

The political impact of the Nigerian Civil war on the Igbo Nation.

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) with major emphasis on its political impact on the Igbo nation. The objectives of the study were to examine the political influence of the Nigerian Civil War on the Igbo nation, assess the extent to which the war affected the political representation and participation of the Igbo people in Nigeria, and identify the strategies adopted for post-war recovery, resilience, and political integration. The study was rooted on the Democratic Peace Theory, which emphasizes the cruciality of inclusive governance, political participation, representation, and peaceful conflict resolution in maintaining national stability.

The study adopted an ex post facto research design and depended on the documentary method of data collection. Data were obtained from secondary sources, including textbooks, scholarly journals, government publications, historical documents, archival materials, and other relevant literature. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

The findings revealed that the Nigerian Civil War emerged from a combination of political instability, ethnic tension, military coups, anti-Igbo violence, and the failure of constitutional and political negotiations, culminating in the declaration of the Republic of Biafra in 1967. The study further found that the war significantly altered the political participation and position of the Igbo nation within the Nigerian federation. Although post-war policies such as Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation were introduced to promote national unity and political stability, many Igbo people continued to perceive themselves as politically marginalized and excluded matters in relation to representation, access to strategic federal appointments, and participation in national leadership. The study also found that these perceptions have influenced contemporary political attitudes, renewed calls for greater political inclusion, and the emergence of pro-Biafra movements. Despite these challenges, the Igbo nation has remained actively involved in Nigeria's democratic process and has demonstrated remarkable resilience through political participation, entrepreneurship, education, and community development.

The study concluded that the political consequences of the Nigerian Civil War continue to influence national integration, ethnic relations, and political discourse in Nigeria. It thereforrecommended that the Federal Government strengthen inclusive governance, ensure equitable political representation, promote genuine national reconciliation, and implement policies that foster justice, national unity, and peaceful coexistence among all ethnic groups

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The Nigeria Civil War (1967–1970) often referred to as the *Biafran War* was a landmark event in the political history of Nigeria. It arose from longstanding ethnic, political, and economic tensions within the newly independent Nigerian state, which had gained freedom from British colonial rule in 1960 (Chukwuka, 2021). The uneven colonial legacy had left Nigeria structured into major regions dominated predominantly by the *Hausa-Fulani* in the North, *Yoruba* in the West, and *Igbo* in the East, creating a federal configuration rife with competition for power, resources, and political influence. These regional and ethnic divisions intensified as political elites vied for control in the post-independence era, undermining national cohesion and amplifying sectional fears of domination and exclusion (Nnadi, 2021).

Tensions escalated dramatically after a military coup in January 1966, which was led in large part by Igbo officers and resulted in the assassination of several northern and western politicians. Widespread suspicion that the coup aimed to establish *Igbo dominance* within the Nigerian state provoked a counter-coup in July 1966, followed by brutal anti-Igbo pogroms in northern cities. Thousands of Igbo civilians were killed, and mass displacements occurred as survivors fled back to the Eastern Region. These events underscored the fragile nature of Nigeria's federal compact and deepened ethnic mistrust (Anyanwu, 2023).

Against this backdrop of insecurity and political mistrust, the Eastern Region, dominated by the Igbo ethnic group, declared its secession from Nigeria and established the Republic of Biafra on *May 30, 1967*. This bold act was intended to protect the Igbo community from further violence

and political exclusion, but it was perceived by the Federal Military Government under General Yakubu Gowon as a direct threat to Nigeria's territorial integrity (Chukwuka, 2021). As a result, civil war broke out by *July 6, 1967* when federal troops moved to suppress the secessionist state.

The war transformed into one of the deadliest conflicts in post-colonial Africa, marked not only by conventional military engagements but also by a federal naval and land blockade of Biafra. The blockade precipitated widespread starvation and humanitarian catastrophe, which remained a defining feature of the conflict's human cost. Estimates suggest that well over one million civilians, mostly Igbo, died from starvation, disease, and violence before Biafra's eventual surrender in January 1970 (Obika, 2021).

Politically, the war changed the architecture of the Nigerian state. The federal government's military response reinforced the dominance of military authority in national politics and weakened mechanisms for managing ethnic diversity through dialogue and power-sharing. The creation of new states shortly before and during the conflict, particularly the fragmentation of the Eastern Region into multiple administrative units, was intended by the federal center to undercut secessionist sentiment. However, these measures also diluted Igbo political unity and influence within the national polity (Uwa, 2024).

Furthermore, despite federal pronouncements at war's end of "*No Victor, No Vanquished*" as a reconciliation policy, many Igbo felt politically marginalized in the post-war dispensation. Issues such as delayed reintegration of Igbo leaders into federal power structures, limited appointment of Igbo into high national offices, and lingering perceptions of exclusion contributed to long-term political grievances. These sentiments have persisted into contemporary times, influencing movements that seek greater Igbo autonomy or restructuring of the Nigerian federation (Ngwu, 2024).

The civil war's legacy therefore extends beyond the battlefield into the very fabric of Nigerian politics and identity. It reshaped political discourse about federalism, ethnic citizenship, and national integration, especially regarding the Igbo nation's quest for political recognition, equitable participation, and structural inclusion. Understanding this legacy helps contextualize contemporary debates over national governance, ethnic representation, and regional autonomy in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Nigeria Civil War (1967–1970), also known as the Biafran War, was one of the most defining events in Nigeria's post-independence history. While the war officially ended over five decades ago, its political, social, and economic ramifications continue to influence the Nigerian state, particularly in relation to the Igbo nation. The conflict, which arose from deep-seated ethnic, political, and economic tensions, resulted in enormous human suffering, widespread displacement, and the near-total devastation of the Eastern Region, an area predominantly inhabited by the Igbo people. Beyond the immediate humanitarian crisis, the war profoundly altered the political landscape of Nigeria, reshaping federal structures, inter-ethnic relations, and patterns of political power distribution (Onwe, 2022).

The Igbo nation, which had once exercised significant influence in the political, military, and economic spheres of Nigeria, experienced long-term marginalization after the war. Federal policies such as “No Victor, No Vanquished”, while ostensibly aimed at reconciliation, failed to fully restore the political influence, representation, and socio-economic status of the Igbo people. Many Igbo leaders were excluded from high-ranking political and military positions, and Igbo

communities were underrepresented in decision-making institutions, limiting their ability to influence national policies and resource allocation (Agbo, 2022).

Additionally, the war accelerated the fragmentation of the Eastern Region into multiple states, a political strategy intended to weaken secessionist tendencies but which also diluted the Igbo political unity. Control over natural resources, particularly oil-rich territories, was diminished, further reducing the region's leverage in national politics. The socio-political disruption caused by the war also entrenched ethnic identity politics, leading to the emergence of modern Igbo nationalist movements and renewed calls for political autonomy or restructuring of Nigeria's federal system (Chukwu, 2024).

Despite the decades since the war, these historical injustices and political exclusions continue to affect the Igbo nation, influencing patterns of electoral behavior, political participation, and advocacy for self-determination. There remains a paucity of comprehensive studies that systematically analyze the long-term political impact of the Nigeria Civil War on the Igbo people, particularly regarding their representation, participation, and influence in national governance.

This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by examining the political consequences of the Nigeria Civil War on the Igbo nation, including the nature of their marginalization, the structural challenges that impede their political engagement, and the enduring legacy of the war on inter-ethnic relations and federal governance in Nigeria. The findings aim to provide insights into how historical conflicts shape contemporary political realities and the prospects for fostering inclusive governance in multi-ethnic societies.

1.3 Research question

1. How did the Nigerian civil war influence the political status of Igbo nation in Nigeria
2. To what extent has the Nigeria civil war impacted on the political representation and participation of the Igbo nation in Nigeria
3. Which strategies were adopted for post-war recovery and resilience among the Igbo people

1.4 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the Nigeria civil war (1967-1970) with special reference to its political impact on Igbo Nation. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. To evaluate the political influence of the Nigeria civil war on the Igbo nation.
2. To assess the political impact of the Nigeria Civil War on the Igbo nation.
3. To identify strategies for post-war recovery and resilience among the Igbo people

1.5 Significance of the study

This study is significant because it provides a comprehensive and systematic examination of the Nigerian Civil War with particular emphasis on its causes, consequences, and long-term implications for the Igbo nation. By critically analyzing the political, ethnic, and economic factors that led to the outbreak of the war, the study deepens historical understanding of one of the most defining conflicts in Nigeria's post-independence history. Scholars have argued that the Nigerian Civil War was not a sudden event but the result of accumulated political instability, ethnic mistrust, military interventions, and economic competition among regions. This study therefore contributes to a more balanced and evidence-based interpretation of the war's origins.

Politically, the study is significant because it assesses the impact of the Nigerian Civil War on the political status and participation of the Igbo nation within the Nigerian state. The war reshaped power relations in Nigeria and altered patterns of political inclusion, representation, and trust in national institutions. Persistent feelings of political marginalization among the Igbo have been linked to unresolved post-war grievances and the failure of full national reconciliation. By examining these issues, the study provides valuable insights into Nigeria's challenges with nation-building, federalism, and democratic stability.

Furthermore, the study is significant in the field of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Understanding the post-war recovery and resilience strategies adopted by the Igbo people highlights how communities respond to devastation through social networks, entrepreneurship, education, and collective identity. These findings are relevant for policymakers and development practitioners seeking sustainable approaches to post-conflict reconstruction, reconciliation, and social cohesion in multi-ethnic societies.

The study also has social and cultural significance, as it contributes to preserving historical memory and collective experiences of the Igbo people during and after the war. Scholars emphasize that unaddressed historical trauma can perpetuate ethnic tensions and political instability. By documenting these experiences, the study promotes dialogue, understanding, and healing, which are essential for long-term peace and unity in Nigeria.

Academically, the study is significant to students and researchers in history, political science, sociology, peace and conflict studies, and African studies. It enriches existing literature by adopting a multidisciplinary approach that integrates historical analysis with political and post-

war recovery and resilience strategy perspectives. The study also serves as a reliable reference for future research on civil wars, ethnic relations, and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study examines the Nigerian Civil War with specific focus on its causes, consequences, and post-war implications for the Igbo nation. The scope of the study is limited to an analysis of the political, ethnic, and economic factors that led to the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War, which occurred between 1967 and 1970. By concentrating on this period, the study provides a focused historical understanding of the conditions and events that culminated in the war.

