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Research Article

Secessionist Agitations and Human Security: The Quest for the Agitations of IPOB in Southeastern Nigeria

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Abstract

Human security is a vital aspect of a state's existence and it's performance in both local and international system. However, in Nigeria, the state of human security has been intercepted by many obstacles. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) secessionist movement is a major interception. The arrest of the group's leader, Nnamdi Kanu, in 2015 triggered a rise in the three-year movement and ultimately a fall in human security in the country. This study investigates the relationship between the IPOB secessionist agitation and human security as well as the implications that the agitations have on human security in Nigeria. The study adopts the relative deprivation theory as the theoretical framework to analyse the underlying causes of secessionist movements. Utilizing a secondary method of data collection, the research relies on an extensive literature review and analysis of relevant sources, including books, journals, and online articles. The findings of this study reveal that IPOB agitations have repercussions on human security in the country. The study therefore recommends facilitating open and constructive dialogue between the Nigerian government and representatives of IPOB to address the root causes of secessionist agitations.

Keywords: Human security, Secessionist agitations, IPOB, Marginalisation, Political Economy

1. Introduction

Human security has remained an issue of challenge for Nigeria, especially in southeastern Nigeria where IPOB self-determination agitations have been on (Ibe, 2021 & Nwangwu, 2023). This worrisome situation cannot be disconnected from the composition of the nation. The composition of the

Nigerian state is diverse in character and make-up, having over 250 ethnic groups according to Gandonu (1978). Taking this into consideration and attributing this reality to the complex nature of the country resulting from the advent of colonialism, neocolonialism, geography, and varying factors, one is better able to contextualise the internal conflicts residing in the state. The agitations or movements in question can be accredited to the recent upsurge in demand for a separate state of Biafra and in line with this self-determination and autonomy on the part of the state and the indigenous people that make it.

Buchanan (1997), took account of the types of normative theories of secession, when he noticed that as the concept of secessionist agitations gained a larger audience that there was in turn more stances on the matter. A major reoccurring concern was what were the factors to be taken into consideration when determining what stood for or against a theory to secede. This played with the topic of morality that comes about when discussing secession and intercepting these groups hypothetical 'right to secede'. Though there are three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, that is, the Hausa's, Igbo's, and Yoruba's, out of these groups the Yoruba's and the Igbo's have both on numerous fronts taken the form of different separatist socio-political groups such as the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Biafra Zionist Front (BZF), Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC) and the most infamous of the bunch, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The International Crisis Group (ICG) (2015), identifies the arrest of Nnamdi kanu, the leader of the secessionist movement IPOB and director of the influential 'Radio Biafra' on the 19th of October 2019 as the immediate trigger of the Biafran secessionist resurgence, giving rise to another wave of such agitations. The ICG has as well reported that the charges held against Kanu included sedition, ethnic incitement and treasonable felony. There have been many protests by factions of the country advocating for his release and calling for the restoration of an independent Biafra. The Independent people of Biafra and radio Biafra (set up by Kanu), the present highest profile and most radical radical movement for the Biafran secessionist agitation movement, making them and the man behind it all influential bodies. IPOB particularly and radio Biafra revamped the existing struggle championed by the MASSOB formed by Ralph Uwazurike in 1999, which theoretically based its struggle on non-violence, in line with the teachings of Indian nationalist Mahatma Gandhi (Uwazurike, 2005).

The question that naturally comes to mind concerning the state of a nation and the coexistence of secessionist agitations would easily be the implications of these movements on human security in the country. Human security challenges the state-centric idea of security that existed largely during the cold war era and prior to that, it does so by situating the individual at the centre of security concerns. The Human Development Report (1994), makes note of seven threats to human security. These threats include: food, health, personal, community, economic, political and environmental security. Human security can only be achieved when individuals are secured from the likes of 'life free of fear' and 'life free of want' (Acharya, 2008). These threats are towards the security of both individuals and communities. The major objective of human security is to directly and positively aid those who find their livelihoods, survival and dignity threatened. Due to the parallels between the situation surrounding Boko Haram and that of secessionist movements, mirroring the two is in turn reactive. The bottom line being drawn from one factor, that is, conflict. Conflict tends to play a significant role in destabilising a country and its economy, this reality is applicable and immensely present in many African states. In the same mirrored point of view, the effects of these phenomena ranges from political, social, economic, cultural to environmental ones (Idu, 2020).

2. Statement of Problem

The study will examine how secessionist agitations have affected the human security of individuals and communities in Nigeria and investigate the impact of these agitations on economic activities, social relations, and political stability in the state.

These problems facing the Nigerian government and separatist agitators have their origins traced from the Nigerian civil war, that is, the Biafran war (06 July 1967 to 15 January 1970). The

