic groups. Considering this, one can state that the ultimate objective of ethnicity to the instrumentalists is driven by the interest of the groups which may be political or economic.

The instrumentalist approach attributes that ethnicity is circumstantially construct in a given society. If this is the case, it means that ethnicity is highly susceptible to manipulation; or better regarded as a social phenomenon constructed for mobilization. However, shortcomings notwithstanding, the theory of instrumentalism addresses the core of the subject matter of this study, which is political inequity and ethnic nationalism with focus on renewed demand for Biafra by IPOB. It addresses the issue of why ethnic oriented organizations such as IPOB are emerging in Nigeria. Because instrumentalism views the mobilization of ethnicity to accomplish a political end and given the roles certain actors at the leadership apex of IPOB played in giving birth and nurturing of the organizations, this choice becomes appropriate.

C: Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was survey research design. In this study, the survey research design enabled the researcher to determine the relationship between political inequity and ethnic nationalism in Nigeria using Indigenous People of Biafra as the focus of the study. The target population of this study was the members of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the entire old Eastern region comprising of the current South-east and part of South-South region of Nigeria. Importantly, this paper was designed to generate data from the members of Indigenous People of Biafra. Using convenience sampling technique, two states each from South-East and South-South regions of Nigeria were selected for the study. The states are Anambra State, Abia State, Rivers State and Imo State. A total of one hundred (100) respondents were selected from each of the sample states giving a total of four hundred respondents. Thereafter, simple random sampling technique was used to select the members of IPOB for the study. The essence is to give a fair, equal chance and opportunity to all the respondents.

This study employed the quantitative method of data collection in which it made use of primary data collected with the aid of questionnaire. Quantitative method of data analysis was employed to analyze the data. Frequency tables and simple percentages were employed in analyzing the data while chi-square inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses at varying degree of freedom (df) and 0.05 level of significance. This was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

D: Literature Review

Political Exclusion and Ethnic Nationalism Re-examined

Political exclusion is structured differences in the distribution of political resources. According to this definition, one group has greater or lesser access to, or acquisition of, political resources than another group. Piven and Cloward's (2005) argue that political inequity is the extent to which groups within society differ in their influence over government decisions. In this approach, political influence is understood as the range of actions an actor can take within a political interaction. Political inequity can be described as a situation in which dominant population is made known of the inequity that leads for others due to their relative position in the structure of power. Political inequity is also the way unjust actions are done in the society. Political inequity occurs in a situation where the equals are treated unequally and the unequal is treated equally in political sphere (Michaels, 2006).

On the other hand, ethnic nationalism is a complex social phenomenon. Ethnic nationalism has its history rooted in the colonial period in Nigeria. Conceptions of ethnic group and ethnicity by various scholars will be useful here in order to shape our understanding of the true meaning of ethnic politics as the name implies. In our contemporary Nigeria, nearly all conflicts found within our communities, states and the centre are attributable to ethnic groups competing for the control of political power of their different groups, regions and backgrounds. Hence, ethnic politics can therefore be seen as an organisation and formation of groups of societal elites whose aims and objectives are strategically achieved through mobilization of ethnic groups which are coordinated

on sentimental basis and illusive emotional sympathy to gain the group's support against the perceived majority oppressors (Adamu & Ocheni, 2016).

Political Exclusion and Ethnic Nationalism Resurgence

Olu (2017) examined secessionist movements and the national question in Nigeria. The work examined the relationship between unresolved national questions and the on-going agitation for self-determination by some groups within the Nigerian state. Apart from identifying these activities as collective threat to national unity, the paper also analyses the prospect of restructuring Nigeria politically as a remedy to these challenges. Content analysis was employed in analyzing the data. The study established the fact that the Nigerian state currently harbours, for so long, multidimensional grievances which have culminated into agitations for self-determination and calls for disintegration of the country by separatist groups, especially from the South-South and the South-East geo-political zones. The study also found that these agitations stemmed from prolonged marginalization; dominance of others in their region; and resources and opportunities distribution. The study also found that many Nigerians still preferred a united Nigeria based on the principles of justice, fair play and equality as against total break-up.