Geographically, the study is confined to Nigeria, with particular emphasis on the Igbo-dominated areas of the former Eastern Region. This includes an examination of how the war and post-war policies affected the Igbo people socially, economically, and politically. While references may be made to other ethnic groups and regions for comparative or contextual purposes, the primary focus remains on the Igbo nation.

Thematically, the study covers four main areas: the political, ethnic, and economic causes of the Nigerian Civil War; political influence of the war on the Igbo people; the political impacts of the war on the Igbo nation within the Nigerian state; and the strategies adopted by the Igbo people for post-war recovery and resilience. Issues such as political participation, political representation, and social reconstruction are examined within this framework.

In terms of methodology, the study relies primarily on secondary sources, including textbooks, journal articles, government reports, and documented historical accounts. Where relevant, archival materials and credible historical records are also utilized to support analysis. The study does not involve primary data collection such as interviews or surveys.

The scope of the study excludes a detailed military or tactical analysis of the Nigerian Civil War and does not attempt an exhaustive examination of the experiences of all ethnic groups involved in the conflict. Instead, it focuses on the Igbo experience as a case study to understand the broader implications of civil wars and post-conflict reconstruction in multi-ethnic states.

Limitation of the study

The study is limited by its dependence on secondary sources of data . Access to some archival materials and official document relating to the Nigeria civil war may be restricted. In additionit may be difficult to obtain completely uniform accounts of certain issues due to differing interpretations of historical events by various authors.

1.7 Operational definition of terms

Nigerian Civil War: In this study, the Nigerian Civil War refers to the armed conflict that occurred between **1967 and 1970** between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the secessionist state of Biafra, primarily involving the former Eastern Region of Nigeria dominated by the Igbo ethnic group.

Igbo Nation: The Igbo nation, as used in this study, refers to the Igbo ethnic group of southeastern Nigeria, including their social, political, and economic structures, as well as their collective experiences before, during, and after the Nigerian Civil War.

Political Factors: Political factors in this study refer to issues such as leadership struggles, military coups, constitutional crises, governance failures, power imbalance, and policy decisions that contributed to the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War.

Ethnic Factors: Ethnic factors refer to inter-ethnic tensions, mistrust, discrimination, and conflicts among Nigeria's major ethnic groups, particularly those affecting the Igbo people, which played a role in the escalation of the Nigerian Civil War.

Economic Factors: Economic factors in this study refer to competition over resources, regional economic disparities, control of revenues, and economic policies that influenced political tensions and contributed to the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War.

Political influence: Political of the influence of the Nigeria civil war refers to the impact of the war on the political status, representation, participation ;power distribution and decision-making influence of the Igbo nation within the Nigeria state after the war

Political Impact: Political impact in this study refers to the effects of the Nigerian Civil War on the political status, participation, representation, and influence of the Igbo nation within Nigeria's political system after the war.

Post-War Recovery: Post-war recovery refers to the processes and efforts undertaken by the Igbo people and the Nigerian state to rebuild social, economic, and political structures after the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970.

Resilience: Resilience, as used in this study, refers to the ability of the Igbo people to adapt, reorganize, and rebuild their communities, economy, and identity in response to the challenges and disruptions caused by the Nigerian Civil War.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual review

In order to explain the major concepts related to the study based on scholarly opinions and historical perspective, this study therefore provides both a conceptual and thematic approach to

understanding how the Nigeria civil war influence political relations, ethnical identity, governance and post-war reconstruction in Nigeria

2.1.1 Concept of the Nigerian Civil War

The Nigerian Civil War, popularly referred to as the Biafran War, was a large-scale internal armed conflict that took place between July 1967 and January 1970 between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Eastern Region, which had declared itself the independent Republic of Biafra. The war stands as one of the most significant and traumatic events in Nigeria's post-independence history, with profound political, economic, social, and humanitarian consequences. Conceptually, the Nigerian Civil War can be understood as the outcome of accumulated structural weaknesses within the Nigerian state, combined with immediate political crises, ethnic insecurity, and contested visions of nationhood.

Following Nigeria's independence from British colonial rule in 1960, the country inherited a federal system designed to manage its immense ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. However, this system proved fragile due to weak political institutions, intense regionalism, and the politicization of ethnicity. The three dominant ethnic groups Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo were largely organized into regional political blocs, each competing for control of federal power. Rather than fostering national integration, politics in the First Republic deepened ethnic mistrust and rivalry, creating conditions ripe for conflict (Falola & Heaton, 2018).

A major conceptual foundation of the Nigerian Civil War lies in the failure of political leadership and governance during the early post-independence period. Electoral malpractices, corruption,

and political violence characterized the First Republic, particularly during the disputed 1964 federal elections and the 1965 Western Region crisis. These events weakened confidence in democratic processes and heightened perceptions of injustice among different regions. The inability of civilian authorities to manage these crises paved the way for military intervention, fundamentally altering Nigeria's political trajectory.

The military coups of January and July 1966 constitute a critical conceptual turning point in the origins of the Nigerian Civil War. The January coup, led largely by young Igbo officers, overthrew the civilian government and resulted in the assassination of key political and military leaders from the Northern and Western Regions. Although the coup was not officially an ethnic project, its ethnic coloration created widespread resentment in the North. The subsequent counter-coup in July 1966, dominated by Northern officers, led to the killing of many Igbo soldiers and the assassination of the Head of State, General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (Siollun, 2019).

Beyond the coups themselves, the mass killings of Igbo civilians in Northern Nigeria between 1966 and 1967 played a decisive role in shaping the civil war. Thousands of Igbo people were killed, and many more were displaced and forced to return to the Eastern Region. These pogroms generated deep feelings of fear, betrayal, and abandonment among the Igbo population, reinforcing the perception that the Nigerian state could no longer guarantee their safety. Conceptually, this phase of violence transformed the crisis from a political dispute into an existential struggle for survival (Achebe, 2022).

The declaration of the Republic of Biafra in May 1967 by Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu can be understood within this context of insecurity and political breakdown.

From a conceptual standpoint, secession was framed by Biafran leaders as a defensive response to state failure, ethnic persecution, and the collapse of trust in federal authority. Conversely, the Federal Government viewed secession as a direct threat to Nigeria's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and post-colonial statehood. These opposing interpretations of legitimacy and authority lay at the heart of the conflict (Madiebo, 2021).

Economically, the Nigerian Civil War was deeply influenced by disputes over resource control, particularly oil. By the mid-1960s, crude oil had become a strategic economic asset, with major reserves located in the Niger Delta within the Eastern Region. Control over oil revenues intensified federal resistance to secession and added an economic dimension to what was already a complex political and ethnic conflict. From a conceptual angle, the war illustrates how natural resources can both fuel conflict and shape state responses to internal challenges (Osaghae, 2023).

The Nigerian Civil War also occupies an important place in the conceptual study of humanitarian crises. The federal blockade of Biafra led to widespread famine, malnutrition, and disease, resulting in the deaths of an estimated one to two million civilians, many of them children. Images of starving Biafran children drew international attention and reshaped global humanitarian activism. Conceptually, the war highlighted the devastating impact of modern warfare on civilian populations and raised ethical questions about the use of starvation as a weapon of war (Ekwe-Ekwe, 2018).

From an international relations perspective, the Nigerian Civil War was influenced by Cold War dynamics and foreign interests. While the conflict remained largely internal, external factors such as Britain, the Soviet Union, France, and humanitarian organizations played varying roles through diplomatic support, arms supply, or relief efforts. Conceptually, the war demonstrates

how internal conflicts in post-colonial states can become entangled with global power politics, even when ideological divisions are not the primary drivers (Afigbo, 2023).

The end of the war in January 1970, marked by Biafra's surrender, ushered in a new phase in Nigeria's national development. The Federal Government's declaration of a policy of "No Victor, No Vanquished" aimed to promote reconciliation, reconstruction, and reintegration. Conceptually, this policy reflected an attempt to heal national wounds while preserving state unity. However, critics argue that post-war reconstruction efforts did not adequately address the structural inequalities and grievances that contributed to the war, particularly in relation to the Igbo people (Osaghae, 2018).

In broader analytical terms, the Nigerian Civil War represents a case study in the challenges of nation-building in deeply divided societies. It underscores the dangers of exclusionary politics, weak institutions, and the politicization of ethnicity in post-colonial states. The war also highlights the long-term consequences of violent conflict, including social fragmentation, economic disruption, and enduring mistrust among ethnic groups. As such, the Nigerian Civil War remains a crucial reference point for scholars examining civil conflict, federalism, and state legitimacy in Africa and beyond (Falola, 2020).

In conclusion, the concept of the Nigerian Civil War extends beyond a mere historical event to encompass broader themes of governance failure, ethnic insecurity, resource politics, humanitarian catastrophe, and contested nationhood. Understanding the war conceptually provides valuable insights into Nigeria's contemporary political challenges and the persistent struggle to build a cohesive and inclusive national identity in a plural society.

2.1.2 Concept of War and Civil Conflict

War is generally understood as an organized, large-scale violent confrontation between states or within a state, involving the use of armed force to achieve political, economic, territorial, or ideological objectives. It is a structured form of conflict distinguished from sporadic violence by the involvement of identifiable actors, command structures, and sustained military operations. Conceptually, war reflects the breakdown of peaceful mechanisms for resolving disputes and the resort to force as a means of imposing will. Classical theorists such as Clausewitz view war as the continuation of politics by other means, emphasizing its deep connection to power, authority, and state interests (Clausewitz, 2021).

Civil conflict, on the other hand, refers specifically to armed conflict occurring within the boundaries of a sovereign state, involving the government and one or more organized non-state groups. Unlike interstate wars, civil conflicts are rooted in internal dynamics such as governance failure, political exclusion, ethnic or religious divisions, economic inequality, and competition over resources. These conflicts often emerge in states where institutions are weak, legitimacy is contested, and mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution are ineffective (Collier & Hoeffler, 2024).

From a conceptual perspective, civil war represents an advanced and intensified form of civil conflict in which violence becomes widespread, prolonged, and highly organized. It typically involves territorial control, mass mobilization of civilian populations, and direct challenges to

state authority. Civil wars are particularly destructive because they take place within societies, eroding social cohesion and national identity while leaving deep psychological and institutional scars. The Nigerian Civil War conforms to this model, as it involved sustained military engagement between the federal state and an internal secessionist entity (Kalyvas, 2016).

Ethnicity and identity play a central role in many civil conflicts, especially in post-colonial states. Where political power, security, and economic opportunities are distributed along ethnic lines, grievances are easily framed in ethnic terms. This politicization of identity often transforms civil conflict into an existential struggle, intensifying violence and reducing the prospects for compromise or peaceful settlement (Osaghae, 2022).

