



## Research Article

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# Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Agitation for Autonomy: The Implications for Nigeria's Unity and the Survival of the Igbo Nation

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## Abstract

*This article is set to discuss the continual agitation of IPOB for autonomy from the Nigerian state. The study uses data from a secondary source with content analysis as a methodology. Among other things, the paper examines reasons predisposing the agitation and implications of such an agitation on the unity of Nigeria and the survival of the Igbo nation. The study engages theories of secession to illustrate IPOB's agitation and presents strategies which could be used to actualize IPOB's ambition. In its concluding remarks, the study argued in favour of IPOB's position for self-government through a strong adherence to wisdom and strategies discussed, as against the open confrontation strategy, due to the posture of the Nigerian government which is not favourable towards the agitation.*

**Keywords:** Continual, agitation, autonomy, IPOB, implications, Nigeria and the Igbo Nation

## 1. Introduction

In a developing country such as Nigeria, the amalgamation of divergent ethnic groups into one entity could be a significant step towards national development due to the deposition of numerous mineral resources in large quantities in each region. Besides,

the literature has shown the existence of human resources and workforce assets in all spheres of human life in each region. Thus, the amalgamation would have provided an opportunity for Nigerians to pool their natural and human resources together for achieving national development. However, the events since the amalgamation has proved otherwise, which might have been responsible for agitation for secession from certain ethnic groups within Nigeria. Such ethnic groups might have perceived that the development of their regions is being jeopardized through marginalization and oppression, and be willing to seek liberation in order to pursue national development.

The term national development can be considered an effort to ensure overall development in all aspects of life. Thus, it goes beyond measuring development with pecuniary metrics and extends to the capability of a country to reduce or eliminate poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Seer, (1969) cited in Omonijo, Uwajeh & Anyaegbunam (2019). To reduce something means to lessen while eliminating connotes terminating something. Although the latter may not apply to this discourse, the former could, because the terms such as poverty, inequality, and unemployment used to describe development are social problems that are more or less integral parts of every society and have never been eradicated in any society since the inception of the human race, no matter the efforts put in place.

However, one noteworthy and undisputed point lies in the rate of poverty, inequality, and unemployment in human society. While the literature has confirmed its minimal rates in developed nations, it has frowned at its escalation in developing countries such as Nigeria (Singh & Chudasama, 2020). In that wise, it appears, that the rate of poverty, inequality and unemployment are not much of a concern to humanity in developed countries, but in developing countries. The concern is borne out of the large existence of natural and human resources which ought to have been used for national development but were squandered by the elite class. It, therefore, applies that poor governance must have contributed to the escalation of the trio of poverty, inequality and unemployment in developing societies.

The society itself is not the unit for analysis because it does not exist on its own; it owes its existence to several human beings occupying spaces in it. The interaction of human beings with the forces of nature within the spaces could go a long way in determining the rate of poverty, inequality and unemployment. In other words, when the rate of poverty, inequality and unemployment is relatively high, as often manifested in most developing countries, bad governance could be responsible. It shows that a group of individuals must have been hindering the smooth flow of administration for their selfish interests. As often exhibited by a group against other groups, the hindrance could be associated with domination and oppression and they are capable of threatening the question of the peaceful coexistence of multicultural societies.

Going by human nature, the subjugation of persons / ethnic groups/tribes/races predates history. It usually involves using one's advantageous position to oppress the less privileged. A clear case exists in the ancient slave trade and colonialism. Studies

have shown that the two horror experiences inflicted terror, agony and backwardness on African societies for several decades (Rodeney, 1972; Frank, 1969; Fanon, 1972). With that painful experience, one would have thought that Africans would have learned a good lesson and strive to reconstruct their countries to attain sustainable development with their abundance of natural endowments. However, events since independence in each country across Africa have proved otherwise (Crocker, 2019).

Concerning Nigeria, the negative implication of colonialism is historic. It resulted in the amalgamation of different tribes and ethnic groups for the benefit of the colonialists without any regard for the differences and cultural backgrounds of each ethnic group. Nigerian citizens were never permitted to negotiate the terms and conditions to uphold the amalgamation before its existence. Consequently, various terms that would have been able to guide the togetherness were not instituted and defined. Therefore, the amalgamation could be described as a loose end and a deceptive unification carefully orchestrated by the British to foster her selfish ambition.

The Nigerian elites who succeeded the colonialists had the opportunity to rebuild Nigeria through restructuring but they failed to focus on that vital issue that would have helped in shaping Nigeria's future. Thus, the question of restructuring Nigeria has remained a mirage to date because each time scholars, technocrats and politicians present restructuring agenda it hits a brick wall. Hence, it could be averred that the Nigerian elites at independence were stooges of the colonialists who did not merit the position of leadership but were ill-favoured to protect the interests of the colonialists. The bestowed position of leadership also accorded the elites an opportunity to satisfy their selfish interests (looting the resources of the state) (Burns, 1964; Anglin, 1965).

Although across the world, studies have shown that cheating is a regular phenomenon, mainly between the powerful and the less powerful, privileged and less privileged (Rodeney 1972; Frank, 1969; Fanon, 1972), but strategies are usually designed by the lessprivileged who is wiser to defeat the swindler (cheater) without lives and valuable property. However, events in Africa over the years have proved otherwise. Thus, instead of the elites engaging the weapon of wisdom to resolve several problems confronting Africa, including a failed political system, poverty and economic reliance on natural resources and ethnolinguistic fragmentation, marginalisation, and ethnicity. They usually resort to war, as evident in one hundred and sixty-one African countries between 1960 and 1999 (Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2002). Probably, African elites have forgotten that every war in history is a bloody affair with sorrow, pains, regret and other negative implications to contend with by the survivals.