mention of the Civil War in discussions about IPOB's secessionist agitations serves as a historical reference point, highlighting the historical context and the potential risks associated with secessionist movements in Nigeria. It is a reminder of the previous conflicts and the deep-rooted issues surrounding ethnic tensions, resource distribution, and political power in the country (Okoli, & Onwuka, 2021). Biafran's generally feel under-represented and by extension marginalised. This under representation, according to Biafran's is shown in the under-usage of their economic and developmental prowess in the country (Ezemenaka & Prouza, 2016). This sentiment proved to be one held by the bulk of secessionist agitators and supporters alike, being the drive for their cause. With the south-east being made up primarily of Igbo's, it seems to be in a state of what some might be described as justifiable perception of collective victimization, which only gives way to separatist feelings after taking history into account. Ezemenaka & Prouza, (2016) discussed the root of this issue, noting post civil war Nigeria as being characterised by what might be termed 'ethno-phobia' towards the Igbo's, this form of discrimination consisted of a 'non-inclusiveness' towards the group, notably in elite political circles, wherein pivotal deliberations concerning Nigeria are constructed, the exclusion of certain groups on the basis of the ethnic group they belong to in turn made them less than on board with the general idea of things. According to Anugwom (2000), marginalization is present when an ethnic group or any other sort of group feels disenchanted within the political system. This resulted in the industries and business associations of the hypothetical Biafra to feel they had a predetermined limited allocation within the political system and various industries. This gave rise to the clamour for secession in order to have monopoly over an environment that would work in their favour. The current separatist movements towards the actualisation of an autonomous Biafra has led to increasing discourse on the state of Nigeria and the consequences of such agitations on the state of human security in the country. These discussions are in line with the resulting outcome and consequences on the country.

In essence, the human security implications have increasingly become a cause for concern and area of concentration. Despite Nigeria's efforts to maintain its territorial integrity, secessionist agitations have persisted in various parts of the country, particularly in the south-east. These agitations have led to numerous security challenges that threaten human security and national stability. Therefore, the problem this study seeks to address is to determine the human security implications of the Indigenous People of Biafra's agitation to secede on the Nigerian state, with a view to providing insights into the nature of these agitations and their impact on the lives and well being of citizens.

3. Methodology

This study makes use of the of the qualitative research design and secondary data. Secondary data is essentially the analysis of data previously collated by someone else (Boslaugh, 2007). This would imply that this research study makes use of the likes of books, journals, newspapers, websites, and government records.

The method of data analysis employed in this research is textual analysis. It involves examining and interpreting written or spoken language in order to identify patterns, themes, and meanings and is usually used to examine texts as is the case of analysing secondary data.

For the population of this study, the group of major interest is the inhabitants of the Eastern region as they are identified as the group most affected by the agitations of the IPOB in this study. The current population of Nigerians in this region is about 32 million and they make up about 15.2% of Nigeria's total population as of 2022, according to data provided by the statista, 2022 .

This study utilises a secondary data collection method to gather information for analysis. The data is sourced from various published materials, including books, journal articles, reports, and other scholarly publications. Through this method, this research aims to contribute to existing knowledge by effectively utilizing secondary data to address the research question and achieve the objectives of the study.

4. Literature Review

The literature bordering on the concept of secessionist agitation has found increasing growth in relatively recent times. That is not to imply that secessionist agitations are a new found phenomenon, as Nigeria had crossed paths with this sensation as early as 1914 as acknowledged in Tekena Tamuno's '*Separatist Agitations in Nigeria Since 1914*'. here, Tamuno documents historical accounts of agitations and attempted movements in form of secession. Starting off from the 'mistake of 1914', the term accredited to Sir Ahmadu Bello. The 'mistake' in question is referring to Lord Lugard's amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates that ultimately came to form what is known as Nigeria today. Tamuno also discusses the secessionist agitations that arose again in early 50s Nigeria which were attributed to new constitutional arrangements and rivalries within political parties at the time as well as conflicting principles revolving federalism. Arguably, the period where these agitations gained the most traction was in 1966 with the uprising of 'Biafra' and the Biafran movement in 1966 as a sort of form of retaliation to what the Igbo's had faced at the hand of the Nigerian government in form of what was perceived as marginalisation and discrimination by this group and followed by fierce agitations on their part and in turn the eventual civil war between Nigeria and the now abstract state of Biafra from the 6th of July 1967 to the 15th of January 1970 with Lieutenant Colonel Ojukwu Odumegwu at its forefront. Decades down the line from the event of the civil war, we observe similar patterns in regards to the outrage expressed by Biafrans. This concept is not one that is confined to the Nigerian state, it finds variations of itself accompanied by different motivators across the world. Beary (2008). recognises this reality, pointing out the active status and concentration of such agitations in Europe and Asia. A trend that seems to many a time characterise seperatist agitations is violence, this can be owed to ethnic and or religious differences between the secessionist body and the mother country according to him (Daudu, Osimen,& Shuaibu ,2023).

The term 'secessionist agitation' itself, implies a conscious intentional effort or attempt carried out by a group of people of similar identity and common ideology, backed by an interest to remove themselves from an already existing sovereign state in order to form an independent state of their own, entirely separate from the would be former mother country. Chukwudi & Chukwuma (2020), define secessionist agitations as a circumstance whereby individuals or groups tied by language, culture or common history unite to demand for the self actualisation of their own autonomous state by reason of the perception of political and economic exclusion, marginalisation and or sense of repression. According to Osaghae, Ikelegbe, Olarinmoye & Okhomina (2007), there is a connection between agitation and social movements, as well as actions within the political economy, such as instances of exclusion, marginalization, and inequality. The group on the receiving end of this poor treatment could in turn believe themselves to be considered second class citizens by their government and retaliate with threats and actions towards seceding. According to some studies, the emergence of separatist movements can be attributed to the economic and or political marginalization inflicted by the Nigerian government on certain factions (Ibeanu et al, 2016). Adibe (2022), identifies the general ideological consensus held by Igbo secessionist movements in this case, being that the Igbo's as a group continue to be marginalised in the political economy and treated as if unequal in status in comparison to other major ethnic groups in Nigeria, in political, economic, social and cultural terms alike.