Economic factors are also central to the concept of civil conflict. Conditions such as poverty, unemployment, uneven development, and competition over natural resources can generate grievances that fuel rebellion. In some cases, conflicts are sustained by economic incentives through war economies, resource exploitation, and external financial support. This perspective highlights that civil conflicts are not driven solely by ideology or identity, but are deeply embedded in material conditions and economic structures (Collier, 2017).

Civil conflicts have severe humanitarian and social consequences. They are associated with mass displacement, refugee crises, civilian casualties, destruction of infrastructure, and long-term trauma. Civilians often bear the greatest burden because fighting occurs within communities, blurring the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. These humanitarian dimensions make civil conflicts more complex and harder to resolve than conventional interstate wars (Brown, 2019; UNDP, 2022).

From a theoretical standpoint, civil conflict challenges traditional notions of sovereignty and the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of force. It exposes fundamental questions about legitimacy, citizenship, and governance. In the Nigerian case, the civil war revealed the fragility of the post-colonial state and demonstrated how unresolved national questions can escalate into violent confrontation (Falola & Heaton, 2023).

In summary, the concept of war and civil conflict provides a critical analytical framework for understanding the Nigerian Civil War. It demonstrates how internal grievances, identity politics, economic pressures, and weak state institutions interact to produce large-scale violence. Conceptualizing war and civil conflict in this manner is essential for analyzing both the causes of internal wars and their long-term political, economic, and social consequences for affected societies

2.1.4The Igbo Nation

The Igbo nation refers to one of the three major ethnic group primarily located in southeastern Nigeria, widely recognized for their distinctive language, rich cultural heritage, social organization, and historical experiences. The Igbo people identity is shaped by a combination of kinship ties, communal solidarity, shared values, and cultural practices that have been maintained over centuries. Conceptually, the Igbo nation is not merely an ethnic grouping but a socio-political and economic entity, characterized by its systems of governance, traditions, and interactions with the wider Nigerian state and global community (Onwuejeogwu, 2018).

Historically, the Igbo people were organized into decentralized societies, where governance was largely communal and participatory, with decision-making processes driven by village

assemblies, councils of elders, and age-grade systems. This structure emphasized consensus, communal responsibility, and social cohesion, providing a foundation for social stability and collective decision-making. Despite the absence of centralized authority, the Igbo system enabled efficient resource management, conflict resolution, and the preservation of cultural norms, underscoring the uniqueness of Igbo political and social organization compared to other ethnic groups in Nigeria (Afigbo, 2023).

Economically, the Igbo nation has long been noted for its entrepreneurial spirit, trade networks, and innovative approaches to business. Prior to the Nigerian Civil War, the Igbo dominated commerce, agriculture, and professional sectors, leveraging education and mobility to secure opportunities across Nigeria. The combination of economic acumen, high literacy levels, and social networks contributed to the Igbo's reputation as industrious, resourceful, and influential within the broader Nigerian polity. These economic attributes were also intertwined with cultural practices, such as communal lending systems, market networks, and apprenticeship structures, which facilitated wealth accumulation and skill transfer across generations (Falola & Heaton, 2023).

Culturally, the Igbo nation is rich in traditions, religious beliefs, and artistic expressions. Festivals, ceremonies, and rites of passage form an integral part of Igbo life, reinforcing social cohesion and intergenerational continuity. Religion and spirituality, both traditional and Christian, have historically shaped moral frameworks, governance practices, and community interactions. Music, dance, crafts, and oral literature are key components of Igbo cultural identity, reflecting both aesthetic expression and social instruction (Okafor, 2019). These cultural

practices continue to provide a sense of belonging, especially during periods of upheaval, such as the Nigerian Civil War.

The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) had a transformative impact on the Igbo nation, both materially and psychologically. The war resulted in widespread displacement, the destruction of infrastructure, loss of life, and severe economic disruption. These experiences reinforced ethnic solidarity and collective consciousness, as the Igbo sought to protect their communities and preserve identity amidst existential threats. Post-war, the Igbo nation faced significant challenges, including reintegration into the Nigerian state, recovery of lost assets, and reestablishment of social and economic networks (Madiebo, 2021). The war highlighted the vulnerabilities of decentralized ethnic systems when confronted by centralized state power and large-scale military conflict.

Socially, the Igbo nation has displayed resilience and adaptability in response to historical and contemporary challenges. Displacement and post-war marginalization compelled communities to reorganize economic and social systems, emphasizing entrepreneurship, education, and informal trade. These adaptive strategies became defining characteristics of the Igbo nation, demonstrating the interplay between cultural values, social norms, and economic necessity. Furthermore, post-war migration and diaspora movements expanded Igbo networks, contributing to transnational economic and cultural influence (Meagher, 2017).

Politically, the Igbo nation has historically engaged in both regional and national politics to safeguard interests and assert collective rights. Pre-war political influence was significant, with Igbo elites occupying key positions in civil service and governance. The post-war era, however, saw restrictions on political participation, reduced regional cohesion due to state creation, and

challenges in reclaiming lost political power. These dynamics influenced the evolution of Igbo political strategies, including advocacy for equitable representation, economic inclusion, and cultural preservation within Nigeria's federal system (Falola, 2020).

In contemporary terms, the Igbo nation continues to navigate the challenges of integration, economic development, and cultural preservation. Despite historical marginalization and structural inequalities, the Igbo maintain a distinct identity, reinforced by language, culture, entrepreneurship, and communal solidarity. The Igbo diaspora further strengthens these connections, facilitating both economic and social remittances that support communities in southeastern Nigeria. Conceptually, the Igbo nation exemplifies the capacity of an ethnic group to sustain cohesion, adapt to adversity, and negotiate identity within complex national and global contexts.

In summary, the concept of the Igbo nation encompasses historical continuity, cultural richness, economic innovation, and adaptive resilience. It illustrates how a decentralized ethnic group can maintain identity, social cohesion, and economic vitality, even in the face of war, displacement, and structural marginalization. Understanding the Igbo nation conceptually is essential for analyzing the impact of historical events, such as the Nigerian Civil War, on ethnic identity, social organization, and the political economy within a pluralistic society.

2.1.5 Political Impact of the Nigeria Civil War on the Igbo Nation

The political impact of the Nigerian civil war on the Igbo nation remains one of the most debated issues in the Nigeria political history

The Nigeria Civil War (1967–1970), also known as the Biafran War, marked one of the most transformational periods in Nigeria’s political history. It had deep and enduring political consequences for the Igbo Nation consequences that have shaped political identities, participation, and power dynamics in Nigeria for more than half a century. Prior to the war, the Igbo were a politically vibrant and influential group within the Nigerian federation. As significant contributors to the civil service, military, and commercial sectors, Igbo elites held notable sway in national governance structures. The secession attempt through the declaration of the Republic of Biafra in May 1967, intended to counter widespread pogroms and institutional exclusion, abruptly disrupted this political ascendancy and reconfigured Igbo participation in national governance (Rabiu & Ogbonna, 2024).

The immediate impact of the war on Igbo political structures was foundationally disruptive. The conflict led to the elimination, displacement, or marginalization of many Igbo politicians, civil servants, and military officers. Following the collapse of Biafra in January 1970, the federal government, under General Yakubu Gowon, implemented policies aimed at reconciliation and reintegration, symbolised by the slogan “*No victor, no vanquished.*” However, in practice, these policies often failed to restore Igbo political agency adequately. Measures such as the Public Officers (Special Provisions) Decree barred numerous former Biafran public servants from resuming federal service, effectively excluding many Igbo who had been associated with the secessionist administration from key governance roles (Rabiu & Ogbonna, 2024).

Beyond individual exclusion, structural changes to Nigeria’s federal system further constrained Igbo political influence. The reorganisation of regions and creation of new states, ostensibly to prevent further secessionist tendencies, resulted in the southeast region being subdivided into

smaller states. This fragmentation diluted the political weight the Igbo had previously exercised and limited their representation at the federal level relative to other regions. Likewise, although the federal character principle was later institutionalised to ensure equitable representation across ethnic groups, in practice it often functioned to *decentralise* rather than *restore* Igbo influence in strategic federal appointments and decision-making processes (Njoku & Nwogu, 2025).

The longer-term political impact of the civil war has been the persistence of a profound sense of political exclusion and alienation within the Igbo Nation. In post-war Nigeria, the Igbo have felt underrepresented in key leadership roles at the national level. One manifestation of this perceived marginalisation is the absence of an Igbo individual in the office of the President of Nigeria since the end of the civil war a fact often cited by scholars and political commentators as evidence of structural imbalance in national power sharing (Njoku & Nwogu, 2025).

This sense of marginalisation has, over time, contributed to the emergence of new political movements and discourses centred on autonomy, self-determination, and political restructuring. Perhaps the most internationally visible of these is the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), whose leadership and activities have periodically reignited political tensions in the southeastern region. IPOB's weekly "sit-at-home" protests and calls for secession or political restructuring reflect enduring grievances that many Igbo trace directly to the post-war political settlement and perceived exclusion from meaningful participation in Nigeria's political architecture. These protests have led to significant security challenges, loss of lives, and economic disruption, demonstrating how unresolved political grievances from the civil war era continue to shape the region's political dynamics (Reuters, 2025).

Additionally, the political alienation experienced by many Igbo has shaped the broader trajectory of national politics in Nigeria. Studies of Nigerian post-war politics indicate that mutual distrust between regions, especially between the Igbo-dominated southeast and other geopolitical zones, has remained a persistent challenge to national political unity and stability (Rabiu & Ogbonna, 2024). The civil war's legacy also influences contemporary debates about federalism, minority rights, and national inclusion, with advocates for restructuring arguing that Nigeria's current political architecture retains elements that inadvertently perpetuate historical inequalities. These debates highlight how the war's political impact is not confined to historical analysis but remains central to contemporary political discourse in Nigeria (RSIS International, 2025).

Meanwhile, the political changes initiated in the post-war era have also influenced patterns of leadership recruitment and political participation among the Igbo. Many veterans of the war and their families, having been thrust into rebuilding their lives in the aftermath of enormous human and material loss, prioritised economic survival and community reconstruction over immediate political engagement. While some Igbo did reintegrate into national politics over time, the broader experience of exclusion and the challenges of re-establishing political networks created a political landscape where Igbo influence was significantly less dominant than in the pre-war period (Njoku & Nwogu, 2025).