Ibeanu, Orji and Iwuamadi (2016) examined Biafra Separatism, Its causes, Consequences and Remedies. The main objectives of this study were to explain why there is a resurgence of the agitation for an independent Biafran state; to analyze the elements driving the renewed agitation; to explore the role of Igbo leaders in the agitation; to examine the consequences of the recurrent agitation for Biafra; and to suggest measures and actors that could help in addressing the agitation. The data used in the study were collected from four different sources, namely documentary sources (desk review), opinion survey using a questionnaire, interviews, and reports in newspapers. Data collection from documentary sources involved mapping and evaluation of the relevant literature on Nigerian politics and society particularly those relating directly to the Biafran war, its onset, termination, and post-war peace building. Documentary data were complemented by questionnaire-based survey of 121 respondents,

purposely selected to reflect the various sections of the society such as Biafra supporters, community leaders, community members, and professionals. The survey was carried out in ten locations across the South East, namely Aba, Asaba, Awka, Enugu, Mbano, Nsukka, Owerri, Okigwe, Onitsha, and Umuahia (ten copies of questionnaire were sent by email to some Biafra supporters residing in Finland). Additional data were derived from interviews with key informants, drawn from among former Biafran soldiers, Biafra supporters, academics, security agents, and media practitioners.

Finally, a content analysis of reports of three daily newspapers for the period – January 2010 to June 2015 was conducted. The study found that extant explanations for the recurrent agitation for Biafra fall into three main strands: those that focus on ethnic divisions and competition, those that focus on economic frustrations, and those that focus on state-society relations. The study contends that feeling of collective victimization is critical in the Biafra separatist agitations and that body of evidence strongly suggests that developments that occurred before, during and after the Biafran war engendered particularly deep grievances which have created a sense of communal suffering and collective victimhood among the Igbo. As the study shows, three major factors have helped to sustain and reinforce this sense of victimhood, namely: certain policies and actions of the Nigerian government which are perceived to disadvantage the group, acts of violence seen to be targeting the group, and the rhetoric of the Igbo elites as well as those of other Nigerians.

Bello (2017) examined the developments that led to the resurgence of Biafra struggle against Nigeria in 2015. Using reliable and pertinent sources, this paper examines the motivations for reemergence of Biafra's agitation against Nigeria. It argues that though achieving this goal by IPOB is unrealistic at the moment, the group deserves to be heard and granted access to referendum by Nigerian government as has been demonstrated in other democracies around the globe. The paper concludes that allowing every citizen access to 'fair hearing' and 'fair play' could help Nigeria in deepening its 'one nation' agenda.

Deiwi, Cederman and Gleditsch (ND) examined inequality and conflict in federations. Case study evidence suggests that inequality between regions in federations affects the risk of secessionist conflict. However, the conventional quantitative literature on civil war has found little support for a link between economic inequality and civil war. This article argues that this seeming discrepancy in part stems from differences in the conceptualization of inequality and operationalization. The study adopt a spatial approach, based on recently geo-coded data on economic wealth, ethnic settlements and administrative units in 31 federal states between 1991 and 2005, and demonstrate strong evidence that regional inequality affects the risk of secessionist conflict. The results of the study indicate that both relatively developed and underdeveloped regions are indeed more likely to be involved in secessionist conflict than regions close to the country average. The findings on inequality remain robust even when controlling for ethno-nationalist grievances and other potentially confounding factors.

Ndukaeze (2014) investigated ethnic and sub-nationalist agitations and the state of the Nigerian project. The purpose of this study is to argue that while ethnicity is a fundamental threat and hindrance to the achievement of a Nigerian nation-state, the activities of ethnic militias, though ordinarily needless, are in our case, inevitably integral to the strategies for halting the drift towards national disintegration. The study examined the experiences of MEND, NDPVF, MASSOB, OPC, MOSOP, ODC in Kenya, the BaHutu (Rwanda), SLA and JEM (Southern Sudan) and Tibetans (China). The study found that conflict, protest and inter-group hostility is not necessarily dysfunctional in an ethnically plural society characterized by inequality of access and participation among the component groups.