The security movement in Nigeria is witnessing increased activity, indicating a heightened state of the country's security environment. This is showcased with regards to secessionist agitations, particularly we might reference the indigenous people of Biafra (Onuoha et al, 2021). The Human Development Report makes note of seven threats to human security. These threats include; personal security, community security, food security, health security, economic security, political security, and environmental security. Although the concept of human security remains heavily disputed, in 1994 the United Nations Human Development Report outlined two pivotal concepts, they are, freedom from "fear" and from "want" (American Climate Choices, 2010). The two schools came about to further contextualise human security. For example with the "freedom from want" which includes

threats such as natural disasters, hunger and disease to the definition of human security. The Proponents of these schools of thought have argued that these threats are responsible for the death of many more people than genocide, terrorism, and war combined (Human Security Centre, 2008). What needs to be examined as a result is the existing relationship between the IPOB secessionist agitations and human security in this study. On the other hand, "freedom from fear" emphasizes the need to safeguard individuals from all forms of violence, which is often attributed to insufficient state capacity, poverty, and inequalities. This assumption in work here is that limiting human security to violence is not only realistic but manageable.

In this day and age human security more so considers the individual as the most important unit of reference for security. This goes against traditional security or the traditional notion of security as a state centred concept that has its focus on international security, national interests and power politics. Nonetheless, the state has not become irrelevant, and is used in instances such as designing of border and migration policies. In line with the United Nations, conflict prevention, emergency assistance, and peace-building are at the centre of this approach. It is opposed to the more traditional notion of security as state centred. Some classify separatist agitations as terrorism or insurgency, that compromises a state's national and human security, this is applicable to Nigeria. One might argue that due to the proscription of a group like the IPOB as a terrorist organisation by the federal government, the once visible lines on what was seperatism and terrorism exclusively have now been blurred. The decision to deem group as a terrorist organisation had gone through the federal government following an ex parte order granted by the federal high court Abuja under president Buhari's administration. (Andangor, 2018). Particularly with the separatist agitations of IPOB, Nigeria's security seems to be more to have become more tumultuous than ever. (Onuoha, 2021).

Olomojobi, (2020) sheds some light on the controversy surrounding the principle of self-determination in and of itself. The back and forth on the matter is on the basis of the right to secede, right to create a sovereign state and its status in international law. Olomobolaji used marriage as an analogy, whereby a reluctant partner figuratively held at gunpoint will want any way out and jumps at the first opportunity that comes their way, the same can be said for a nation and its people that do not see their needs met, in this case, Biafra.

There are existing arguments under international human law for similar circumstances, that is, the right for national self determination. In international law there is what is called 'the remedial right to secede' or 'remedial secession' which suggests that secession might be a legitimate last resort to faced oppression. In the era of the United Nations (UN) charter, the secessions of Bangladesh and Kosovo are often referenced in a comparable manner. It is crucial to acknowledge that the UN has issued various declarations regarding its position on self-determination. According to the United Nations (2019), for a state to attain membership, it must be acknowledged by a minimum of two-thirds of the current UN member states, following approval by the UN Security Council. They tend to not always stand by this, at times supporting countries when this is not the case. The term "self-determination" has two unique definitions in the United Nations charter. The first is the freedom of a state to choose its own political, economic, social, and cultural systems. Second, self-determination includes the freedom for individuals to establish their own state or freely choose whether or not to join one that already exists. These definitions find their foundation in the UN charter, specifically in Article (paragraph 2) and Article 55 (paragraph 1). IPOB, while agitating for self-determination have repeatedly referenced this section as part of the basis that justifies their call for a Sovereign State of Biafra (Vidmar, 2010).

Many who analyse the theoretical foundations consider the argument that resonates with the sentiments of both IPOB supporters and sympathizers. It suggests that if the government fails to fulfil its responsibilities outlined in the social contract, including ensuring citizen security, protecting against discrimination, and promoting inclusive participation in various sectors of the political economy, it undermines its own legitimacy. Consequently, if a secessionist entity can effectively address these grievances and meet the needs of its people, it strengthens the legitimacy of their claim to statehood. This perspective highlights the potential for a more compelling case to be made for

secession (Brown, 2020). A question arises, who then would determine the criteria for a secessionist entities capability to outperform the mother state in order to grant it legitimacy?

The governance and political economy of a region contribute to secessionist agitations (Eboh, 2019). In relation to IPOB, examining how issues such as corruption, nepotism, and lack of development may be fuelling secessionist sentiments is crucial. Due to the distribution of resources and power, which has led to a feeling of marginalisation and exclusion among the Igbo people of the south-east region, the political economy of Nigeria has been highlighted as a crucial element in the secessionist agitations of the IPOB (Eke, et al. 2018). Political economy refers to the interaction between political and economic systems in a society, and how these systems shape the distribution of resources and power.

One of the most significant factors in the political economy of Nigeria is the concentration of power and resources at the federal level, with little autonomy given to the country's states and regions. This has led to a situation where the central government controls much of the country's wealth and resources, while the states and regions are left with limited power and resources to govern themselves (Eke, 2018).

The south-east, which is predominantly Igbo and the heart of IPOB's activities, has historically been one of the most marginalized regions in Nigeria, with limited access to resources and political power (Nnadozie, 2019). The region has suffered from neglect in terms of infrastructure development and has limited access to education and health facilities, which has contributed to high levels of poverty and unemployment (Okeke & Osakwe, 2020).