The Nigerian civil war is a case in point. Its emergence has been attributed to cheating, domination and oppression of other ethnic groups, most especially the Igbos in the southeast by the Hausa/Fulani oligarchy in several articles (Nafziger, 1972 & Onyemelukwe-Waziri, 2017). Further to that, the implications of the war have been well illustrated in academic presentations since the end of the war (Akresh, Bhalotra, Leone & Osili 2017). Despite its negative implications, the southeast geopolitical zone of

Nigeria keeps requesting self-autonomy. Authors such as Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim and Imhonopi (2019) have examined the agitation and the reactions of the Federal Government of Nigeria against it. Also, Gberevbie Abasilim and Imonopi, (2019) discussed the implications it portends on Nigeria's political stability. However, the article fails to discuss Igbos demonstration of patriotism for one Nigeria in the past and its replacement with marginalization in the contemporary. The study also failed to look at the implications of the agitation on Nigeria's unity and the survival of the Igbo nation. It is on these accounts that the present article was considered. It intends to fill the gaps in knowledge in the article of Gberevbie, Abasilim and Imonopi, (2019) which might have not been hitherto addressed in academic literature.

The paper is subdivided into three major sections namely, the introduction, literature review, methodology, and concluding remarks.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Examination of Research on Autonomy*

The concept of autonomy has featured prominently in several social, behavioural, and management sciences and humanities disciplines, with a profound impact on governance and liberty among humanity. Although scholars in these spheres of life employ different perspectives, it could be observed that each of them aims at one thing—freedom from marginalisation and oppression towards a better way of life.

For Carruthers (1994), autonomy in social sciences has been a vital and persistent subject of concern. This can be attributed to the focus of these disciplines hinging on human beings and how they can make the most of their environments and available resources, which are usually in a state of contention for a better living. Therefore, to ensure autonomy, human beings desire independence for decision-making and implementing such decisions to favour the general public and not a section of the society Skocpol (1985). Contention between a section and the general public has been a bone of contention in many societies, this makes the subject of autonomy essential. Contrary to this, developmental psychologists argue that autonomy is the ability to make an informed and uncoerced decision. At the same time, scholars of human resources contend that it is a relatively high level of discretion granted to workers in work settings in carrying out their daily duties. The purpose of such discretion is to bestow a sense of responsibility for workers to perform satisfactorily at work without being forced.

Similarly, economists such as Smith (1976) argue in favour of the autonomy of government policies because of the insulating interests of the state from the hand of a section. Thus, government policies will be corrupted to favour a set of business persons without autonomy rather than the general public's interest. Similarly, Schumpeter (1950) emphasizes the expediency of autonomy to protect democracy.

In law, autonomy is a fundamental human right toward liberty (Marshall, 2009). The concept is related to The Universal Declaration of Human rights of 1948, which states that autonomy is the legal protection or self-determination in article 22(52), concurs with Griffioen (2010), who argues that self-determination is the right of human beings. Regarding the autonomy of indigenous people, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights via the international law specifies Human rights for indigenous persons via its 3<sup>rd</sup> article by granting them a right to self-determination. This means such persons are at liberty to determine their political standing and also be responsible for improving their social, economic and cultural affairs, which are in line with the definition of the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (1828), which posits that autonomy is the quality or a state of having self-government or having a right to self-government is considered.

Concerning the agitation for autonomy from the Nigerian state by the IPOB, one view of autonomy as the right to self-governance, which is the expectation of individuals, a group of people or an ethnic group if their geographical interests become jeopardized. From the perspectives presented above, autonomy has to do with the protection of general interest and not the interest of a given section in the conglomeration of many ethnic groups. Since the end of the Nigerian civil war, agitations for restructuring Nigeria to reflect true federalism in the literature have not produced any positive response from the government-controlled Hausa-Fulani hegemony. Even though promises made to rehabilitate the eastern region were not fulfilled, the Igbo nation continues to witness a high level of marginalization politically and economically (Osaretin,2019).

Given the idea of an influential German Philosopher in the era of enlightenment, Immanuel Kant, 1724- 1804, the term autonomy is considered under three themes considering contemporary ethics. The first has to do with the right of people to make decisions concerning their lives without any intervention from other persons. The 2nd entails the ability to make such decisions through personal independence of mind after personal thinking, and lastly, the ideal way of living a life of independence. Oliver (2013) considers autonomy as the moral right of people or their capacity to think and make decisions for themselves and have some degree of control or power over the events that unfold around their lives. The call for self-autonomy is not a crime; it should be treated with the referendum. It is a matter of inviting the representatives of the ethnic groups to a round table conference to decide if they want independence or to be part of Nigeria.

However, it could be observed that efforts put in place to ensure a round table conference to decide referendum have never been successful. This might have been responsible for the IPOB's continual agitation for secession.

## *2.2 Examination of Research on Secession*

The term secession could be viewed as the action of formally withdrawing membership from a federation or a body, especially a political state with the aim of forming a new

and independent state. The next section of this article intends to present instances of such withdrawal and the emergence of separate states globally.

### 2.2.1 Overview of Secession of Selected Countries Globally

Over the years, literature has shown cases of countries that withdrew their membership from larger entities (Birhanu, 2017). Such pieces of literature have demonstrated their actualization through violent or peaceful resolutions. While the violent aspect often results in war and creates tension for humanity, especially in African countries, the peaceful aspect is a catalyst for healthy competition for human development (Birhanu, 2017). The cases of Malaysia and Singapore, Sweden and Norway, Denmark and Iceland are points of reference (Soon, 1970). It shows the high level of literacy, maturity, and positive mentality of the elite class in such countries.