Importantly, the political impact of the civil war on the Igbo Nation must be understood within the broader context of how mutual distrust and fragile national unity have shaped Nigeria's post-independence political evolution. Research suggests that although formal instruments of reconciliation were implemented after the war, affected communities continued to experience lingering distrust and uncertainty regarding their place within the federation. Such sentiments

have complicated efforts at forging a cohesive national political identity, especially among younger generations who have inherited political narratives shaped by historical grievances and contemporary debates about marginalisation (Rabiu & Ogbonna, 2024).

In conclusion, the political impact of the Nigeria Civil War on the Igbo Nation has been profound, multifaceted, and enduring. It reshaped the Igbo's role in national governance, redefined their political participation, and contributed to ongoing debates about inclusion, representation, and federalism in Nigeria. While the war concluded more than five decades ago, its political ramifications continue to influence the aspirations, identities, and political activities of the Igbo people, underscoring the necessity of addressing historical grievances through structural reforms and sustained efforts at inclusive governance.

2.1.6 Social and Cultural Consequences of the Nigeria Civil War on the Igbo Nation

The Nigeria Civil War (1967–1970) had profound social and cultural ramifications for the Igbo Nation, disrupting traditional community structures, altering cultural practices, and reshaping identity in ways that have persisted for decades. The war, characterized by widespread violence, starvation, and displacement, fundamentally altered the social fabric of Igbo society, leaving deep psychological and cultural scars (Chukwu, 2024).

One of the most immediate social consequences was the disruption of familial and communal networks. As the conflict intensified, millions of Igbo civilians were forced to flee their homes, leaving behind established neighborhoods, farmlands, and community institutions. Families were often separated, with many individuals resettling permanently in other parts of Nigeria or abroad, fundamentally altering settlement patterns and weakening the traditional kinship systems that

had long sustained Igbo social life (Scribd, 2025). The large-scale displacement not only destabilized local communities but also created long-term challenges for post-war reconstruction and social cohesion.

The civil war also undermined traditional cultural practices and ceremonies, which are central to Igbo social organization and identity. Festivals, marriages, funerals, and initiation rites were frequently suspended due to the insecurity and chaos caused by the conflict. These practices, which are critical for reinforcing communal bonds, marking social transitions, and transmitting cultural values, suffered significant disruption. The inability to perform these rites led to a rupture in cultural continuity, leaving many communities struggling to maintain their traditional identity (Sam, 2025).

Moreover, the war affected modes of cultural transmission and the preservation of collective memory. Historically, Igbo culture relied heavily on oral narratives passed down by elders. However, the war's devastation, the loss of elders, and displacement disrupted this transmission, compelling communities to adopt alternative methods such as literature, art, and documentation to preserve their cultural heritage. Post-war literature, particularly works by writers like Chinua Achebe, has served as a vehicle for recording the social experiences of the Igbo during the war, ensuring that the collective memory of the conflict remains a central component of Igbo identity (Ugwu, 2025).

The psychological impact of the war was equally profound. The widespread famine, massacres, and destruction of communities created deep emotional trauma among survivors. Many experienced long-term effects, including grief, anxiety, and distrust, which influenced social behavior and intergenerational relationships. The psychological scars of the war have shaped the

Igbo perception of national politics, inter-ethnic relations, and their social identity within Nigeria (Ngwu, 2025).

The conflict also prompted significant changes in gender roles and labor dynamics within Igbo society. With many men killed, injured, or displaced, women assumed greater responsibilities in sustaining households, managing farms, and maintaining community networks. These changes not only altered household structures but also had long-term implications for social organization, reinforcing women's central role in post-war economic and social recovery (Agbo, 2021).

Another critical consequence was the heightened ethnic consciousness and cultural identity formation. The war reinforced Igbo collective identity, as shared experiences of suffering and resistance became central to community narratives. This heightened ethnic consciousness has been reflected in literature, art, and public discourse, influencing how the Igbo engage with broader Nigerian society (Vocal, 2025). Simultaneously, events such as the Asaba massacre left enduring legacies of inter-ethnic mistrust, complicating post-war reconciliation and social integration (Uche, 2025).

Finally, the war facilitated patterns of migration and diaspora formation, which reshaped Igbo social and cultural life. Many displaced families settled in other regions of Nigeria or abroad, creating diasporic communities that maintained Igbo cultural practices while adapting to new social environments. These migrations contributed to the diffusion of Igbo culture and facilitated the creation of hybrid identities, ensuring the survival and evolution of Igbo cultural expression in post-war contexts (Igbokwenu, 2025).

In conclusion, the social and cultural consequences of the Nigeria Civil War on the Igbo Nation were multifaceted and enduring. Displacement, disruption of cultural practices, psychological trauma, changes in gender roles, and evolving ethnic identity all contributed to reshaping Igbo society. Despite these challenges, the resilience of Igbo communities, their commitment to preserving cultural heritage, and the emergence of new forms of cultural expression have enabled the Igbo to adapt, rebuild, and maintain a distinct social and cultural identity within the Nigerian state.

2.1.7 Post-War Reconstruction and Igbo Resilience

Post-war reconstruction refers to the process of rebuilding societies, institutions and communities after the end of a violent conflict. It involves activities aimed at restoring political stability, social cohesion, public infrastructure and national unity.

Following the end of the Nigerian Civil War in January 1970 ushered in a complex and multifaceted process of post-war reconstruction and reintegration for the Igbo nation. The Federal Government of Nigeria adopted the policy of “No Victor, No Vanquished,” intending to promote national reconciliation, rebuild infrastructure, restore public services, and reintegrate the Eastern Region into the Nigerian state. This policy was symbolic of the government’s desire to mend ethnic divisions and foster unity. However, in practice, the implementation faced significant hurdles, including widespread destruction of property, human capital losses, infrastructural collapse, and inadequate financial resources for reconstruction (Achebe, 2022).

Economically, the Igbo nation was confronted with the daunting task of rebuilding a region devastated by war. The destruction of residential, commercial, and industrial infrastructure left communities with limited means of livelihood. Agriculture, which had been the backbone of the Eastern economy, suffered extensive disruption as farmlands were abandoned, crops destroyed, and labor displaced. In addition, the post-war compensation policy, particularly the £20 flat payment for bank deposits and abandoned property, was grossly insufficient to address the scale of economic losses. Although the financial marginalization forced the Igbo to rely heavily on entrepreneurial activities, informal trade, and communal support networks to restore economic stability. The Igbo people demonstrated exceptional determination in reconstructing their communities and restoring their place within Nigeria society .sThrough ingenuity and determination, the Igbo gradually revived commerce, small-scale industries, and farming, illustrating the interplay of resilience, social capital, and economic adaptation in post-conflict recovery (Falola & Heaton, 2020).

Socially, post-war reconstruction required addressing the deep trauma of displacement, famine, and loss of life. Communities were disrupted, families fragmented, and traditional social structures weakened. In response, community-based organizations, religious institutions, and extended family networks played a pivotal role in reintegrating displaced persons, providing psychosocial support, and rebuilding communal ties. Cultural practices, festivals, and traditional decision-making assemblies were leveraged to restore social cohesion, instill hope, and preserve a sense of identity. These measures not only facilitated immediate social recovery but also reinforced the resilience and adaptive capacity of Igbo society in the aftermath of large-scale conflict (Okafor, 2022).

Politically, the Igbo nation faced structural challenges in reasserting influence within the federal system. The creation of new states out of the former Eastern Region fragmented regional cohesion, diluted political power, and limited access to national decision-making structures. Despite these constraints, the Igbo demonstrated political resilience by maintaining active engagement in local governance, advocating for equitable representation, and participating in national debates on inclusion, rights, and development. This political adaptation reflected the community's commitment to safeguarding interests while negotiating integration within a centralized state framework (Falola, 2020).

Education emerged as a critical instrument of post-war reconstruction and long-term resilience. Recognizing the role of human capital in economic and social recovery, the Igbo invested heavily in formal education, vocational training, and higher learning. Schools were rebuilt, and educational programs were promoted by both government and communal initiatives. Diaspora contributions and local philanthropy further reinforced educational development, equipping a new generation with skills for entrepreneurship, leadership, and civic participation. Education thus became a vehicle for restoring agency, fostering innovation, and strengthening the community's ability to adapt to changing national and global contexts (Falola & Heaton, 2018).

Culturally, the Igbo relied on traditional values, norms, and identity markers to navigate the post-war environment. Communal cooperation, respect for elders, religious observances, and shared cultural practices facilitated cohesion and collective problem-solving. These cultural mechanisms provided a framework for negotiating the challenges of reintegration, promoting moral guidance, and sustaining community solidarity. The emphasis on culture as a tool of resilience illustrates

the interconnection between identity, social capital, and adaptive strategies in post-conflict recovery (Okafor, 2019).

The Igbo diaspora played a complementary role in post-war reconstruction, providing remittances, skills, investment, and advocacy that supported local development projects. These transnational networks facilitated economic reconstruction, social reintegration, and the reinforcement of cultural identity. The engagement of diaspora communities underscores the importance of extended social networks in post-conflict recovery, especially in contexts where local resources are constrained or unevenly distributed (Meagher, 2020).

In conclusion, post-war reconstruction and Igbo resilience exemplify the dynamic interplay of economic adaptation, social cohesion, political engagement, educational investment, and cultural preservation. Despite substantial material loss, structural exclusion, and political marginalization, the Igbo nation demonstrated remarkable capacity to rebuild livelihoods, restore social structures, and maintain a distinct socio-political presence within Nigeria. Conceptually, this period underscores the resilience of ethnic communities in recovering from conflict, adapting to adversity, and negotiating survival and growth within challenging national and historical contexts.

THEORITICAL REVIEW

The theoretical review of this study focuses on the major theories that explain the political consequences of the Nigeria civil war on the Igbo nation. Theories are important in research because they provide a framework for understanding and interpreting social and political realities. In examining the political impact of the Nigerian civil war on the Igbo nation, this study

adopts three theories; the Democratic peace theory, Relative deprivation and frustration Aggression theory. These theories collectively explain the relationship between political exclusion, ethnic conflict, frustration and separatist agitation within a multi-ethnic state like Nigeria.

The democratic peace theory is one of the most relevant theories used to explain the relationship between political systems and the possibility of conflict. The theory argues that democratic systems are less likely to experience violent conflict internally and externally because they promote accountability, dialogue, negotiation, political participation, institutional checks and peaceful resolution of disputes.

The Democratic peace theory originated from the idea of Immanuel Kant in his work titled Perpetual Peace established in 1795. The theory was later developed and expanded by scholars such as Michael Doyle (1983) Bruce Russett and Rudolph Rummel (1993) who emphasized on the relationship between democratic governance, political inclusion and peaceful conflict resolution.