Another significant factor in the political economy of Nigeria is the country's dependence on oil exports for revenue. This has created a situation where the country's economic fortunes are tied to global oil prices. However, because of this dependence, the Nigerian government has not made enough investments in other economic sectors, such industry and agriculture, which has contributed to high rates of unemployment and poverty, especially in the south-east region. (Nnadozie, 2019). The political economy of Nigeria has also been shaped by corruption, which has undermined the country's institutions and contributed to the concentration of power and resources at the federal level (Eke, 2018). Corruption has also contributed to the neglect of the south-east region, as resources earmarked for development have been diverted into the pockets of corrupt officials.

5. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted by this research is the relative deprivation theory. Samuel Stouffer coined 'Relative Deprivation' as a theory under social psychology that explains how individuals' feelings of deprivation arise from their social comparison with others. Observations were formed from the unforeseen data gotten from surveys answered by American soldiers during World War II. The findings obtained from the surveys showed that U.S. Army Air corpsmen displayed feelings of relative deprivation. In the case the corpsmen, they were reportedly experiencing higher rates of frustration over promotions in comparison to the military police even though they were being promoted at a faster rate than was the case for the military police (Smith et al, 2011). These feelings were maintained by the corpsmen, as explained by Stouffer, despite the better conditions they faced in comparison to the military police, which was not viewed as relevant to their discontent (Pettigrew, 2015). All the same, this produced the sensation we characterise as relative deprivation Osimen, Daudu, & Awogu-Maduagwu, 2023). With this it is evident relative deprivation has less to do with degrees of deprivation based on an objective quantified scale, and more to do with how the individual or group concerned make of their situation. The source of this frustration on the part of the corpsmen would be with their own peers, the result was them feeling that they were falling short as far as status or privileges when considering what is attainable or enjoyed by other individuals (Ejiofor, 2022). The theory of relative deprivation has been applied largely in various disciplines in the social sciences, namely. International relations, political science, economics, sociology, and psychology. In political science, relative deprivation has been used to explain phenomena such as

voting behaviour, political attitudes, and social protest. Scholars like Gurr and Hagan have used this theory to explain the causes of ethnic conflicts and international terrorism, making the case that such events are given rise to when groups perceive that their status and resources are being threatened.

In his book 'Why Men Rebel', political scientist Ted Gurr (1970) argues that people become discontent once coming face to face with a sense of entitlement to what they should or could have in relation to what they do possess in actuality. Gradually this discontent leads to frustration and ultimately amounts to rebelling against the posed deprivation's source, perceived or real depending on the involved group or individual's disposition. Gurr (2005) highlights that structural inequality refers to the systemic and institutionalized disparities that occur within societies. These inequities are firmly ingrained in social, economic, and political structures, which frequently perpetuate disadvantages and limit possibilities for marginalised groups. Gurr contends that structural inequality is the result of broader societal causes such as historical legacies, discriminatory legislation, and unequal resource allocation, rather than individual actions or decisions.

As for Gurr's work on deprivation and poverty, he focuses on understanding the different levels of deprivation experienced by individuals and its relationship to inequality. His analysis distinguishes between mild, moderate, and high or severe deprivation. Mild deprivation refers to limited access to resources and opportunities without compromising basic survival needs. Moderate deprivation involves a more significant lack of resources, impacting basic needs and social mobility. Severe deprivation represents extreme economic and social disadvantage, with individuals lacking essential resources and facing barriers to meeting basic needs. He used this to aim at discourse on Boko Haram, terrorism, insurgency and all things in between. Gurr's theory suggests that political violence is influenced by varying degrees of deprivation. Mild deprivation is likely to drive a small number of individuals towards political violence, while moderate deprivation would attract a larger number of people. On the other hand, when deprivation reaches a very high level, it is more likely to motivate a significant number of individuals to engage in political violence. When it comes to relative deprivation, the general idea is that those associated may feel they are deprived of some desired state or thing, in comparison with some standard, 'reference group', or with the real or imagined condition of others. Under this one social unit as compared with another holds "more" of some variable, this might manifest in a plethora of 'qualities', for example, income, prestige, safety. Reactions of relative deprivation can have greatly different consequences (Coser, 2017). Relative deprivation is described inexplicitly in the sense that due to its relativity it is unable to subscribe to a 'one size fits all' mantra which is where relativity comes in. An assumption of the theory that the disadvantaged feeling and or mindset that comes with it is attributed to a reference group, such feeling would arise from comparison of oneself to another. Said reference group is used as the point of comparison that essentially fuels the perception of deprivation.

Relative deprivation refers to the perceived difference between the goods and life conditions that individuals or groups believe they deserve in terms of value expectations and what they can realistically achieve and maintain based on the available social resources and opportunities, known as value capabilities. It involves the subjective assessment of the gap between desired outcomes and attainable outcomes within a specific social context (Gurr, 1978). Here, Gurr was trying to get to the bottom of '*why men rebel*'. With this framework we are able to use the theory of relative deprivation similarly in understanding the factors that contribute to the seperatist motivations of IPOB by applying it to the study.