**Table 1:** The List of Countries that have Successfully Seceded and Years of Secession

S/N	Larger Countries	Newly Created Countries or seceded countries	Year
1	United Kingdom	USA	1776
2	USA	Vermont	1777
3	Netherland	Belgium	1830
4	UK	Canada	1861
5	Denmark	Iceland	1905
6	Sweden	Norway	1905
7	Russia	Finland	1917
8	United Kingdom	Iceland	1921
9	The U.K.	South Africa	1934
6	British India Dominion	India and Pakistan	1947
7	Denmark	Iceland	1944
8	United Arab Republic	Syria	1961
9	Malaysia	Singapore	1965
10	Pakistan.	Bangladesh	1971
11	USSR	15 republics	1991
12	USA	Palau (A Pacific Island)	1994
13	Ethiopian	Eritrea	1993
14	Sudan	Secession	2011
15	Europe	U.K.	2019

**Source:** Researchers compilation, 2022

Also, it could demonstrate the concern of the elite class for the plights of others who want to secede from their countries. Such qualities are relatively lacking among the elites in most developing countries, such as Nigeria. Within the country, it appears the obvious negative religious, cultural, economic and political differences that have sparked off violence, destruction of human lives and property do not make any meaning to them. For instance, the menace of religious intolerance Atoi and Kume, (2022) which has led to the killing of Christians in the North by the Islamic fanatics is a clear case in point.

Also, several cultural and political genocides against the Igbos by the Hausa /Fulanis are another point of reference. The genocide could be regarded as a lack of cultural resilience of the Hausa race for other tribes. Further to that, the contribution of some ethnic groups to oil, the mainstay of the Nigerian economy and unequal distribution of the resources by the elite class are other evidences of lack of concern for the followers. The implication is that individuals and communities in Nigeria have no capacity to deal with and overcome adversity based on individual characteristics and the larger social-cultural factors (Clauss-Ehlers, 2010). If the elite class actually care about the minority groups, she ought to have engaged the obvious differences as a concern to champion the secession of each tribe from Nigeria. Probably, their selfish economic and political interests within Nigeria could be responsible.

Therefore, the incompatibility of diverse entities that constitute a nation could be traced to agitation for secession, especially in developing countries. Also, the tendency of the major ethnic group to dominate the minority groups could be another severe point to be reckoned with in the secession bids of some ethnic groups in developing countries such as Nigeria.

### *2.2.2 Overview of Secession in Nigeria*

Literature has shown different cases of threats to secede in Nigeria. The prominent among them being the threat issued by the Huasa/Fulani in 1950, towards the end of colonialism. When it became clear that the country would become independent. Northern Muslim politicians of Hausa / Fulani origin were afraid of being dominated by the better educated and economically advanced Christians in the south. Thus, they threatened to secede if their region did not receive a high degree of autonomy. The threat worked out and the colonial administration, fearing a breakup of the country, granted them major concessions and also assisted them in gaining control of the central government at independence in 1960 (Ogunmupe, 2021). However, the present article presents the transition of threat to real secession in the succeeding section.

#### *2.2.2.1 Kaima Declaration*

The first transition of threats to actual secession took place on February 23, 1966, when the late Isaac Adaka Boro, an indigene of Kaima in Bayelsa State, declared the secession of the Niger Delta (Kobo, 2020). He aimed to set indigenes of the Niger Delta free from the marginalization in the old Eastern Region and Nigeria. Consequently, he blazed the trail of militarism and activism in the Niger Delta region through his Kaima Declaration (Kobo, 2020). Since then, it appears the region is yet to be rid of militarism; instead, the menace is spreading across other geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

However, late Major General Aguiyi Ironsi reacted against the Kaima declaration with military action enforced by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu. Consequently, Major Isaac

Boro was arrested while 150 members of his group were killed. He was charged to court for a treasonable felony and was convicted and sentenced to death by hanging by the Supreme Court of Nigeria in December 1966.

Luckily for Major Isaac Boro, before his date of execution, a revenge coup took place on July 29 by a group of Northern officers and the regime of Major General Aguiyi Ironsi was toppled. The new head of State, Major General Yakubu Gowon, upon resumption of office, in his wisdom, granted Major Isaac Adaka Boro a state pardon (Kobo, 2020). Consequently, he was released unconditionally and reinstated into the Nigerian army with his previous status.

### *2.2.2.2 Biafra Declaration*

After the counter coup of 1966, the Nigerian military was enmeshed in violence and disagreement. Attempts, national and international to settle the leadership tussle ended in a fiasco. Thus, Boko (2020) reported that the late Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu declared the secession of the Biafra Republic from Nigeria on May 30, 1967. Boko, (2020) argues further that the action led to a bloody civil war that greatly affected the development of Nigeria in all ramifications between July 6, 1967, and January 15, 1970. After an intense battle, Boko (2020) contends that the Biafran army captured Midwest and was advancing to Lagos for another conquest but was interceded at Ore. It was said that the battle was fierce to warrant the saying in Yoruba land till date: “oleku, ija ore” meaning very tough, the battle at Ore. However, with the Federal government’s introduction of food blockage and its strong enforcement, the Biafrans efforts in forging ahead were weakened and devastated. It was also alleged that it assisted the amphibious landings by the Nigerian marines headed by Major Isaac Adaka Boro to capture the Niger Delta cities of Bonny, Okrika and Port Harcourt on 26 July 1967. Major Isaac Boro, an indigene of Niger Delta, being familiar with waterways, led the Nigerian troop to the southeast. One would have reasoned that, Major Isaac Boro would have used the opportunity to redeclare Niger Delta Republic but he didn't. Instead, he threw his weight behind the regime of Major General Yakubu Gowon for one Nigeria. The loyalty and allegiance of major Isaac Boro to the Gowon administration could be attributed to the prerogative of mercy extended to him by his administration by converting his death sentence to unconditional freedom. Also, it could be used to describe his anger for his persecution for declaring secession by the Ironsi’s regime. Further to that, it could be used to explain a spirit of retribution for Major General Odumegwu Ojukwu for killing his troop, dragged him from the Niger Delta to Lagos in rags and thereby quenched his secession bid and wanting to declare secession for his region (southeast) and included his own region (Niger Delta) in the secession bid without any consultation with him and his people. The Bonny landing of July 1967 was said to have been hailed as the first brilliant operation to be carried out successfully in an underdeveloped world. Via the strategy of food blockage, the situation became tougher for the Biafrans and resulted in the capitulation of Enugu in October 1967. It was said that



the strategy equally empowered the Nigerian army to capture Port Harcourt and Aba in May 19, 1968 and subsequently the surrender of the Biafran army to the Federal government of Nigeria on January 15, 1970.