Asante and Gyimah-Boadi (2004) examined ethnic structure, inequality and governance of the public sector in Ghana. The study examined how successive governments have perceived and managed the main cleavages and inequalities in Ghana; and most importantly, what types of institutions and public policies have been adopted by post-independence governments to manage these cleavages and inequalities, particularly in the Ghanaian public

sector; and the extent to which these institutions and policies have been effective in managing diversity, inequality and representation in government and in the public sector in Ghana. The study uses both primary and secondary sources of data to examine these questions. Primary sources include interviews conducted with a cross-section of Ghanaians, most of whom are employed in the civil service, parastatals, the security sector, academia or civil society organizations.

For the purposes of this study, some key public sector institutions were purposively selected. These include the Civil Service, Ministries of Education (MOE) and Health (MOH); The Judicial Service; Parliament; and parastatals include the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) and the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT). The security sector included the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) and the Customs Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS). However due to paucity of data, this study also focuses on the ethno-regional background of the top hierarchy of these institutions. The study found that the north-south divide, rural-urban disparities, Ashanti-Ewe divide, overall dominance of the Akan group in economic and social life and in the public sector represent the main features of ethnic and regional polarization in Ghana. The study also found that institutional arrangements and public policies under successive governments are the main factors accounting for the relative success with which Ghana has been able to contain ethno-regional inequalities and rivalries. The pattern of appointments into the public service and to political positions, fostered by constitutional provisions, notably those contained in the 1992 Constitution also help to promote political inclusiveness and national unity.

Duruji (2012) investigated resurgent ethno-nationalism and the renewed demand for Biafra in south-east Nigeria. Through the processing of primary data, the paper examines this reinvention of Igbo nationalism. It looks at its linkage with the 1999 democratic transition in Nigeria, its implications and management by the government. The study contends that the renewed demand for Biafra by Igbo people is a rejection of their post-war socio-political and economic condition in Nigeria. The study found that the decline in economic opportunities and mass

unemployment that resulted from the economic policies of adjustment over the years prior to the transition to democracy in 1999, created a large army of the unemployed. The deep frustrations that threw up this army of people who are ready to vent their anger on the system using any means including violence was significant for the success of MASSOB in recruitment. But this alone does not provide sufficient condition for enlistment, as the overriding factor that motivated a large number of individuals was related to issues of perceived marginalization and injustice to the people of the former eastern region of Nigeria, particularly the Igbo. The study concludes that the renewed demand for Biafra is caused by perception of inequities and injustice in the distribution of power and resources among the Igbo. Hence a deliberate effort to correct these social problems, assuage ethnic tensions and presumption of political violence in Nigeria.

Alumona, Azom and Iloh (2017) examined the Nigerian state and the resurgence of separatist agitations: the case of Biafra. This study explored the linkages between political governance and deteriorating material conditions of people on the one hand, and the rising wave of separatist agitations on the other. With the aid of secondary data generated through documentary sources, this study systematically presents evidence to demonstrate that pro-Biafra separatist agitations derive from the deteriorating material conditions of the people. The study found marginalization and systematic “minoritization” of the Igbo domiciled in the Southeast geopolitical zone to have been elevated to an official state policy. Accordingly, the study argues that certain actions, inactions and policies of the Nigerian government, which are perceived to be targeted against the Igbo, have created the feelings of collective victimization among the people which sustains and reinforces the separatist agitations. Moreso, the study highlights the interplay of forces that account for the inability of the Nigerian government to concretely address the challenges of nation-building, and their overall implications for peace-building and sustainable development in Nigeria.