6. Application of Theory to the Study

Relative deprivation theory pertains to the experience of individuals or groups when they feel deprived of something they believe they are entitled to or consider significant. It highlights that deprivation can be relative rather than absolute, encompassing economic, political, and social aspects. This perspective takes into account perceptions of justice, self-worth, and the fulfilment of basic human rights. The theory has been applied to explain various phenomena, including participation in collective protests, vulnerability to terrorist recruitment, and the emergence of

political violence. Relative deprivation theory can be applied to the secessionist agitations of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and provides insight into the root causes of such movements. Gurr (1970) posited that individuals or groups who perceive themselves as disadvantaged or deprived in comparison to others. Supporters of IPOB argue that the Igbo people in Nigeria have experienced marginalization and discrimination at the hands of the Nigerian government and other ethnic groups within the country. In their society, they may become motivated to take action to address their grievances. (Eboh, 2018). They claim that issues such as unequal distribution of resources, lack of political representation, and cultural suppression are evidence of their relative deprivation.

The theory of relative deprivation can also explain the appeal of secessionist movements like IPOB. By advocating for the creation of an independent state of Biafra, IPOB seeks to redress what they see as the historical and ongoing marginalization of the Igbo people (Onuoha, 2017). The theory is useful in understanding the motivations behind secessionist movements such as IPOB. This theory highlights issues of perceived marginalization and inequality as the root cause of such grievances and movements. Ugwueze et al (2020), contends that the desire for political inclusion, resistance to the Holocaust, and economic integration are key factors in secessionism. In many ways this mirrors similar plight faced by the Igbo's, that is, from withstanding the blows of the Nigerian government on them during and following the civil war and the evident blockade of economic opportunities. The federal government's "vindictive" post-war policies had cultivated in the Igbo a sense of relative deprivation and persecution. We might claim the influence of the unresolved national question on secessionist agitation in Nigerians Fourth Republic with the use of the IPOB (Mustard, 2019).

Relative deprivation theory suggests that when individuals or groups perceive a significant gap between what they believe they deserve and what they can actually attain, it can lead to feelings of frustration, resentment, and grievances. In the case of IPOB, their secessionist agitations can be seen as a response to the perceived relative deprivation experienced by the Igbo population in Nigeria's southeastern region. IPOB supporters argue that the Igbo people have been marginalized, politically and economically, leading to a sense of relative deprivation compared to other regions in Nigeria. They perceive a discrepancy between the resources, opportunities, and political representation they believe they are entitled to and what they actually have access to. This perceived deprivation in areas such as infrastructure, economic development, and political power fuels their aspirations for secession and the establishment of an independent state of Biafra.

7. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

IPOB, short for the Indigenous People of Biafra, is a secessionist movement operating in Nigeria. Founded by Nnamdi Kanu in 2012, IPOB aims to restore the independent state of Biafra in the south-eastern region of the country. This region, predominantly inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group, has experienced a long-standing sense of marginalization and oppression within the Nigerian state. IPOB's primary objective is to address these grievances by advocating for self-determination and the establishment of a separate Biafran nation. Through various means such as the utilization of Radio Biafra, an underground radio station established by Kanu, and the extensive use of social media platforms, IPOB has been able to disseminate its message and mobilize support.

However, the Nigerian government has labelled IPOB as a terrorist organization, citing concerns over its activities and alleged involvement in acts of violence. This designation has led to a crackdown on IPOB members and increased tensions between the group and security forces. The issue of secession and self-determination in Nigeria is a complex and sensitive matter, given the country's history of ethnic and religious diversity, as well as its colonial legacy. The Nigerian government argues that secessionist movements like IPOB pose a threat to national unity and stability, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and peaceful means to address grievances. The Nigerian government proscribed the IPOB as a terrorist organization in 2017, and launched a crackdown on its members, leading to widespread human rights abuses (Okeke, 2019).

Osimen, Ayankoya, and Udoh (2023) believe that IPOB was founded as a platform for

advocating for the rights of the Igbo people and promoting their cultural identity. IPOB's activities gained momentum in 2015, following the election of President Muhammadu Buhari, who many of the Igbo's perceived being hostile to their interests. The group went on to organize protests and rallies calling for Biafran independence, which were met with a heavy-handed response from the Nigerian government. Opinions on IPOB and its activities vary widely. Supporters view IPOB as a legitimate movement fighting for the rights and self-determination of the Igbo people, while critics argue that secession is not a viable solution and could lead to further fragmentation and conflict within Nigeria (Okeke et al, 2020). The map presented in figure 1 and 2 shows the one Nigeria and the part that agitates for breakaway:
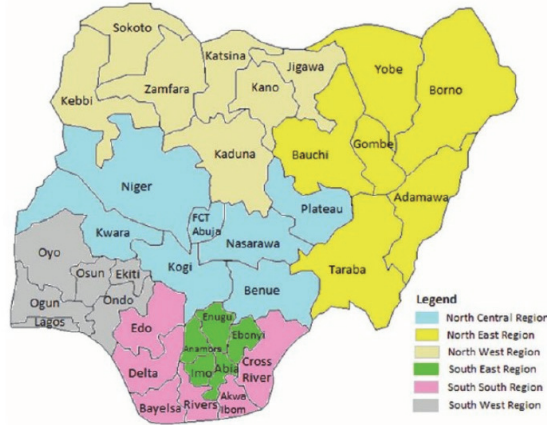

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing all the thirty-six (36) states and their regions.
Source: Gayawan, Arogundade, and Adebayo, (2014)

The map in figure 1 shows Nigeria as a vast and populated nation. Nigeria is a country known for its diversity of cultures and ethnicities. It is separated into one Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) and thirty-six states. Nigeria's topography is made up of a range of environments, from plateaus and savannas to coastal regions and rainforests. Large cities are important hubs for the economy and culture. Examples of these include Lagos, Abuja, and Kano. Nigeria has experienced difficulties, such as problems with security, corruption, and governance. Secessionist agitation for self-determination championed by IPOB has remained a challenge for Nigeria with high-level suppression from the Nigeria Federal government and worsening human insecurity witnessed mostly in the Southeastern region.