The theory assumes that when citizens and ethnic groups are adequately represented in governance and decision making processes, the likelihood of political violent and separatist conflict is significantly reduced. The theory argues that democratic institutions promote justice, equality and protection of minority rights, thereby strengthening peaceful coexistence within the state.

The Democratic peace theory is relevant to this study in that it lies in its explanation of how weak democratic institutions, political crisis, ethnic tension and political exclusion contributed to the outbreak and aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War. Before the war, Nigeria experienced

political instability, electoral violence, ethnic rivalry, and military intervention, all of which weakened democratic governance and increased distrust among ethnic groups. The theory helps to explain how the absence of inclusive political structures created feelings of insecurity and marginalization among the Igbo, thereby contributing to the declaration of Biafra and the subsequent civil war. The theory is equally important in understanding post-war political developments, as many Igbo people continued to perceive themselves as politically excluded from major leadership positions and national decision-making processes after the war.

Another important theory relevant to this study is the Relative Deprivation Theory propounded by Ted Robert Gurr in his book *Why Men Rebel* published in 1970. The theory explains that conflict and aggression often arise when individuals or groups perceive a gap between what they expect from society and what they actually receive. According to Gurr, people become frustrated and dissatisfied when they believe they are unfairly deprived of political opportunities, economic benefits, social recognition, or access to resources compared to other groups within the same society. The theory emphasizes that perceived inequality and injustice are major causes of political unrest, rebellion, and separatist movements. The Relative Deprivation Theory is highly relevant to the study because it helps to explain the political experiences of the Igbo nation after the civil war. Following the war, many Igbo people believed that they were politically marginalized within the Nigerian federation. Policies such as the £20 compensation policy, inadequate infrastructural development in the South-East, and perceived exclusion from key political appointments created feelings of deprivation among the Igbo population. The theory also explains the resurgence of pro-Biafra agitations and demands for self-determination among some Igbo youths in contemporary Nigeria. Many of these agitations are driven by perceptions of unequal treatment, political exclusion, and lack of fairness in the distribution of national

resources and opportunities. Thus, the Relative Deprivation Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how perceived injustice and inequality contributed to continued political dissatisfaction among the Igbo people after the war

The Frustration-Aggression Theory is another theoretical framework relevant to this study. The theory was developed by John Dollard et al (1939) and later expanded by Leonard Berkowitz (1962). This theory argues that aggression is often a reaction to frustration resulting from blocked goals, denied expectations, or obstacles that prevent individuals or groups from achieving their desired objectives. According to the theory, when people are continuously denied opportunities, rights, or recognition, frustration builds up and may eventually result in violence, rebellion, or aggressive political behaviour and resistances against political structures. The relevance of the Frustration-Aggression Theory to this study can be seen in the historical experiences of the Igbo people before and after the Nigerian Civil War. Before the outbreak of the war, the Igbo experienced political tension, ethnic hostility, and violent attacks, particularly during the anti-Igbo riots that followed the 1966 military coups. These events created fear, anger, and frustration among the Igbo population and contributed significantly to the secession of Biafra and the civil war. The theory also explains contemporary political agitations in the South-East region, where feelings of marginalization, poor infrastructural development, political exclusion, and distrust of federal institutions have generated frustration among many Igbo youths. This frustration has contributed to the emergence of separatist movements and renewed demands for self-determination. Collectively, the Democratic Peace Theory, Relative Deprivation Theory, and Frustration-Aggression Theory provide a comprehensive explanation of the political impact of the Nigerian Civil War on the Igbo nation. While the Democratic Peace Theory emphasizes the importance of inclusive governance and democratic participation in maintaining

peace, the Relative Deprivation Theory explains how perceptions of inequality and exclusion generate grievances and political dissatisfaction. The Frustration-Aggression Theory further explains how unresolved grievances and blocked expectations may lead to aggressive political behaviour and separatist agitations. These theories therefore provide an appropriate theoretical foundation for understanding the historical and contemporary political experiences of the Igbo people after the Nigerian Civil War

Empirical Review

The causes, consequences and post-war implications of the Nigeria civil war have been examined by several scholars.

Achebe (2012) in his book *There was a country: A personal History of Biafra*, evaluated the political events that culminated in the Nigeria civil war and what the Igbo nation experienced during and after the war. The work adopted a historical and documentary approach based on the author's personal experience, historical records, and secondary sources. Achebe maintained that ethnic rivalry, political instability, the 1966 coups and the massacres of the Igbo people in the northern Nigeria contributed significantly to the outbreak of the war. The work further observed that the political consequence of the war continues to influence the relationship between the Igbo people and the Nigerian state. The book emphasized on the necessity for justice, reconciliation and inclusive governance. This work is relevant to the present research work because it provides

historical evidence on the political impact and consequences of the Nigerian civil war on the igbo nation.

Osaghae (1998), in crippled Giant: nigeria since independence, examined nigerias political development after independence. The researcher made use of a historical reaseach design using documentary sources. Findings suggest that ethnic politics, military rule, unequal political representation and political exclusion weakened national integration after the civil war. The study recommends institutional reforms to strengthen democracy and national unity. The study is relevant because it explains the post-war political challenges the igbo nation faced.

Obasanjo (1980), in *my command: An account of the Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970*, analyses the conduct and outcome of the Nigerian civil war from the perspective of the federal government. Using documentary data and official military records, the study found that military victory persevered Nigeria unity but failed to completely resolve post-war political grievances. The study recommendedsustained reconciliation and national integration. The study is relevant because it discusses post-war recovery and reintegration policies

International crisis Groups (2015) in *curbing violence in Nigeria (II): The Biafra insurgency* , evaluated the resurgence od pro-Biafra movements in contemporary Nigeria. The study made use of a qualitative analysis using interviews, field observations and documentary evidence. Findings reveals that perceptions of political exclusion, economic inequality and historical grievances added to the renewed separatist MOVEMENT IN THE SOUTH- East. The study recommends inclusive political participation, dialogue and region development. The study is relevant to the research work because it connects the legacy of the Nigeria's civil war with contemporary political development.

Alexandra A. Madiebo (1980), in the Nigeria revolution and the Biafra war, analyzed the experiences of the Igbo nation in the political and military aspect. The study relied on historical records and personal accounts. Findings revealed that the political confidence and participation of the Igbo nation was highly affected due to the defeat of Biafra. The study suggests genuine reconciliation and equal political opportunities. The study is relevant to this study because it examines the post-war political condition of the Igbo nation.

Max Siollus (2009), in oil, politics and violence: Nigeria Military coup culture(1966-1976), examines the relationship between military coups and political instability in Nigeria. He adopted a documentary evidence, findings suggest that the January and July 1966 coups heightened ethnic suspicion and contributed directly to the cause of the civil war. The study recommended a stable, stronger democratic institutions and civilian governance. This study is relevant because it explains the all the political events that led to the war.

Rotimi T.Suberu (2001) in his work titled in the Federalism and ethnic conflict in Nigeria, examined how federalism has been used to manage ethnic diversity in Nigeria. Findings reveal that although federalism reduced some tension, challenges relating to political inclusion and resource distribution remained un attended to. The study recommended that strengthening true federalism and equitable representation. The study is relevant because it explains the political challenges different ethnic groups faced after the Nigerian civil war.

Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton (2008), in a History of Nigeria, examined from the colonial era to the democratic era. Using documentary and historical evidence. Findings suggest that the Nigeria civil war reshaped national politics, ethnic relations, and governance. The researchers recommended the continuous efforts toward national reconciliation and political inclusion. It is relevant to this study because it lays a historical background for the understanding of the political impact of the Nigerian civil war.

OkwudibiaNnoli (1978). in his study titled in ethnic in Nigeria, examined the role of ethnicity in Nigerian politics. He made use of a documentary analysis, the study found that political instability and weakened national integration are caused by conflict and rivalry among ethnic groups. It recommended policies that promotes equality, justice, and inclusive governance. This study is relevant because it explains how ethnic politics influenced the civil war and its consequences.

Billy J. Dudley (1973), in his study titled in instability and political order: politics and crises in Nigeria, analyzed the political crisis that led caused the civil war. The study examined the collapse of the first Republic using historical evidence. He found that electoral malpractice, ethnic tension, regional competition and weak political institution contributed significantly to the cause of the war. The study recommends stronger democratic institution and constitutional governance to prevent future political conflict. The study is relevant to this study because it explains the political environment that preceded the civil war.

Gap in Literature

Despite the numerous scholarly works on Nigerian Civil War and its effects on the Igbo nation, several gaps still exist in the literature. One major gap identified is the overconcentration of existing studies on the economic and humanitarian consequences of the civil war, with relatively less attention given to its long-term political implications on the Igbo nation. Most scholars focused extensively on issues such as post-war reconstruction, starvation, displacement, and economic hardship, while inadequate empirical attention has been devoted to examining how the Nigeria civil war reshaped Igbo political identity, political participation, and representation within the Nigerian state.

Furthermore, many earlier studies concentrated on the immediate post-war period of the 1970s and 1980s, with limited attention to contemporary political developments such as renewed separatist agitations, ethnic nationalism, and demands for self-determination among the Igbo youth. The resurgence of pro-Biafra movements in recent years suggests that the political effects of the war are still relevant in modern Nigeria. However, there is limited scholarly attention devoted specifically to the long-term political impact of the Nigerian civil war on the Igbo nation. Particularly when it comes to participation in politics, political representation and post-war resilience. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive examination of the political consequences of the Nigerian civil on the Igbo nation.

CHAPTER THREE

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Democratic Peace Theory

This study is anchored on the democratic peace theory. The democratic peace theory is one of the major theories in political science and international relations used to explain the relationship between democracy ,peace, and conflict among states and societies.

The origin of the Democratic Peace Theory is commonly traced to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant in his 1795 essay titled *Perpetual Peace*. Kant argued that democratic or republican states are naturally inclined toward peaceful relations because citizens who bear the costs of war are less likely to support violent conflict. According to him, democratic governance encourages accountability, constitutionalism, public participation, and diplomacy, thereby reducing the tendency toward war and political violence.

In modern political science, the theory was further developed and popularized by scholars such as Michael Doyle(1983), Bruce Russett(1993), and Rudolph Rummel(1997). Michael Doyle(1983), expanded Kant's ideas by arguing that democratic states share common norms and institutional structures that make peaceful coexistence more possible. Russett (1993) maintained that democratic institutions introduces mechanism through which grievances can be expressed and addressed in a peaceful manner, which will reduce the likelihood of political instability and violent conflict.