The literatures reviewed have shown how some studies on inequity/inequality do not find support for

the general relationship between inequality and ethnic nationalism. We believe that this in large part arises due to inappropriate use of individual-level measures of inequality. In our theoretical and empirical analysis, we focused on regions and regional measures of inequality in order to investigate the link between political inequity and ethnic nationalism more closely. As the literature review has also shown, empirical studies on inequality have failed to provide an unambiguous answer to the question whether regions above and below the national average in political representation are the most likely candidates for ethnic nationalism. Furthermore, most studies inequality/inequity have tended to disregard political inequity, even though political grievances are often intertwined in ethno-nationalist conflicts. Instead, we

consider political inequity as explanatory factor for strong ethnic nationalism.

E: Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, the data generated from the members of Indigenous People of Biafra were presented, analyzed and interpreted. A total of four hundred copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents, out of which three hundred and fifty seven copies of the questionnaire were properly filled and found relevant to the study. Therefore, the analysis in this section was based on the relevant copies. The first section covers the demographic features of the respondents. The second section analyzed the data relevant to research questions while the final section tested the hypotheses earlier formulated.

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Female	147	41.2	41.2	41.2
Male	210	58.8	58.8	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above shows the distribution of respondent base on their gender. 147 respondents representing 41.2% are female while 210 respondents representing 58.8% are male. This indicates that there are more male than female members of Indigenous People of Biafra.

Table 2: Marital Status of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Single	64	17.9	17.9	17.9
Married	274	76.8	76.8	94.7
Others	19	5.3	5.3	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above indicates the marital status of the respondents. Majority of the respondents representing 76.8% of the respondents are married, 17.9% of the respondents are single while the remaining 5.3% chose others as their response. This implies that majority of the sampled members of IPOB are married.

Table 3: Age Distribution of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18 - 30 years	62	17.4	17.4	17.6
31 - 40 years	89	24.9	24.9	42.3
41 - 50 years	170	46.6	46.6	88.9
51 years and above	36	10.1	10.1	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above shows the age distribution of the respondents. It revealed that 62 respondent representing 17.4% falls within the age bracket of 18 - 30 years. 89 respondents representing 24.9% fall within the age bracket of 31 to 40 years, 46.6% of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 41 to 50 years, while the remaining 10.1% fall within the age bracket of above 51 years and above. This implies that majority of the sampled members of IPOB falls within the age bracket of 41 - 50 years.

Table 4: Response to Item Twenty-One: The Structural Imbalance of Nigeria's Federalism has Contributed to Rise in Ethnic Nationalism

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	38	10.6	10.6	10.6
Disagree	24	6.7	6.7	17.4
Undecided	36	10.1	10.1	27.5
Agree	133	37.3	37.3	64.7
Strongly Disagree	126	35.3	35.3	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 above indicates that 35.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that the structural imbalance of Nigeria's federalism has contributed to rise in ethnic nationalism , 37.3% of the respondents agreed, 10.1% of the respondents were undecided, 6.7% of the respondents disagreed while the remaining 10.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed. This implies that the structural imbalance of Nigeria's federalism has contributed to rise in ethnic nationalism.

Table 5: Response to Item Twenty Two: Age-long Dissatisfaction and Discontents Against Successive Government Policies Political Exclusion has led to Ethnic Nationalism

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	31	8.7	8.7	8.7
Disagree	23	6.4	6.4	15.1
Undecided	41	11.5	11.5	26.6
Agree	102	28.6	28.6	55.2
Strongly Disagree	160	44.8	44.8	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 above indicates that 44.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that age-long dissatisfaction and discontents against successive government policies political exclusion has led to ethnic nationalism, 28.6% of the respondents agreed, 11.5% of the respondents were undecided, 6.4% of the respondents disagreed while the remaining 8.7 strongly disagreed. This implies that age-long dissatisfaction and discontents against successive government policies political exclusion has led to ethnic nationalism.