Figure 2: A Map showing the proposed Territory of IPOB
Source: Ekolobaba (2023)

Figure 2 presents a Map of Biafra which has historically been linked to the 1967 attempt to break away from Nigeria, which sparked the Nigerian Civil War. The region that proclaimed independence and existed as a distinct state for a brief time during the civil war is represented on the map of Biafra. The war claimed a great deal of lives and had a long-lasting effect on the stability and unity of the nation. The Biafra issue is still delicate, with some in the area supporting national unity while others call for self-determination.

8. The Relationship between IPOB Secessionist Agitations and Human Security in Nigeria

Nwangwu (2023), opined that the South-East, was at one point the most peaceful region in Nigeria before becoming one of the breading grounds of insecurity in Nigeria, a change which occurred abruptly after 2021. This period was characterised by a heightened level of violence in the region around the IPOB and demonstrates the ties that the group and its activities has with human security in the nation if an entire region could go from one end of the peace scale to the other. The East has been riddled by a phenomena known as 'unknown gunmen' in public and journalistic circles. These individuals are essentially gunmen that are yet to be identified. In a policy brief by Friedrich-Elbert-Stiftung Nigeria (2021), the findings reveal that the number one conflict type in the south-eastern region of Nigeria falls under "unknown gunmen". The brief attributes the recent   prevalence of insecurity in the region to the rise in gunmen attacks, farmer-herder crisis, extra-judicial killings, domestic violence, cultism and communal clashes. Out of the 63 incidents recorded in the South-east, between January and May 2021, 53 were attacks by "unknown gunmen". Ikezue (2023), links the rise in the activities of the IPOB to other cases of human insecurity in the south-east, particularly the unknown gunmen phenomena and makes note of the suspicions surrounding the group of unidentified gunmen. He posits, said gunmen and IPOB members are believed to be the same.

We can see that the relationship between the secessionist agitations administered by the IPOB is reciprocal, that is to say, there are two ends that suffer the after effects of these agitations, the government and the members of the group/citizens. On that note, Akingbule & Parkinson (2021), highlighted an attack on government infrastructure by members of IPOB, on April 5, 2021, this included structures such as the Imo State Police Command and the Nigerian Correctional Centre, Owerri, freeing over 1800 detainees.

In a report published in 2016, Amnesty International described how the Nigerian security forces killed at least 40 unarmed people and injured more than 50 others during an operation that took place between May 29 and 30, 2016, ostensibly to stop IPOB members from marching in advance of Biafra commemoration events in Onitsha, Anambra State. According to the same investigation, Nigerian security personnel were implicated in the assassination of peaceful protesters and activists advocating for Biafra's independence. Based on findings from the European Asylum Support Office report, from 1 January to 30 April 2021, Imo State experienced 32 security incidents, including 14 battles, 1 incident of remote violence/explosions, 13 cases of violence against civilians, and 4 riots, resulting in 59 casualties.

Sahara Reporters, (2016), makes note of a number of human rights groups such as Amnesty International, the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), the Intersociety for Civil Liberties & Rule of Law, and Forum for Justice and Center for Human Rights & Peace Advocacy (CHRPA) have also documented cases of harassment, torture, inhumane and or degrading treatment, disappearances and abductions, as well as extra-judicial killings of suspected members of pro-Biafran separatist movements, primarily the IPOB. All these cases can be categorized under the area of Personal Security within the framework of human security. Personal security encompasses protection from physical violence, abuse, and violation of one's human rights, ensuring that individuals are free from fear, coercion, and intimidation (Gasper & Gómez, 2015).

9. Implications of IPOB Secessionist Agitations on Human Security in Nigeria

With the occurrence of secessionist agitations under the IPOB movement, the state of human security in Nigeria has been called to question. From the formation of the group in 2012 to the momentum the movement built with the arrest of its leader, Nnamdi kanu in 2015, human security in the country has worsened. Oluka (2022), cites the separatist movement of the Indigenous People of Biafra alongside the likes of ritual killings and the COVID 19 pandemic as part of a theme of factors undermining human security in the Nigeria. There are an array of ways security challenges in Nigeria can come out, be it, inter-communal, political or sectarian violence (Ibeanu et al, 2016). Violent and economic implications of IPOB Secessionist Agitations on Human Security in Nigeria will be taken into consideration for this study.

10. Violent Implications

Findings from Mark, Obi & Chibuzor (2022), reveal that following the arrest and trial of Nnamdi Kanu, protests erupted in several parts of the country. He further posits that these demonstrations were met with security force intervention, resulting in clashes and reported casualties and injuries alike. Numerous reports of protests, riots and clashes with law enforcement were recorded during this period, particularly in states like Anambra and Enugu which resulted to numerous casualties and no less than 129 wounded persons (Mark et al, 2022). Punishment is a strategy that can be used in handling conflict (Aluko, Apeloko, Chukwudi, and Paimo, 2023). This punishment strategy can spark up conflict among the people or affiliate groups.

The table below shows the unlawful arrests and extra-judicial killings of Pro-Biafran protesters by the Nigerian security agencies between 2015 and 2021.