After the war, a crucial rhetorical effort to heal wounds was declared by Major General Gowon. It means 'No Victor No Vanquish' (Kobo, 2020) and the promise of rehabilitating the Biafrans. However, events since then have shown otherwise, with the federal government demonstrating the 'victor rhetoric' over the Biafrans with evidence of marginalization as follows:

a. Distribution of contributions to oil production and allocation

**Table 2:** Geopolitical Zones Contributions to oil production and Allocation of Resources

SN	Geo-Political Zones	Contributions	Ranking	Allocations	Ranking
1	North Central	0%	4th	20%	1st
2	North East	0%	4th	16%	2nd
3	North West	0%	4th	21%	3rd
4	South West	3.97%	3rd	16%	4th
5	South East	25.07%	2nd	11%	6th
6	South-South	70.64%	1st	15%	5th

**Source:** Asari, (2018) cited in Omonijo, Uwajeh & Anyaegbunam, (2019).

**Table ii** shows the high level of injustice in the allocation of oil resources against the Igbos. From Table i, it is evident that the South-South, South-East and South-West are more endowed than the remaining three geopolitical zones and therefore contribute positively to the nation's resources. However, the three regions that contributed substantially to the resources are poorly rewarded with meager allocations. The worst is the South-South which contributes 70.64% but earns 15% in allocation. This schema has been in practice for many years because persons from the regions that contribute nothing are usually in control of political power.

b. Distribution of membership of the House of Representative

**Table 3:** Distribution of House of Representative Members

S.N.	Region	States	Number of Members	Total @ Regional Level
1	North Central	Benue Kogi Kwara Nassarawa Plateau Niger	11	49
			9	
			6	
			5	
			8	
			10	
2	North East	Adamawa Bauchi Borno Gombe Taraba Yobe	8	48
			12	
			10	
			6	
			6	
		6		

S.N.	Region	States	Number of Members	Total @ Regional Level
3	North West		24	92
			16	
		Kano Kaduna Jigawa Katsina Kebbi Sokoto	11	
		Zamfara	15	
			8	
			11	
			7	
4	South West		6	71
			24	
		Ekiti Lagos Ogun Ondo Oyo	9	
		Osun	9	
			14	
			9	
5	South East		10	43
			8	
		Imo Abia Ebonyi Anambra	6	
		Enugu	11	
			8	
6	South-South		10	55
			5	
		Akwa Ibom Bayelsa Cross River Delta	8	
		Edo Rivers	10	
			9	
			13	
		<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>360</b>

Source: Omono, Uwajeh & Anyaegbunam, (2019).

Similarly, **Table iii** further presents another glaring pathetic situation of marginalization of the Igbos and other ethnic groups regarding the distribution of house of representative membership. While North-Central has 49 members, North East has, and North West has 48 and 92. Whereas South West and South-South have 71 and 55 respectively, South East has 43 members, which is the least.

Right from the inception, studies have shown that the census that generates the figure that determine membership representation is often manipulated to favour the North and detriment of other ethnic groups (Prothero, 1956; Okolo, 1999). It is unfortunate to realise that the status quo is yet to be corrected in contemporary times.

#### c. Distribution of the Nigerian Head of State/Presidents

**Table 4:** Distribution of the Nigerian Head of State/Presidents

SN	Names	Periods	Regions	Total F	Total Frequency Per Region
1	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa	October 1 <sup>st</sup> 1963- 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan. 966	North East	1 (Once)	1
2	General Yakubu Gowon	1 <sup>st</sup> of Aug. 1966- 29 <sup>th</sup> of July 1975	North-Central	3 (trice)	1
3	General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida	27 <sup>th</sup> of Aug.1985- 8 <sup>th</sup> of June 1998- 29 <sup>th</sup> of	North-Central		2
4	General Abdulsalami Abubakar	8 <sup>th</sup> of June 1998- 29 <sup>th</sup> of May 1999	North-Central		3
5	Late Major General Murtala Ramat Muhammed GCFR	30 <sup>th</sup> of July 1975 – 13 <sup>th</sup> of February 1976	North-West	7 times	1
6	Late Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari GCFR	1 <sup>st</sup> of Oct. 1979 – 31 <sup>st</sup> of Dec. 1983	North-West		2
7	Major General Muhammadu Buhari GCFR	31 <sup>st</sup> of Dec. 1983 – 27 <sup>th</sup> of Aug. 1985	North-West		3
8	Umaru Musa Yar'Adua	29 <sup>th</sup> of May 2007-5 <sup>th</sup> of May 2010	North-West		4
9	Major General Sani Abacha	17 <sup>th</sup> of Nov. 1993-8 <sup>th</sup> of Jun, 1998	North-West		5
10	Alhaji Shehu Shagari	October 1, 1979-31 <sup>st</sup> of Dec. 1983	North-West		6
11	Major General Muhammadu Buhari GCFR	29 <sup>th</sup> of May 2015 to date,	North-West		7

SN	Names	Periods	Regions	Total F	Total Frequency Per Region
12	Major General Olusegun Obasanjo	February 13 <sup>th</sup> of Feb. 1976-1 <sup>st</sup> of Oct. 1979	South-West	3 (trice)	1
13	Late Chief Ernest Shonekan	August 26, 1993-17 <sup>th</sup> of Nov. 1993	South-West		2
14	Dr. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	29 <sup>th</sup> of May 1999-29 <sup>th</sup> of May 2007	South-West		3
15	Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	May 5, 2010-29 <sup>th</sup> of May 2015	South-South	1 (once)	1
16	Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi	16 <sup>th</sup> of Jan. 1966-29 <sup>th</sup> of Jul. 1966	South-East	1 (once)	1

**Source:** Researchers Compilation, (2022)

As indicated in **Table iv**, North-West dominated the presidency since 1960. The geopolitical zone has produced president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria six (7) times. This is followed by two geopolitical zones (North-Central and South-West) that have produced presidents three times each. Lastly, North East, South-South and southeast have been able to produce the president once. Out of the last three geopolitical zones, the case of the South-East is more pathetic because indigenes of the zone represent the third-largest population in Nigeria. In contrast, the North-East is not pathetic because the zone is considered a part of the Northern region.