The Democratic Peace Theory is built on several fundamental assumptions and principles. One of the major tenets of the theory is that democratic societies prefer peaceful means of conflict resolution rather than violence. Democracies encourage open discussion, negotiation, and constitutional procedures in addressing political disagreements. As a result, societies with democratic institutions are less likely to experience severe political crises and civil wars.

Another major tenet of the theory is that democratic governance promotes inclusion, respect for the rule of law, political participation and representation. The theory assumes that when citizens or groups within a state are adequately represented in governance and decision-making processes, they are less likely to resort to rebellion or separatist agitation. Democratic systems create opportunities for citizens and ethnic groups to express grievances peacefully through elections, dialogue, political engagement, public consultations and judicial processes thereby creating a channel where citizens are allowed to pursue their interest within the framework of the law

The theory also emphasizes the importance of rule of law and protection of minority rights. Democratic governance is expected to ensure equality, justice, and fair treatment of all ethnic and regional groups within a state. Where democratic institutions function effectively, issues of political exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization are minimized.

Furthermore, the theory maintains that transparency, accountability, and constitutionalism reduces political tension and distrust among groups in society. Democratic institutions require leaders to remain accountable to the citizens. This accountability helps reduce abuse of power, corruption, discrimination and arbitrary political actions that may generate conflict within society. In a situation where democratic principle are effectively implemented, disagreement are more likely to be resolved through dialogue, compromise and institutional mechanisms rather than violence.

Another important tenet is that lack of democratic inclusion can generate frustration, ethnic nationalism, and violent conflicts. Where groups feel excluded from political power or denied equal opportunities, there is a higher likelihood of separatist movements and political instability emerging within the state.

Application of the theory

The Democratic Peace Theory is highly relevant to the study titled “*The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970): A Case Study of Its Political Impact on Igbo Nation.*” The theory helps to explain how political instability, ethnic tension, and perceived exclusion contributed to the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War. Following the Nigeria’s independence 1960, Nigeria experienced weak democratic institutions, political competition, ethnic rivalry, electoral violence, military intervention, and the failure of democratic institution to effectively manage these division contributed significantly to the political crises that culminated in the civil war , the collapse of constitutional governance following the military coup of 1966 further weakened opportunities fir peace conflict resolution among the countries major ethnic groups.

The theory is also relevant in explaining the feelings of political marginalization and exclusion experienced by many Igbo people after the civil war. According to the assumptions of the Democratic Peace Theory, when a group perceives that it is excluded from political power, representation, and national decision-making, grievances and political dissatisfaction are likely to increase. This helps to explain the emergence of post-war separatist agitations and renewed demands for self-determination among some Igbo groups.

In addition, the theory is relevant because it emphasizes inclusive governance, justice, and equal political participation as essential conditions for peace and national unity. The study examines the importance of post-war reconciliation, national integration and democratic governance in Nigeria. The Democratic Peace Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how democratic inclusion or exclusion influenced ethnic relations and political stability in Nigeria.

The theory further assists the study in analyzing how weak democratic practices, military rule, and lack of trust in government institutions contributed to continued ethnic suspicion and political dissatisfaction after the war. It highlights the importance of democratic reforms, national reconciliation, equitable distribution of political offices, and protection of minority rights in preventing future conflicts and strengthening national integration.

Therefore, the Democratic Peace Theory provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for understanding the political consequences of the Nigerian Civil War on the Igbo nation and the broader challenges of democracy, national unity, and political inclusion in Nigeria.

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study:

1. The Nigeria civil war influenced the political statues of the Igbo nation in Nigeria
2. The Nigeria civil war impacted on the political representation and participation of the Igbo nation in Nigeria.
3. Post-war recovery and resilience strategies contributed to the political integration of the Igbo people after the Nigerian civil war.

3.3 Research Design

Research design refers to the framework or the overall plan and procedures for conducting a study. According to Creswell (2014), research design is the specific procedures involved in the research process, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report. This study adopts the Ex post facto research design. Ex post facto research design is a non-experimental research design used to investigate event that have already happened and whose variables cannot be manipulated by the researcher. The design is particularly suitable for historical and political studies where the researcher evaluates the past events and their consequences. The choice of this design is suitable for

this study because, it focuses on the Nigerian civil war which occurred between 1967 and 1970. Since the events has already taken place, the researcher cannot temper or control the variables associated with it. Rather, the study seeks to evaluate and analyze the political impact of the Nigeria civil war on the Igbo nation using already existing historical evidence and documentary.

3.4 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The method of data collection used is a documentary method. Documentary method here means that the researcher relied on the systematic collection and examination of information collected from existing written materials relevant to the subject under evaluation. Most of the data in this study comes from a secondary source including textbooks, government publications, scholarly journals, archival document, historical records, official reports and magazines. This documentary method is most appropriate for this study because the Nigeria civil war is a historical event and most of the helpful information already exists in documented form. These secondary sources provide useful information regarding the causes of the war, political post-war policies and their implications for Igbo nation.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

The study adopts content analysis as the method of data analysis. Content analysis involves the qualitative analytical technique adopted for examining, interpreting, and evaluating information contained in documents and recorded materials. The study allows the researcher to identify patterns, themes, relationships, and meanings from documentary source. In this study, data collected from books, journals, government publications and other documentary sources,

shall be critically evaluated and interpreted in accordance with the research questions and research objectives. The analysis shall specifically focus on identifying the political causes of the Nigerian civil war, the political impact of the conflict on the Igbo nation and post-war strategies adopted to promote recovery, resilience and political integration.

3.6 LOGICAL DATA FRAMEWORK

RESEARCH QUESTION	HYPOTHESIS	MAJOR VARIABLE OF THE INDEPENDENT(X) DEPENDENT VARIABLE (Y)	EMPERICAL INDICATORS OF THE VARIABLE S	SOURCE OF DATA	METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION.	METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS
How has the Nigeria civil war influenced the political statues of the Igbo nation in Nigeria?	The Nigerian civil war influenced the political statues of the Igbo nation Nigeria	X): Nigerian civil war (1967-1970). Y) Political statues of the Igbo nation in Nigeria.	Political inclusion and exclusion, political marginalizati on, access to leadership positions,	Secondary sources obtained from textbooks, academic journals, internet	Documentary method,	Content analysis

			federal appointments, political influence of the south-east regions.	sources and government publication		
To what extent has the Nigerian civil impacted on the political representation and participation of the Igbo nation in Nigeria?	The Nigeria civil war affected the political representation and participation of the Igbo nation in Nigeria.	X): Nigeria civil war Y) Political representation and participation of the Igbo nation	Electoral participation, representation in government, political appointments, involvement in nation decision making, political engagement of the Igbo people	Secondary sources obtained from archival materials, official reports, academic journals and internet sources.	Documentary method.	Content analysis

Which strategies were adopted for post-war recovery and resilience among the Igbo nation?	The targeted strategies for post war recovery and resilience among the Igbo people Post-war recovery and resilience strategies contributed to the political integration of the Igbo people after the war.	X) Post-war recovery and resilience strategies. (reconciliation, state creation, constitutional reforms, reintegration efforts) Y) Political integration and resilience of the Igbo people.	Reconciliation programs, reintegration policies, reconstruction efforts, political participation and peacebuilding Initiatives	Secondary sources obtained from textbooks, academic journals, government publication and newspapers	Documentary sources	Content analysis
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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 This chapter is dedicated to the analysis and findings of the documentary evidence used in examining the study on The Nigeria civil war 1967-1970 and its political impact on the IGBO NATION .it is organized in line with the objectives and research questions of the study. Specificallyit analyzes the political impact of the Nigerian civil war on the IGBO NATION, the extent to which the war affected the political representation and participation of the IGBO people within the Nigerian state and it identifies the strategies adopted for post-war recovery and resilience among the IGBO people.

Inorder to analyze the political influence of the Nigerian civil war on the igbo nation, it is important to examine the political events that preceded the outbreak of the war. The military coup of January 15,1966 which was led by major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and other young

military officers was presented as an attempt to eliminate corruption, tribalism , and political instability that characterised the first Republic. During the coup several prominent northern and Western political leaders such as The Prime Minister Sir Tafawa Balewa, sir Ahmadu Bello and Chief Samuel Akintola were killed while some notable Igbo figures were survived, this brought about the Northerners perception that it was an ethnic coup planned by the igbos in order to dominate over Nigeria. This perception destroyed the fragile trust among ethnic groups and altered inter-ethnic relations within the federation.

Moreso, the handing over of power to Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi by the Military to become the first military head of state further intensified suspicion of the Northerners. Aguiyi Ironsi promulgated a decree no 34 of 1966, this decree sought to replace the federal structure with a unitary system of government but it was perceived by the Northerner leaders as a way by which the Igbos plan to centralize power in their favour . Furthermore the 1966 coup triggered a retaliatory military counter- coup in July 1966 leading to the assassination of Ironsi and several Igbo military officers. One of the most tragic and direct causes of the Nigerian civil war was the widespread massacre of the Igbo people living in northern cities such as Kano, Kaduna, Jos, and Zaria and the destruction of properties belonging to the Igbo people, many victims were brutally murdered while others fled in large numbers back to the eastern region. Historians estimate that between 30,000 to 50,000 Igbos lost their lives during the massacre.

The inability of the federal government to effectively and efficiently protect the lives of the Igbos and their properties weakened confidence in the Nigerian state among many easterners.

Consequently, Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the military governor of the Eastern region, demanded for autonomy and security of the Igbo nation.

Attempt for a peaceful resolution in Aburi conference held in Ghana in January 1967 failed due to disagreement over the implementation of the agreement between Ojukwu and General Yakubu Gowon under the mediation of Joseph Arthur Ankrah which advocate for a restructuring of the Nigerian state into a loose federation in which regions would enjoy greater autonomy. Upon reaching Nigeria General Yakubu Gowon refused going ahead with the agreement while Ojukwu maintained that the Aduri should be implemented, this contributed to the declaration of the Republic of Biafra on 30 May 1967 and the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war. This development created the foundation for the long term political consequences experienced by the Igbo nation after the war. The memories of the massacre, the failure of political negotiation and the defeat of Biafra brought fear and perception among many IGBO people that they had become politically vulnerable within the Nigerian federation. This perception has continued to influence political behaviour. ethnic consciousness, advocacy for equity and contemporary agitation movement in the south east. Therefore, the political influence of the civil war cannot be understood without examining and analyzing the chain of events beginning with the January 1966 coup, the counter coup, the anti Igbo pogroms and the failure of the Aburi Accord.