Table 1: Pro-Biafran Agitators Killed and Arrested by Nigerian Security Agencies 2015-2021

YEAR	NUMBER ARRESTED	NUMBER KILLED
2015	56	43
2016	105	150
2017	246	98
2018	115	70
2019	53	60
2020	136	65
2021	187	102

Source: Udeh, Edeh, Obiagu, Madu & Agwu (2023)

The table above shows the number of killed and arrested pro-Biafran agitators within a seven-year span by Nigerian security agencies. Said killings and arrests were found to be unlawful in and of themselves according to the research.

The violence that comes about during the IPOB's arises similarly on both ends. According to Abubakar Malami, the former Attorney-General of the Federation, the Indigenous People of Biafra were responsible for the deaths of 175 security personnel and multiple high profile individuals within a span of months, that is, from October 2020 and June 2021. Out of the one hundred and seventy-five, 128 were policemen, 37 were military personnel and the last 10 were other security operatives (Ejekwonyilo, 2021). Malami alleged that the attacks were essentially instigated by Kanu through a radio programme of his conducted online, where he incited his supports to set flame to police stations and kill persons (Ayankoya and Osimen, 2023).

11. Economic Implications

One of the major threats to human security that the United Nations Human Development Report (1994), makes note of is in areas of the economy. Such a sector is vital to the state of a nation and in the case of Nigeria has seen adverse effects due to agitations. This can be majorly owed to the sit-at-home initiative operated by the the Indigenous People of Biafra. A form of civil disobedience which started firstly as a yearly event, to remember those who died in the Biafran war, which later became a tool of drawing attention to the perceived wrongful captivity of Nnamdi Kanu (Mark et al, 2022). The sit at home initiative makes it so that all commercial activities are put on hold every Monday of each week. The losses suffered as a result of the initiative have been estimated estimated to reach about 8 billion naira following the end of each Monday NACCIMA (2022). The Southeast geopolitical zone encompasses various commercial hubs such as Owerri, Aba, Enugu, and Onitsha. These zones contribute significantly to Nigeria's economy (Orugun & Nafiu, 2014). The likes of Abakiliki and Nnewi normally see an inflow of traders from other areas of the country but due to the interception of all economic activities by the initiative investors and investments alike have become significantly demoralized (Ekechukwu et al, 2022).

There are uniquely regional and national security repercussions of the Biafra independence movement, including the possibility that organising prospective demonstrators could increase armed conflict and exacerbate the current levels of insecurity. At the national level, ongoing pro-Biafra demonstrations have been shown to exacerbate already-existing security issues, like as Igbo attacks in Northern Nigeria and battles between Igbo communities and the Fulani herdsmen in the Southern region (Olayode, 2010). The government's response to the activities of the IPOB has been to organise crackdowns and security operations aimed at suppressing the group.

12. Findings

The proposition states that there is a significant relationship between secessionist agitations and human security in Nigeria. The data presented coincides with this proposition, indicating a clear connection between secessionist movements and various dimensions of human security. Instances of ethnic tensions, communal violence, displacement, economic disruption, and notably unknown gunmen are strongly correlated with secessionist agitations in Nigeria (Ibeanu et al, 2016). These findings emphasize the significant impact secessionist movements have on the overall human security situation in the country (Osimen, Olu-Owolabi, Apeloko, & Awogu-Maduagwu, 2023).

The data shows that secessionist agitations contribute to heightened ethnic tensions, leading to conflicts and a breakdown of social cohesion. Violent clashes between secessionist groups, security forces, and other ethnic communities further exacerbate the risk to human security, endangering the safety and well-being of individuals (Duerksen, 2021). The data also sheds light on concerns regarding the government's response to IPOB's agitations, with reports of human rights violations and excessive use of force. Such actions undermine human security by infringing upon individuals' rights and perpetuating an atmosphere of fear and distrust (Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim & Imhonopi, 2019). Leadership styles in every setting determines the output (Abasilim, Gberevbie, Osibanjo, 2019).

The second proposition states that the IPOB secessionist agitations have implications for human security in Nigeria. The data presented aligns with this proposition, emphasising the significant impact of IPOB's activities on various dimensions of human security in the state. IPOB's agitations have contributed to heightened ethnic tension and violence amongst the various tribes, thereby posing a direct threat to human security in Nigeria (Okeke & Osakwe, 2020). based on the data presented, the economic disruptions caused by IPOB's agitations intersect another element of human security. These disruptions include the loss of livelihoods, heightened poverty rate, and increased social unrest, all of which contribute to challenges bordering on human security. The data also sheds light on concerns regarding the government's response to IPOB's agitations, with reports of human rights violations and excessive use of force. Such actions undermine human security by

infringing upon individuals' rights and perpetuating an atmosphere of fear and distrust.

In addition, the spread of extremist ideologies among IPOB's supporters poses a long-term security challenge, with potential implications for human security in Nigeria. This radicalisation can fuel violence and destabilise communities, endangering the safety and well-being of individuals.

13. Summary of Findings

The findings of this research are presented below:

- The first proposition identifyy if there was an existing relationship between IPOB's secessionist agitations and human security in Nigeria. The proposition was substantiated by findings that proved evidence of the profound ties between IPOB agitations and human security in Nigeria. The agitations have resulted in instances of violence, loss of lives, and human rights abuses, posing a significant threat to the security and well-being of individuals as has been reported on by various hhuman rights groups such as the Amnesty International and Civil Liberties Organization (CLO).
- The second proposition was to examine the implications of IPOB's agitations on human security in Nigeria. The proposition was validated because of numerous occurrences whereby the movements' agitations had adverse effects on the state of human security in Nigeria. Two major dimensions of human security being disrupted that were examined were in the areas of violence and the economy. The findings explored in this study on the hit the economy has taken due to the agitations and the violence resulting from the groups' activities prove so.