**d. Distribution of states**

**Table 5:** Geopolitical Zones, No. of States, Percentage and Rank

S.N.	Geopolitical Zones	No. of States	%	Ranking
1	North Central	6 excluding the FCT	16.6	2nd
2	North East	6	16.6	2nd
3	North West	7	19.4	1st
4	South West	6	16.6	2nd
5	South East	5	13.8	3rd
6	South-South	6	16.6	2nd
	Total	36	100	

**Source:** Itumo, Nwobashi and Offor, (2018) and expanded by the researchers, (2020)

**Table v** shows the distribution of states per geopolitical zone in Nigeria's North-East. The North-West is ranked best with seven states while four geopolitical zones-the south-south, south-west, north-east and north-central were ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with six states. The southeast is ranked last with five states, which is somehow pathetic going by the population of the people in the zone (the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria).

**e. Distribution of Local Government**

**Table 6:** Geopolitical Zones, Local Government, Percentage and Rank

S.N.	Geopolitical Zones	No. of L. G	%	Ranking
1	North Central	112		5th
2	North East	113		4th
3	North West	186		1st
4	South West	137		2nd
5	South East	95		6th
6	South-South	125		3rd
		774		

**Source:** Itumo, Nwobashi and Offor, (2018) and expanded by the researchers, (2020)

**Table vi** presents geopolitical zones, the number of local government areas and rank. While the north-west is ranked best with one hundred and eighty-six, the south-west was ranked second with one hundred and thirty-seven. South-south, north-east and north-central were ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> (one twenty-five), 4<sup>th</sup> (one hundred and thirteen) and 5<sup>th</sup> (one hundred and twelve), respectively. Lastly, the southeast was ranked last with ninety-five.

f. Distribution of budgets

**Table 7:** Geopolitical Zones, Budgets, Percentage and Rank in 2016

S.N.	Geopolitical Zones	Budgets	%	Ranking
1	North-Central	53.87b	18.8	2nd
2	North-East	46.69b	16.3	4th
3	North-West	73.7b	25.7	1st
4	South-West	48.97b	17.1	3rd
5	South-East	28.22	09.8	6th
6	South-South	35.31b	12.3	5th
		286.76b		

**Source:** Itumo, Nwobashi and Offor, (2018) and expanded by the researchers, (2020)

**Table vii** presents the geopolitical zones of Nigeria with budget allocation in 2016 with their percentages and ranks. The north-west was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with 25.7% budget while the north-central was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with 18.8%. South-west, north-east and southeast were ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> with 17.1%, 16.3% and 12.3%, respectively. Lastly, the south-east was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> with 09.8%. It is not comforting to see south-south and south-east that contribute more to the resources of Nigeria ranked low in budget allocation while the north central and north east that contributes less were ranked higher. It goes to show the extent of marginalisation against the two geopolitical zones.

g. Distribution of appointment of Inspector General of Police

**Table 8:** Geopolitical Zones, Inspector General of police since 1964 -2018

S.N.	Geopolitical Zones	I.G.	Ranking
1	North-Central	1	2nd
2	North-East	5	1st
3	North-West	5 times	1st
4	South-West	5	1st
5	South-East	1	2nd
6	South-South	5	1st

**Source:** Itumo, Nwobashi and Offor, (2018) and expanded by the researchers, (2020)

**Table viii** presents the geopolitical zones of Nigeria and the appointment of the

inspector general of police. While North-east, north-west, south-west, and south-south had representatives five times, each north-central and southeast had a representative once. This means that Ndigbos have been grossly marginalized in the security formation of Nigeria. This appointment could be crucial in posting security agents across the country. A zone that is poorly represented at the apex may likely be poorly represented in the posting of police officers and the zone may experience insecurity.

### 3. Theoretical Insights

In the past and in recent times, some theories have presented a systematic analysis of the sudden rise of quest for succession in many countries globally. Some of such countries are indicated in Table i. Based on the information in Table I, and other literature such countries were able to succeed in securing succession Violi, (2019). Also, it is evident that such countries have developed. However, experiences in Africa, most especially in Nigeria has been different with cases of denial of secession bids. Most of such countries, Nigeria inclusive have experienced bloody civil war that undermine national and regional advancement. Thus, the right to secede is a volatile topic in international and constitutional law (Violi, 2019). Over the years, supporters and antagonists of the right to secede have been presenting a plethora of different arguments for and against the topic and yet the debate has never been concluded and the probability of it been concluded before the entire world fads away, is not bright, judging from complex contemporary issues which may never be resolved.

Central to secession theories is the view that issues surrounding secession are located in the political theories and practices in human society. For Buchanan, (1991 and 1997), however, the following theories are crucial to understanding secession.

- a. Primary right
- b. Remedial Right;
- c. Plebiscitary;
- d. Ascriptives;
- e. Situating theories of secession within theories of territory and territorial justice;  
and
- f. Narrowly versus widely institutional theories.

For the purpose of this paper however, the primary and remedial right theory are considered appropriate based on the right to secede and injustice being perpetuated against the group wanting to secede.

#### 3.1 Primary Right Theories

Protagonists of these theories assert that ethnic groups have a general right to secede if they are convinced it portends the most feasible way of existence (Beran, 1987; Buchanan, 1991). However, the advocacy lies in the general rights of the people and

strongly against unilateral right capable of violating other persons basic human rights.; Buchanan, (1991) and his supporters such as Seymour, (2007) therefore view secession justifiable and achievable through ascription or association which can be anchored via a democratic process by majority votes.