Table 6: Response to Item Twenty Three: The Systematic Exclusion of Igbos in Politics and Civil Service has lead to Renewed Agitation for Biafra

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	17	4.8	4.8	4.8
Disagree	18	5.0	5.0	9.8
Undecided	13	3.6	3.6	13.4
Agree	260	72.8	72.8	86.3
Strongly Agree	49	13.7	13.7	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above indicates that 13.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that the systematic exclusion of Igbos in politics and civil service has lead to renewed agitation for Biafra, 72.8 % of the respondents agreed, 3.6% of the respondents were undecided, 5.0% of the respondents disagreed while 4.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed. This implies that the systematic exclusion Igbos in politics and civil service has lead to renewed agitation for Biafra

Table 7: Response to Item Twenty Four: Politically Motivated Distortions to the Structures of Governance by Prolong Military Regime has Engendered Political Exclusion

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	17	4.8	4.8	4.8
Disagree	11	3.1	3.1	7.8
Undecided	23	6.4	6.4	14.3
Agree	170	47.6	47.6	61.9
Strongly Agree	136	38.1	38.1	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above indicates that 38.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that politically motivated distortions to the structures of governance by prolong military region has engendered political exclusion, 47.6% of the respondents agreed, 6.4% of the respondents were undecided, 3.1% of the respondents disagreed while the remaining 4.8% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that politically motivated distortions to the structures of governance by prolong military regime has engendered political exclusion.

Table 8: Response to Twenty Five: The Concentration of Political and Economic Resources at the Centre has Intensified the Problem of Ethnic Mobilization

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	7	2.0	2.0	2.0
Disagree	34	9.5	9.5	11.5
Undecided	21	5.9	5.9	17.4
Agree	218	61.1	61.1	78.4
Strongly Agree	77	21.6	21.6	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above indicates that 77 respondents representing 21.6% strongly agreed that the concentration of political and economic resources at the centre has intensified the problem of ethnic mobilization, 61.1% of the respondents agreed, 5.9% of the respondents were undecided, 9.5% of the respondents disagreed while the remaining 2.0% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 9: Response to Item Twenty Six: The Structural Imbalance in the Nigerian System is a Major form Political Exclusion

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	18	5.0	5.0	5.0
Disagree	14	3.9	3.9	9.0
Undecided	25	7.0	7.0	16.0
Agree	253	70.9	70.9	86.8
Strongly Agree	47	13.2	13.2	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 9 above shows that 47 respondents representing 13.2% strongly agreed that structural imbalance in the Nigerian system is a major form political exclusion, 70.9% of the respondents agreed, 7.0% of the respondents were undecided, 3.9% of the respondents disagreed while the remaining 5.0% strongly disagreed. This implies that structural imbalance in the Nigerian system is a major form political exclusion

Table 10: Response to Item Twenty Seven: The fact that the Presidency has Eluded the Igbo for too Long Added to their Disaffection Towards Nigeria state

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	23	6.4	6.4	6.4
Disagree	31	8.7	8.7	15.1
Undecided	41	11.5	11.5	26.6
Agree	160	44.8	44.8	71.4
Strongly Agree	102	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 10 above indicates that 102 respondents representing 28.6 strongly agreed that the fact that the presidency has eluded the Igbo for too long added to their disaffection towards Nigeria state, 44.8% of the respondents agreed, 11.5% of the respondents were undecided, 8.7% of the respondents disagreed while the remaining 6.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed. This implies that the fact that the presidency has eluded the Igbo for too long added to their disaffection towards Nigeria state.