4.1. The political influence of the Nigerian civil war on the Igbo nation

This part will concentrate on analyzing the political status of the Igbo nation before the Nigerian civil war and after the civil war.

4.1.1 The political status of the Igbo nation before the Nigerian civil war

Before the emergence of the Nigerian civil war, the Igbos occupied prominent and strategic positions in Nigeria's political and administrative structure. The Igbo political leaders played an important role in the development of the Nigeria state. One of the prominent notable figure was Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, who was a leading nationalist and one of the foremost architects of

Nigeria's independence movement and early political development. He served not only as a Governor general 1963 but Nigeria's first president in the first Republic in 1963. Similarly, Dr Micheal Iheonukara Okpara, premier of the Eastern Region between 1959 and 1966, transformed the Eastern Region into one of the fast growing economies in Africa through agriculture and industrial policies.

Also, within the military, many senior officers of Igbo origin held influential positions before the war. Their presence within the armed forces reflected the growing integration of the igbo nation into national institutions during the early post- independence period. Similarly, the National council of Nigerian citizens(NCNC), drew significant support from the Eastern Region and emerged as one of the major political parties in Nigeria's first Republic.

The above analysis proves that before the Nigerian civil war, the Igbo nation occupied an important position in the Nigerian political structure. The Eastern Region had significant political influence and participated effectively in governance and in the contribution to national development.

4.1.2 political changes experienced by the Igbo nation after the Nigerian civil war.

After the Nigerian civil war which lasted for 3 years from 1967- 1970, So many scholars debated that the political influence and participation of the igbo nation dropped considerably. In as much as General Yakubu Gowon introduced the policy of “ Victor, no Vanquished”, many IGBO elites argue that full political reintegration has not been achieved.A

study of successful political leadership from 1970 to contemporary times further reveals this pattern . Prominent leadership position at the federal level has largely been occupied by individuals from other geopolitical zones. Examine for instance the military administration and the civilian administration starting from General Yakubu Gowon(1966-1975) , General Murtala Muhammad, General Olusegun Obasanjo, president Shehu Shagari, General Muhammad Buhari, General Ibrahim Babangida, Chief Ernest Shonekan, General Sani-Abacha (1993-1998), down to the present day president Bola Ahmed Tinubu all emerged from other regions outside the South - East . Although some Igbo politicians occupied secondary leadership positions, the south- East was often perceived as having limited access to prominent national political positions compared to some other regions. One issue usually cited by scholars is the absence of an Igbo executive president of Nigeria. After Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe who served as a ceremonial president in the first there has not been any other Igbo president since the introduction of the presidential system in 1979. This has continued to fuel debates about political inclusion, federal balance, equity , restructuring and national integration.

Study reveals that one of the most immediate consequences of the war was the weakening of the collective political influence previously enjoyed by the Eastern region. The creation of states before and after the war further reduced the former Eastern region into smaller administrative units, which resulted to the reducing of its capacity to function as a unified political bloc within the federation. This development altered the balance of political power in Nigeria and influenced the bargaining power of the Igbo nation in national affairs.

Another consequence of the war was that there was a serious generated political distrust. Many IGBO citizens believed that the post-war political arrangement was unfavourable to their aspirations and interest. Feelings of exclusion and marginalization became increasingly

pronounced as key federal position came under the control of other regions. The renewed separatist agitation demonstrates how memories of the civil war continues to influence political attitudes among many IGBO citizens. Supporters of these movement often cite issues like perceived marginalization from federal appointments, infrastructure deficits, and the absence of an Igbo presidency.

Nevertheless, despite all these challenges, the Igbo has remained politically active in Nigeria. Prominent leaders like Dr Alex Ekwueme, senator Ken Nnamani, Dr Chris Ngige, Chief Rochasokoro the last but not the least Peter Obi have played important roles in national politics and has contributed effectively in the democratic process of Nigeria despite the impact of the Nigerian civil war on the political status of the Igbo nation.

4.2 Critical analysis of the political representation and participation of the Igbo nation in Nigeria after the civil war.

This section analyses how the Nigerian civil war affected the political representation and participation of the Igbo nation. Evidence gotten from documentary sources, historical records, scholarly works and previous empirical research indicates that before the Nigerian civil war, the south east participated effectively in the Nigerian state which made them the region with one of the country's most prominent political leaders, including Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and many other whose administration was widely recognized for their contributions to development achievements in the Nigerian state. The political representation and participation of the south east had great influence and was evident in the national decision making processes, public administration and Constitutional negotiations during the first Republic in 1963.

Furthermore, the outbreak of the Civil war and the eventual defeat of the Biafra in 1970 altered the political landscape for the Igbo nation. Findings in this study reveal that many IGBO people

perceived the post-war period as one characterised by increased marginalization and limited access to strategic positions in the Nigerian state. Thus this feeling was strengthened by the fact that many former Biafran political and military elite were removed from positions of authority following the war. An analysis carried out suggested that Nigerians political history after 1970 shows that in as much as the Igbo people were reintegrated into the Nigerian state, their participation in the highest level of political leadership remained limited unlike the south south and south west which has produced several heads of state and president. This argument is further supported by a comment made by Kenneth Okonkwo an actor and politician in a political debate where he mentioned that there is yet to be an Igbo presidency and that it was time for the south east to rule . He maintained that it has nothing to do with ethnicity, but it has everything to do with justice, Kenneth stated that the Igbo nation are the majority tribe and it was the turn of the south east to produce the next president because from 1999 till date the Igbo nation has not produced a president or vice President but the south south has and the south west. This analysis proves that there is perceived political marginalization amongst the Igbo people even after 50years of the civil war . Despite these challenges the Igbo people are still in the active representation and participation of the democratic process in Nigeria through elections, political parties, legislative representation and public service. One significant example was the emergency of Dr Alex Ekwueme as Nigeria's first vice President under Shehu shagari in 1979-1983. He played an important role in Nigeria's democratic transition and constitutional development. Similarly, several prominent Igbo politicians have occupied strategic positions in government. The study also finds that the south east has consistently participated in electoral politics through the election of Governors, senators, members of house of representatives, and other political

office holders. This participation shows that the Igbo nation have remained politically active within Nigeria's democratic systems despite historical grievances linked to the civil war.

Nevertheless, documentary evidence reveals that political representation and participation alone has not completely eliminated the feeling of marginalization. Many political organizations and socio-cultural groups including Ohanaeze Ndigbo, have continuously advocated for greater inclusion of the south- East in national leadership structure. The findings postulate that infrastructure development and federal appointments have frequently been used to evaluate their level of political inclusion. Whether or not their arguments are true, the perception itself has influenced political attitude and voting behavior within the region.

In addition, other important findings relate to the emergencies of the pro-biafra movement after the restoration of democratic rule. Organizations such as the movement for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB), Founded by Chief Ralph Uwazuruike, and the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB), led by Nnamdi Kanu, gained popularity because there was still perceived political dissatisfaction and exclusion. The rise of these movements reveals that many young people in the south East continue to interpret contemporary political challenges through the historical experience of the civil war. The Igbo nation has remained strong in political events and civic engagement. The emergency of nationally recognized political figures such as Peter Obi has further shown that the igbo people have continued to demonstrate relevance in national politics. The Nigerian civil war did not totally eliminate the Igbo participation in politics. Rather, it only transformed the nature of their participation. While the Nigerian civil war weakened the confidence of the igbo people politically in the immediate post-war period, the South East region known for their resilient spirit gradually re- engaged with the

Nigerian political system. However, unresolved concerns towards representation, inclusion and access to national leadership continue to influence political attitudes within the region.

4.3 Strategies for Post-War Recovery and Resilience

This section will analyse the identified the strategies adopted for post-war recovery and resilience among the Igbo people after the civil war. Findings from documentary sources, historical records, and scholarly publications demonstrates that after the Nigerian civil war various policies were adopted to help the Igbo nation reintegrate into the Nigerian system. Specifically, it will be analysing the policy of Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation, Reintegration of former combatants and displaced persons, Economic reconstruction and national development, and promotion of national unity and inclusion

4.3.1 Policy of Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation: Following the end of the Nigerian Civil War in January 1970, the Federal Military Government under Yakubu Gowon introduced the policy of “Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation” as the foundation for rebuilding Nigeria after the devastating conflict. This strategy was designed to heal the divisions created by the war, restore destroyed infrastructure, and reintegrate citizens from the former Biafran territories into the Nigerian federation.

The reconciliation aspect of the policy focused on promoting national unity, forgiveness, and peaceful coexistence among Nigerians despite the bitterness generated by the conflict. Gowon’s declaration of “No Victor, No Vanquished” was intended to reduce hostility and prevent retaliatory violence against the defeated Biafrans. This policy encouraged Nigerians to see themselves as members of one united country rather than enemies divided by ethnicity or political differences. According to Heaton (2018), the reconciliation policy played an important role in preventing further ethnic violence and preserving Nigeria’s territorial unity after the war.

The reconstruction component concentrated on rebuilding infrastructure destroyed during the war. Roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, markets, communication systems, and public institutions in the Eastern Region had suffered extensive damage due to military operations and economic blockade. The government therefore allocated resources toward restoring these facilities to revive economic and social activities. Reconstruction was necessary to reconnect affected communities with the rest of the country and restore public confidence in the government.

The rehabilitation aspect involved assisting war victims, displaced persons, widows, orphans, and former soldiers to return to normal life. Many people had lost their homes, businesses, and means of livelihood during the conflict. Rehabilitation programmes attempted to provide relief materials, shelter, employment opportunities, and social support for affected populations. According to Stremlau (2023), the rehabilitation strategy was important for reducing suffering and stabilizing communities devastated by the war.

Despite these efforts, critics argued that the implementation of the policy was uneven and failed to fully address the grievances of many Eastern Nigerians. Nevertheless, the policy of reconciliation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation remains one of the most significant post-war recovery strategies adopted in Nigerian history.

4.3.2 Reintegration of Former Combatants and Displaced Persons: The reintegration of former combatants and displaced civilians was another critical strategy for post-war recovery and resilience in Nigeria. After the war, thousands of ex-Biafran soldiers surrendered to federal forces and needed to be absorbed back into society to prevent renewed violence and instability. Reintegration was therefore necessary to transform former fighters into productive citizens and restore social order.