Further to the above, primary right theorists contend that some ethnic groups could seek secession unilaterally but it has to be done in the absence of injustice in the past. Therefore, the ground for demanding secession is not limited to the past injustice being experienced with the hope of providing remedy. According to Buchanan (2006), the rights can be discussed under ascriptive group theories and associative group theories. While the former is based on an intrinsic value possessed by a group seeking secession the latter illustrates intended penchant of appropriate percentage of the members of the group to create its own nation.

### *3.2 Remedial Right Theories*

Advocates of remedial right theories illustrate the need for succession, as the last resort against injustice being perpetuated against the aspiring secessionist group by the state (Beran, 1987). In that wise, these theorists perceive secession as a remedy to the high level of injustice being perpetuated against the group demanding a separate state. It is assumed that the right to secede, if granted, could enable the oppressed group to amend the evil perpetuated against it. Remedial right theories also states that the right to disaffiliate is applicable to a part of the citizen who occupy a section of the entire nation.

However, it could be noted that while primary right theories illustrate fundamental human right to life remedial aspect focus on the perceived injustice experienced by the separationists and hope for remedy. Given this, the right to what can be called rebellion or revolution is embedded in the former while the latter could be comprehended under the mainstream of normative theories of revolution, as illustrated by the great philosopher, John Locke which states that the people have the right to overthrow the government on the ground of human rights violation and inability to reach a peace accord (Buchanan, 1998).

In-spite of this line of demarcation, the two theories are very relevant to IPOB's agitation for self autonomy on the following grounds;

- a. International law supports right to life, right to be free and equal. By this, IPOB is entitled to secession but it has to be achieved through ascription and association, better put a democratic process;
- b. To seek remedy for the high level of marginalization against the Igbos as illustrated previously in this paper. If the right to secede is granted, the probability of Igbos emerging a world power may be very bright going by the strong drive often display towards inventions and innovations and as well as entrepreneurship which are considered catalyst for national development by

scholars of entrepreneurship and development. The remedy could be used to support the past and present justice melted out at Igbos and it shows the inability of the federal government to run a federation void of domination of one ethnic group;

- c. The culture of Igbos is extremely different from other ethnic groups in Nigeria. In fact, it could be observed that the nation is characterized by cultural diversities and that no ethnic group has grown to acquire maturity needed to manage such diversities in Nigeria, just like the United States of America; and
- d. Igbos occupy a unique section, the southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria, and therefore entitle to secession. Although some Igbo speaking persons are located in the south-south geopolitical zone, such as Agbor but the majority of them reside in a particular location that support the argument of these theorists.

Although, the above theories are very relevant to the course of IPOB but an aspect of the remedial right theories which is hinged on revolution, if the peace accord could not be secured could be criticised. This is because war is a bloody business and the bloodiest usually carry the day with horrible strategies that undermine human race. It is not sure if someone that has witnessed a war will ever suggest it as the last resort for liberation. At all cost bloodbath should be avoided. In spite of this, these theories provide the platform for explaining the IPOB's agitation.

#### **4. Demonstration of Patriotism towards the Unity of Nigeria by the Igbos Previously**

According to Omiyale (2019), when Ahmadu Bello described the amalgamation of Nigeria as a mistake and that it should be corrected to prevent unstoppable bloodshed and a failed country, Nnamdi Azikiwe, a great nationalist of Igbo extraction, denounced Ahmadu Bello's ideas and termed him an ethnic champion nursing a sectional agenda against the unity of Nigeria. The literature also shows that when the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo described the amalgamation of Nigeria as "a mere geographical expression not qualified to be called a country, let alone a nation" and advocated restructuring of Nigeria as a strictly federal state to enable each tribe to enjoy autonomy - freedom from being dominated by a single tribe, if the amalgamation could not be reversed, but late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe also condemned the expression and the advice, and stated that the Unity of Nigeria was non-negotiable (Omiyale, 2019).

In addition to the above, Omiyale (2019) states that after moving the motion for independence in 1953, the great nationalist, Chief Anthony Enahoro proposed a secession clause in the future constitution of Nigeria to give legal backing for any tribe to peacefully exit the forced union if it feels marginalized in the future. Such provision in the Nigerian constitution would instill in all Nigeria's future leaders the fear of the consequences of misgovernance but Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, rose against him in the parliament and labelled him an agent of disunity and an enemy of Nigeria. In spite of this confrontation, Omiyale (2019) submits that late Chief Obafemi Awolowo proceeded

to strongly advocate the inclusion of secession clause in the constitution but Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe resisted and instigated the colonial authorities to threaten him and Enahoro with charges of a treasonable felony if they did not stop proposing a secession clause for the future constitution

In the same line of thought with Ahmadu Bello, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Anthony Enahoro, Omiyale, (2019) states that Tafawa Balewa, at a public lecture speech described Nigeria a British experiment and Nigeria's unity a British intention which Nigerians do not believe in but Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe condemned his submission and saw no reason why such description should be accorded to Nigeria.

Another case of patriotism towards Nigeria was recorded when Major Isaac Boro declared secession of the present Niger Delta from Nigeria. Omiyale, (2019) reported that the then military Head of State, Aguiyi Ironsi, an Igbo man, ordered Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, another Igbo military officer of Igbo extraction to arrest him for prosecution. In a swift reaction, Colonel Ojukwu went all out against Isaac Adaka Boro with federal military might and within 12 fighting days, he killed 150 of Isaac Boro's soldiers, arrested him, stripped him naked, and drove him to Lagos (Omiyale, 2019). Major Isaac Boro was charged to court and convicted of a treasonable felon, and consequently, he was sentenced to death by hanging in December 1966 (Omiyale, 2019). Afterwards, Ironsi immediately promulgated the Anti-secession Decree making the mere mention of secession from Nigeria a punishable offence of death by hanging Omiyale, (2019).