Understanding the motivations behind IPOB's secessionist agitations is essential for comprehending their impact on human security in Nigeria. The resultant instability caused by IPOB's secessionist agitations has far-reaching consequences for human security. Heightened tensions, social unrest, and sporadic violence disrupt personal, economic, and community security, posing threats to the well-being and safety of individuals and communities (Mark et al, 2022).

Moreover, the implications extend beyond immediate security concerns, as these agitations foster divisions, hamper social cohesion, and undermine national unity. Such polarization hinders development efforts, obstructs collective goals, and adversely affects human security at various levels (Yerima et al., 2016).

The sit-at-home initiative, organized by IPOB as a form of protest, further compounds the challenges faced by Nigeria. While serving to voice grievances and exert pressure, it disrupts economic activities, hampers livelihoods, and aggravates socio-economic hardships. This disruption directly impacts economic security and the overall welfare of the population, this assertion is in line with the findings of Ekechukwu, Nwogu, & Emerho (2022). The secessionist agitations have strained the relationship between IPOB and the Nigerian government. The government's response, characterised by security crackdowns and arrests, has often led to human rights abuses and further escalated tensions (Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim & Imhonopi, 2019). In other words, conflict must be well managed in any society to ensure stability (Chidozie & Joshua, 2015).

Through the course of this study, it became evident that the secessionist agitations spearheaded by IPOB have had far-reaching consequences on the state of human security in Nigeria. The calls for an independent Biafran state have created social unrest, political instability, and violence, posing a significant threat to the safety and well-being of individuals across the country. This research delved into the underlying factors that fuel these agitations, including historical grievances, socio-economic disparities, and political marginalisation.

Additionally, the study shed light on the challenges faced by the Nigerian government and other pertinent actors in effectively responding to IPOB's activities. It highlighted the intricacies involved in striking a balance between preserving national unity and addressing the legitimate grievances of marginalized groups. This emphasizes the crucial need for a nuanced approach to achieve sustainable peace and security in the region.

This study is relevant because it reinforces discussions on the impact of IPOB proposes appropriate recommendations to authorities in curbing the effects of the agitations on Nigeria and provides valuable suggestions to government officials through its findings.

This study has been limited by imposing logistics and geographical constraints on the side of the researcher. There is limited quality data on the Indigenous People of Biafra's real activities. Further studies should capture Secessionists' agitations in the Diaspora and how that has influenced both the agitations at home and human security.

14. Conclusion

Through the course of this study, it became evident that the secessionist agitations spearheaded by IPOB have that belie and feeling of deprivation which has consequences of aggression as maintained by the relative deprivation theory. This has shown that IPOB agitations have had far-reaching consequences on the state of human security in Nigeria. The calls for an independent Biafran state have created social unrest, political instability, and violence, posing a significant threat to the safety and well-being of individuals across the country. This research delved into the underlying factors that fuel these agitations, including historical grievances, socio-economic disparities, and political marginalization.

Additionally, the study shed light on the challenges faced by the Nigerian government and other pertinent actors in effectively responding to IPOB's activities. It highlighted the intricacies involved in striking a balance between preserving national unity and addressing the legitimate grievances of marginalized groups. This emphasizes the crucial need for a nuanced approach to achieve sustainable peace and security in the region.

15. Recommendations

As is made evident in this research, the activities of the IPOB have taken a hit on human security in Nigeria. Based on this situation, several recommendations are proposed to address and curb the effects of IPOB secessionist agitations in the state:

- This research recommends facilitating open and constructive dialogue between the Nigerian government and representatives of IPOB to address the root causes of secessionist agitations. This inclusive approach can help alleviate tensions and pave the way for peaceful resolutions.
- This study recommends prioritising socio-economic development in regions that have experienced marginalisation and contribute to the grievances driving secessionist sentiments. Investing in infrastructure, job creation, and reducing inequality will address existing underlying grievances and foster a sense of inclusivity.
- This study suggests the promotion of national unity by ensuring equitable representation and participation of all ethnic groups in governance. By addressing perceptions of marginalisation and promoting inclusivity, the government can mitigate secessionist tendencies.
- This study recommends engaging civil society organizations and community leaders in peace building and reconciliation efforts. Their involvement can bridge divides and promote dialogue, ultimately contributing to long-term stability.
- This study suggests launching comprehensive public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the negative consequences of secessionist agitations on human security. This study recommends that through promoting accurate information and dispelling misinformation, these campaigns can foster national unity and discourage support for divisive movements.
- Lastly, the study further suggests seeking regional and international cooperation to address

the challenges posed by secessionist agitations. Engaging with neighbouring countries and international partners can provide avenues for assistance and collaboration in managing similar circumstances.

16. Policy Implications of the Study

- The study will direct policymakers to adopt policies that prioritize dialogue and negotiation over confrontational approaches in handling secessionist groups.
- Policy makers will understand more the need for improved human security and protection of human rights for all citizens, including those involved in secessionist movements.
- This study will make policymakers and researchers focus on identifying and addressing the underlying socio-economic and political grievances that fuel secessionist sentiments.
- The study enlightens the government and its policymakers on the need to de-militarize approaches to conflict resolution.
- Interest is created in the urgency of economic development in the region of the agitators to calm strayed nerves caused by different motivations.

17. Acknowledgements

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