The government introduced disarmament measures aimed at collecting weapons from former combatants, weapons as the Ogbunigwe which was one of the popular bombs the igbos used during the war and discouraging further armed resistance. Ex-soldiers were encouraged to return to civilian occupations such as farming, trading, education, and public service. Some former military personnel were also reintegrated into the Nigerian armed forces and other government institutions. According to Madiebo (1980), reintegration was essential because failure to properly absorb ex-combatants could have led to rebellion, criminality, or insurgency after the war.

In addition to former soldiers, millions of civilians displaced by the conflict required resettlement and reintegration into their communities. Many families had fled from combat zones and refugee camps due to insecurity, starvation, and destruction of property. The government and humanitarian organizations therefore worked toward resettling displaced persons, restoring family ties, and rebuilding local communities. Reintegration also involved restoring trust and social relationships among ethnic groups that had become deeply divided during the war. Communities needed to overcome feelings of hatred, revenge, and suspicion that developed during the conflict. According to Lederach (2023), sustainable peace after civil conflict depends largely on rebuilding relationships and encouraging reconciliation among former enemies.

However, reintegration efforts in Nigeria faced several challenges. Many former Biafrans complained of discrimination, unemployment, and political marginalization after the war. The famous “twenty pounds policy,” which limited the amount of money returned to former Biafrans regardless of their previous bank savings, created resentment and economic hardship. Despite these challenges, reintegration remained an important strategy for restoring peace and preventing renewed conflict.

4.3.2 Economic Reconstruction and National Development: Economic reconstruction was one of the most important strategies adopted to promote post-war recovery and resilience in Nigeria. The civil war caused severe destruction to economic activities, especially in the Eastern Region where industries, markets, transportation systems, and agricultural production were heavily disrupted. As a result, rebuilding the economy became necessary for restoring national stability and improving the living conditions of citizens. The Federal Government invested in repairing roads, bridges, railways, airports, schools, hospitals, and public utilities destroyed during the conflict. Economic reconstruction also aimed at reviving trade and commercial activities that had collapsed during the war. According to Osaghae (2021), infrastructure development after the war was intended to reconnect isolated communities and promote national economic integration.

The discovery and expansion of petroleum production in the 1970s provided Nigeria with substantial oil revenue, which the government used to finance reconstruction and development projects. Large-scale public investments were made in transportation, education, housing, electricity, and industrial development. These investments were expected to reduce poverty, create employment opportunities, and strengthen public confidence in the Nigerian state. Agricultural production was also encouraged after the war to address food shortages and revive rural economies. Farmers displaced during the conflict were encouraged to return to their farms through agricultural support programmes and rural development initiatives.

Despite these efforts, economic recovery was uneven across regions. Many Eastern Nigerians believed that federal reconstruction programmes favored other parts of the country while neglecting the former Biafran territories. The “twenty pounds policy” further weakened the financial capacity of many Eastern families and businesses. According to Heaton (2018), although post-war economic development contributed to national growth, it did not completely

eliminate feelings of economic marginalization among some groups. Nevertheless, economic reconstruction remains a vital strategy in post-conflict societies because economic hardship and unemployment can create conditions for renewed violence and instability.

4.3.4 Promotion of National Unity and Inclusion: The promotion of national unity and integration was another major strategy adopted to strengthen resilience after the civil war. Since ethnic rivalry and regionalism contributed significantly to the outbreak of the conflict, the Nigerian government considered national integration necessary for maintaining peace and preventing future divisions. One important initiative introduced after the war was the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps in 1973. The programme was designed to promote unity by posting university graduates to regions outside their ethnic or cultural backgrounds for one year of national service. Through this programme, young Nigerians graduates were expected to interact with people from different ethnic and religious groups, thereby promoting understanding, tolerance, and patriotism.

The government also established unity schools across different parts of the country to encourage interaction among students from diverse backgrounds. Educational curricula emphasized national history, civic responsibility, and peaceful coexistence. According to Nnoli (2022), educational integration programmes were necessary because ethnic mistrust had become deeply rooted in Nigerian society.

Another important strategy was the adoption of the federal character principle, which aimed to ensure equitable representation of different ethnic groups in government appointments, public institutions, and resource allocation. This policy was intended to reduce fears of domination by any particular ethnic group and strengthen citizens' sense of belonging within the federation. National orientation campaigns, cultural festivals, sports competitions, and inter-

ethnic dialogue programmes were also used to foster national identity. According to Osaghae (2021), promoting national integration was essential because the survival of Nigeria depended on its ability to manage ethnic diversity peacefully. Although ethnic tensions still exist in Nigeria, these inclusion strategies contributed significantly to preserving national unity after the war.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study examined the Nigerian Civil War with particular focus on its political impact on the Igbo nation. Findings from the study revealed that the Nigerian Civil War was not merely a military confrontation but a deeply rooted political and ethnic crisis that significantly transformed the political position, identity, and participation of the Igbo people in post-war Nigeria. The study found that the war emerged from a combination of ethnic rivalry, political instability, military coups, anti-Igbo violence and the failure of the Aburi Accord that culminated in the secession of Biafra in 1967.

Secondly, the study found that the January 1966 military coup and the July 1966 counter-coup intensified ethnic suspicion and hostility against the Igbo people. The killings of prominent Northern leaders during the January coup created the perception that the coup was an Igbo conspiracy for political domination. Consequently, the counter-coup and subsequent massacres of Igbos in Northern Nigeria generated fear, insecurity, and a sense of political alienation among the Igbo population. These events ultimately influenced the declaration of the Republic of Biafra under Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu.

The third major finding of the study was that the defeat of Biafra in 1970 had long-term political consequences for the Igbo nation. Before the war, the Igbo occupied strategic political and administrative positions within the Nigerian state. Prominent figures in the likes of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dr Michael Okpara, Dr. Akanu Ibim and many more senior military officers. However, after the Nigerian civil war, the political influence of the Igbo nation dropped considerably. Although the Federal Government introduced the policy of “Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation,” many Igbo people continued to perceive themselves as politically marginalized and limited within the Nigerian federation. The study discovered that the Igbo experienced limited access to key political positions, military leadership, and strategic federal appointments after the war. This perception of exclusion contributed to feelings of injustice and weakened the sense of belonging among many Igbos in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the study found that the political impact of the civil war continues to shape the political representation and participation of the Igbo nation. Reviews from various political administrations showed that the Igbos have had active participation in the democratic processes of the Nigerian state, through electoral politics, legislative representation and business leadership. However, the study shows that there have been persistent concerns regarding underrepresentation in strategic positions nationally, military leadership and presidency. The findings indicate that the inability of an Igbo candidate to emerge as a president since the end of the civil war has strengthened the perception of political marginalization and exclusion among sections of the Igbo population. This has resulted in contemporary Igbo nationalism and separatist movements in Nigeria. Organizations such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) emerged partly as reactions to perceived marginalization, political exclusion, and unresolved grievances associated with the

civil war. The persistence of pro-Biafra agitations demonstrates that many issues connected to the war remain unresolved in contemporary Nigerian politics.

Another finding of the study was that the Nigerian Civil War strengthened ethnic consciousness and identity among the Igbo people. The shared experiences of violence, displacement, starvation, and collective suffering during the war contributed to a stronger sense of Igbo solidarity and nationalism. The study observed that memories of the war continue to influence political discussions, historical narratives, and inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria.

The study additionally found that the Federal Government's post-war integration policies achieved mixed results. Programmes such as the policy of "No Victor, No Vanquished," the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps, and federal character principles were introduced to promote national unity and reconciliation. However, many political commentators and scholars argued that the implementation of these policies did not completely eliminate ethnic distrust, political imbalance, and regional inequality in Nigeria.

Finally, the study found that the Nigerian Civil War remains one of the most significant events in Nigeria's political history because of its lasting effects on national unity, federalism, ethnic relations, and political development. The war exposed the dangers of ethnic politics, political exclusion, and poor governance in a multi-ethnic society. The study concluded that genuine national integration, equity, justice, and inclusive governance are essential for preventing future conflicts and strengthening peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

5.2 Conclusion

The study examined the Nigerian Civil War with particular emphasis on its political impact on the Igbo nation. The study concluded that the civil war remains one of the most significant and

transformative events in Nigeria's political history because of its profound effects on national unity, ethnic relations, and political development of the Igbo people. The conflict was not merely a military confrontation but a manifestation of deep-rooted political instability, ethnic rivalry, colonial legacies, regional imbalance, and failures of leadership that characterized Nigeria's post-independence period.

The study further concluded that the January 1966 coup, the July counter-coup, and the massacre of Igbos in Northern Nigeria created fear, insecurity, and political alienation among the Igbo people, which eventually led to the declaration of the Republic of Biafra under Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. The outbreak of the war therefore reflected the inability of the Nigerian state to effectively manage ethnic diversity, political grievances, and constitutional crises during the First Republic.

The study maintained that although the civil war ended in 1970, many of its political consequences remain visible in contemporary Nigeria till date. Issues relating to political inclusion, federal appointment, power sharing, national integration, and ethnic relations continue to bring about debate among scholars, policymakers and political actors. These continuous debates suggest that the political legacy of the war remains an important factor in understanding Nigeria's democratic development

The study also concluded that although the Federal Government adopted policies such as "Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation" after the war, many Igbos continued to perceive themselves as politically marginalized within the Nigerian federation. Feelings of exclusion from major political appointments, infrastructural development, and national power structures contributed to persistent grievances and dissatisfaction among sections of the Igbo

population. These unresolved issues have continued to influence contemporary political agitations and pro-Biafra movements in Nigeria.

.Finally, the study concluded that the memories and consequences of the civil war continue to shape political discourse, ethnic relations, and national integration in contemporary Nigeria. Therefore, there is a need for sincere reconciliation, inclusive governance, historical understanding, and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms to strengthen unity and prevent the recurrence of violent conflict in the country.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study on the Nigerian Civil War and its political impact on the Igbo nation, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Government at all levels should implement rules and policies that encourages political integration, ethnic tolerance and national reconciliation through dialogue, equitable resource allocation and obedience to the federal character principle. These measures will improve inter-ethnic relations and improve the political participation of the Igbo nation in the Nigerian state.
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria should promote inclusive governance by ensuring fair political representation and appointment of the Igbo people in key national political appointments, security institutions, and decision-making processes. This would help reduce perceptions of political marginalization that emerged after the Nigerian Civil War.
3. The government should formulate and implement comprehensive post-war recovery policies that focus on social rehabilitation, and political reintegration of affected populations. Such policies should prioritize communities that suffered severe destruction during the Nigerian Civil War, particularly in the South-East region.

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