## **5. Insights into the Marginalisation of Igbos**

One may ask, what could have been responsible for the marginalization of Igbos to a greater extent? The tribe once noted for the unity of Nigeria by constantly resisting secession bids or propositions in the past. In response to this question, could it be associated with the distribution of the political appointments in the First Republic, which greatly favoured the Igbos serves? (see Table vx). Alternatively, could it be attributed to the boasting of late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1945 that "From all indications, the god of us Igbos have destined us to rule the whole of Africa" as reported by Udom, (2022). Can one also reason along with the boasting of Oscar Onyemma in 1949 that "It is getting clearer each day that Igbo domination of Nigeria is just a question of time" as reported by (Udom, 2022)? The probability of such boasting being responsible could be bright, because such boasting are constantly coming from prominent elites from the southeast. Perhaps, the boastings have sent a signal to the Northern oligarchy that Igbo domination in Nigeria was inevitable and should be curtailed by hiding their access to sensitive areas of governance in order to continually remain in power.



**Table 9:** Overview of Political appointments in the first republic

S/N	Appointments	Region
1	Chief of Army Staff	South-east
2	Chief of Naval Staff	South-east
3	I.G. of Police	South-east
4	Chief of Defence Staff	South-east
5	Internal Affairs Minister	South-east
6	Education Minister	South-east
7	Parliament President	South-east
8	Unilag and U.I. V.C.s	South-east

**Source:** Authors compilation, (2022)

In addition to the above, could the marginalization of Igbos be attributed to the distribution of casualties in the first coup, as indicated in Table xv and the events in the wake of the first coup that led to the death of top Northern leaders?

**Table 10:** The Distribution of the Most Senior Officers in the First Republic and casualties in the First Coup

S/N	Regions	No. of Officers	Causalities
1	South-East,	37	None
2	South-West	10	2
3	North	8	All

**Source:** Authors compilation, (2022)

The submission of Kobo (2020) gave credence to the preceding statement. The dominance of Igbo officers in the coup, coupled with the assassination of the top northern politicians and the transfer of power to an Igbo general, could raise the suspicion among northerners that the objective of the coup was to eliminate their leaders. Besides, the failure of General Ironsi to prosecute the coup plotters and the imposition of a unitary system of governance which Igbo politicians had sought at the time of independence as a way to gain political advantage and neutralize the hegemony of the North further enflamed the suspicion of an orchestrated effort to impose Igbo dominance over the rest of the country (Kobo, 2020).

## 6. The implications of the Continua's Agitation of IPOB on the Unity of Nigeria

The agitation might be a call for another bloody civil war considering

1. An instrument of surrender presented to the Nigerian government by Major General Phillip Effiong, the Biafran representative at the end of the civil war on January 14, 1970. The document states that the state of Biafra ceased to exist

- and ordered the immediate return of the people of the southeast to the Federal Republic of Nigeria Makinde, (2018).
2. The Unwillingness of the Nigerian government to allow a referendum which could allow each ethnic group to decide on secession.
  3. The Nigerian government turning a deaf ear to the agitation and its reaction against it with military actions;
  4. The refusal of the Nigerian government to restructure Nigeria to reflect true federalism as constantly demanded by other ethnic groups;
  5. The refusal of the Nigerian government headed by the Husa/Fulani Oligarchy to dialogue with IPOB members; instead, the group was banned and termed a terrorist organization
  6. Nigerian constitution disproves secession.

In addition to the above, the continual agitation of IPOB for autonomy could prompt other minority groups to begin to toe the same line of action against Nigeria. Presently, the people of the southwest have joined the bandwagon of ethnic groups requesting self-autonomy (Osahon, 2020). This could indicate that the Yoruba nation has lost interest and confidence in Nigeria's unity. If the Igbos and the Yorubas succeed in their self-determination bid, the probability of other ethnic groups following suit, most especially the Niger Delta and middle belt may not be ruled out and that could result in the total dissolution of Nigeria.

Besides, suppose the second and third largest ethnic groups, South West and South East, break away successfully from Nigeria, respectively, the stand of the minority groups within the newly created states could be a significant problem. In the southwest, such includes the people of Edo, while the southeast includes Abakaliki. The case of the south-south could be more complex because of the enmity between the Ijaws and Urobobos over the control of the oil-rich Warri. Considering the high rate of animosity between the two tribal groups, coming together under one nation could be practically impossible. Also, it could be challenging to determine if the minority groups in Edo, Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers states will come together to form one nation when in actual fact the Ijaw minority group in Ondo State has dissociated itself from Oduduwa Republic (Akpan, 2017; Osahon, 2020) while the people of Calabar, who represent the Efik kingdom and the people of Akwa Ibom have separated themselves from the proposed Republic of Biafra (Akpan, 2017).

Also, the desire of these minority groups to remain in Nigeria, considering the plan of the Hausa/Fulani to dominate the entire nation, could be difficult to ascertain. Further, the desire of such minority groups to declare their independence may not be ruled out, which means Nigeria may likely split into several independent states. However, the tendency of the newly created states wanting to wage war against the minorities in their regions for conquest and assimilation may not be underestimated, considering the natural endowments in those areas.

## 7. The Implications for the Survival of the Igbo Nation

As shown in previous studies, the primary occupation of Ndigbo constitutes business transactions, which has prompted them to spread across Nigeria in search of their daily bread (Orogun and Nafiu, 2014). Studies have shown that the presence of Igbos has been felt in the area of small-scale business in cities, towns, and villages across Nigeria with their investments estimated in major cities as shown below:

**Table 11:** The Worth of Igbo Investment, Locations and Authors

S/N.	Locations	Worth of Investment	Authors
1	Lagos	74% investment	Malinga, (2013)
		N300 trillion	Udegbe, (2013)
2	Abuja	N600 trillion	Udegbe, (2013)
3	Kano and Kaduna	N10 trillion	Udegbe, (2013)
4	Borno, Yobe and Adamawa	N5 trillion	Udegbe, (2013)
6	Jos	N15 trillion	Udegbe, (2013)

**Source:** Researchers Compilation, (2020)

The question then is what becomes of these investments in the North and their owners after secession? Judging from the annihilation of Igbos by the northerners since 1960, the probability of permitting Igbos to continue their businesses and everyday lives in northern states may be zero. In this scenario, two things may likely happen. Firstly, the owners who are Ndigbos may forfeit their investments and need to relocate to southern states. The huge loss and the pains of starting afresh in the present economic situation may not be very easy to bear.