Table 11: Response to Item Twenty Eight: Government Neglect for calls for Political Restructuring has Fueled Secessionist Agenda

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	12	3.4	3.4	3.4
Disagree	18	5.0	5.0	8.4
Undecided	14	3.9	3.9	12.3
Agree	175	49.0	49.0	61.3
Strongly Agree	138	38.7	38.7	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above shows that 38.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that government neglect for calls for political restructuring has fueled secessionist agenda, 49.0% of the respondents agreed, 3.9% of the respondents were undecided, 5.0% of the respondents disagreed while the remaining 3.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 11: Response to Item Twenty Nine: The Unequal Number of States in each Geopolitical Zone has Increase Ethnic Nationalism Resurgence

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	17	4.8	4.8	4.8
Disagree	36	10.1	10.1	14.8
Undecided	53	14.8	14.8	29.7
Agree	125	35.0	35.0	64.7
Strongly Agree	126	35.3	35.3	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above indicates that 35.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that the unequal number of states in each geopolitical zone has increase ethnic nationalism resurgence , 35.3 % of the respondents agreed, 14.8% of the respondents were undecided, 10.1% of the respondents disagreed while 4.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 12: Response to Item Thirty: The Exclusion of South East in Sensitive Political Appointments has Heighted Calls for the Creation of Biafra

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	16	4.5	4.5	4.5
Disagree	21	5.9	5.9	10.4
Undecided	20	5.6	5.6	16.0
Agree	236	66.1	66.1	82.1
Strongly Agree	64	17.9	17.9	100.0
Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above indicates that 17.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that the exclusion of South East in sensitive political appointments has heightened calls for the creation of Biafra, 66.1% of the respondents agreed, 5.6% of the respondents were undecided, 5.9% of the respondents disagreed while the remaining 4.5 % of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 13 Chi-square Tests for Hypothesis Three

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	435.354 ^a	24	.000
Likelihood Ratio	252.778	24	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	136.976	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	357		

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Since the Pearson chi-square value of 435.354 at 24 degree of freedom is significant at .05 alpha level, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Hence, we conclude that political exclusion of an

ethnic group in the main stream politics is more likely to lead to resurgence of ethnic nationalism by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

F: Discussion of Findings

The paper showed that political exclusion of an ethnic group in the main stream politics is more likely to lead to resurgence of ethnic nationalism by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The structural imbalance in the Nigeria's federalism and the age-long political exclusion has led to ethnic nationalism. The Igbos has been systematically excluded from the main stream politics. The apparent political exclusion and distributional inequities in political appointment and office holdings have developed into contentious issues between ethnic groups in Nigeria. In particular, the perceived ethnic discrimination through economic disadvantages and political inequity has triggered and reinforced ethno-nationalist grievances, thus increasing the risk of secessionist agenda especially that of IPOB. The agitation for an independent Biafra by IPOB is apparently a response to these sense of fear and political domination with a collective optimism that a new Biafra will bring equal opportunities and freedom.

G: Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper concluded that political exclusion of an ethnic group in the main stream politics is more likely to lead to ethnic nationalism. This political exclusion provides a basis for the persistence of Igbo grievances and animosities. Complaints of deficient infrastructural development in Igbo land, economically disempowering policies, economically disempowering policies, the distortions of the federal structure to the disadvantage of the Igbo, insignificant representation in federal institutions such as the National Assembly and deliberate neglect of ecological problems in the east as a result of political exclusion has enhanced ethnic nationalism among the members of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). This agrees with findings of Duruji (2012) that the renewed demand for Biafra is caused by perception of inequities and injustice in the distribution of power and resources among the Igbo. This agrees with the findings of Alumona, Azom and Iloh (2017) that marginalization and systematic "minoritization" of the Igbo domiciled in the Southeast geopolitical zone to have been elevated to an official state policy.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. For this accommodation to be found there must be a constitutional review, that should radically address structural imbalances that stoke these developments because it creates room for some ethnic groups to become powerful and able to marginalize others.
2. The study further recommends that Nigerian government should make opportunity for a referendum possible for the different groups to determine their collective existence. If the right of Israel to a separate state on the ground of security was recognised by the international judicial persons – the UN, the AU and the Commonwealth, why should the same criterion not be applied to the Biafrans? If Bangladesh and Eritrea could separate from the oppressive regimes of Pakistan and Ethiopia, respectively, why is it difficult to address Biafra questions before it leads to another massive bloodshed.

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