Secondly, as a tribe that is business-oriented and spread across Nigeria in the pursuit of business, the restriction of Ndigbos to their geographical locations may hinder the growth of their businesses and human development capacity. Studies have shown the importance of customers in business transactions (Anuja, 2018) and that is why it has been considered the heartbeat of any establishment. Its importance is hinged on patronage for sales which could impact greatly on revenue generation, expansion of the business, personal and societal development. A great impact on revenue realized and income. It is obvious that most customers of Igbo traders are non-indigenes and spread across Nigeria any attempt to secede may likely limit the growth of business transaction and personal development.

## 8. Methods

An essentially qualitative method of data collection was adopted for the study. A secondary source of data collection was utilized. The data was generated from archival resources for content analyses.

### 8.1 Suggested Strategies for the Emancipation of Igbo Nation

From time immemorial, Stepan, (2005) cited in Violi, (2019) argues that federalism and secession have been considered as antithetical cases. This is because federalism is expected to preserve the unity between different constituent units. Thus, secession is viewed a failure of federalism, especially when the parent state is a federation, a former federation or a regionalised, decentralised state, and the new state is a former constituent unit (Sanjaume I Calvet, 2018) cited in Violi, (2019). This could be likened to Nigeria as a federation and it give credence to the continual agitation of IPOB for secession. However, the following strategies could facilitate its success:

1. Re-organisation of the entire Igbo race to resolve internal wrangling and inability to present a common front.
2. If a military action is to be considered a plan B, it should in conjunction with the west and middle belt for liberation of each of them. On no account should IPOB go to war with Nigeria again, all alone.
3. Drawing from what Osaghae, (1998) called 'cripple the giant' the IPOB could become victorious. It is more or less a strategy which the then National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) used to fight military imperialism to a standstill in Nigeria during the annulment on June 12, 1993, presidential election, assumed to have been won by late Chief Moshood Abiola, a Yoruba man. The Yorubas did not declare war because of the level of injustice, incarceration and assassination of their elite class due to the reason best known to them, which warranted some people tagging them cowards, enslaved people, and 'muumuu. But through literacy level and international campaign against the military, the Yorubas fought military imperialism to a standstill. Thus, the Yoruba race was allowed to feature candidates for the two political parties. Unfortunately, the actual candidate of the Yorubas, Chief Olu Falae, was voted out by the other geopolitical zones through manipulation by the Hausa/Fulani hegemony. President Olusegun Obasanjo, a true representative of the Hausa/Fulanis who lost the election in the polling booth in front of his house, ward, local government, state and geopolitical zone, was elected president The Sun, (2017). The opportunity given to the South to produce the president could be termed an opportunity for the liberation of other tribes which was lost in the time of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo but it was mismanaged by the former President, Olusegun Obasanjo. From the antecedence therefore, the probability of producing a democrat and a true representative of Igbo race as a president may be zero, instead a stooge may likely be supported and installed.
4. Strengthening the strained relationship of Igbos with the Yorubas. The Igbos continual hostility against the West due to the support of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo for Nigeria in the wake of the civil war may not be a wise idea. Being the second-largest ethnic group in Nigeria, Yorubas could be relevant in the

liberation of Biafra and other ethnic group from Nigeria. The support of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo for Major General Gowon could be hinged on his release from prison by his regime and granting him an opportunity to become the Vice Chairman of the Federal Executive Council and Minister of Finance. According to another adage in Yoruba land, "Aja kiigbabe ollore aaro", meaning a dog does not forget the helper of the early days. Had it been late, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi release Chief Obafemi Awolowo from the prison after he became the Head of State, certainly, Nigeria might not have thrived till today because Awolowo would not have had the opportunity of working with Gowon and all the allegiance and valuable advices that gave him victory would have eluded him.

5. Developing a solid alliance with all minority groups in the South-south could be helpful; and
6. Disposition of Igbo assets in the north and the relocation of owners to Southern states in interim.

## 9. Concluding Remarks

The paper discussed the implications of the agitation on Nigeria's unity and the survival of the Igbo nation. From the data presented in this study, marginalization of the Igbo nation is not an understatement; it is a reality in all spheres of life from the end of the civil war until today. The high level of marginalization could justify the position of IPOB on self-autonomy agitation. However, this paper advises caution and strong adherence to wisdom as against the open confrontation strategy due to the posture of the Nigerian government which is not favourable towards the agitation. This could be viewed in line with another Yoruba proverb which says "iru ti oba jenilepon, ogbo lafinpa", meaning the tsetse fly that sucks your blood from the testicle can only be killed by wisdom.

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## Research Article

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# GDP as Development Indicator and the Challenges of Actualising SDG 8: Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth

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### Abstract

*The paper is a conceptual review of the GDP as a measure of economic, national well-being and development sustainability and proposal for adoption of Social Progress Index as a better measures of sustainable economic growth. The study adopted secondary data analysis design and thematic approach to address the pertinent issues raised in the discourse. The overwhelmingly imperativeness to evolve new models, indicators and measures with broader views and coverage around long-term, sustainable socioeconomic and environmental development issues after about 87 years of inaccurately applying the GDP to measure what it cannot measure; The work demonstrated that there should be a preferred substitute of the Social Progress Index (SPI) to the GDP because of its inability to measure national well-being and development. It strengthens the call for Policy Makers, Public Financial and Economic Institutions Managers, and Development Partners to de-emphasise the use of GDP as the determinant for all socio-economic and development policy decisions as it was not designed to do that. The study recommends that a new formula, SPI be adopted for measuring economic growth and national well-being, one which makes for the shortcomings and limitations of the GDP be adopted:  $EP\&NW = GDP (C + I + G + XN) + SPI (B + F + O)$ .*

**Keywords:** Economy, Gross Domestic Product, Limitation, Sustainable Development, Wellbeing