

The Nigerian Elites and the Dialectics of Identity Politics in Nigeria: A Discourse on Biafran Agitation

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Abstract: This study interrogates how the Nigerian elites are recreating identity politics vis-a-vis the recurring Biafran Agitations. Despite fifty-one years after the civil war, the Biafran agitations have reappeared in an unprecedented magnitude amidst attempts by the federal government to suppress the wave of agitations. As it stands now the upsurge of renewed agitations appears to be implicated in the elite's activities in identity politics that have remained deeply rooted in the Nigerian polity and as such, contributed largely to pockets of violence in Nigeria. Thus, the study examines what accounts for the continued identity politics and the dialectics of Biafran agitations in Nigeria despite no victor no vanquished at the end of the civil war and the return of democratic governance in Nigeria. Anchored in Elites Theory, data for the study were generated through the documentary instrument and analyzed using the analytical inductive technique. The finding reveals that while the avowal of identity politics has come to be regarded as having inherently divisive nature, in Nigeria, the hallmarks of identity politics and the dialectics of Biafran agitations are self-created, internally crafted and driven by the elites in Nigeria thereby fracturing not only the political but also the social unity of Nigeria. Taking cognizance of these, the study recommends that in order to curb the politics of identity and secessionist agitations in Nigeria, there are the need for Nigeria to return to regionalism.

Keywords: Biafra Agitations, Dialectics, Elitism, Identity Politics, and Regionalism

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I. INTRODUCTION

Identity-based agitations in recent years have become a regular character of the states in International scene. The states in post-colonial Africa have taken a larger share of these identities based politics of agitation making it the most identified identity-based politics agitators in the world. What accounts for these wave of Identity politics recreating Biafran agitation in Africa and Nigeria in particular, made Michael (2001), argued that ethnicity and nationalism in post-cold war Africa have turned out to be the highest indicative parameters responsible for identity-based agitations just as Western Europe in the first half of the 20th century and Asia and Africa in the 1960s. The import is indicative that few years after the independence of African states, the wave of agitations resurrected thereby cutting across the East to West, and North to the South States in Africa. Therefore, part of the narratives is that the continent of Africa suffered the worst balkanization in human history and that has given rise to a series of identities based agitations within and around the continent. Also, that the divide and rule system of the colonialist are implicated in the current identity-based politics and agitation vis-a-vis the modus of the operand of governance adopted in Africa. In Nigeria precisely, it became evident that six years after independence, a full-blown case of ethno-religious identity-based conflict culminated in the first genocide of the 20th century (Remi, 2016)

Therefore, fifty-seven years after independence, identity-based politics have continued to shadow the Nigerian state. The import is that the Nigerian state is faced with the reality of the ghost of the thirty months of civil war in Nigeria. And as such, the Biafra quests for secessionist federation have continued to raise fundamental questions as regards the unity and integration of the Nigerian state. Unfortunately, the place of the Igbo elites in the Nigerian society on the Biafra agitations over the years has remained passive. The operational inactiveness and indifferent to the Biafran agitations by the Igbo elites have cause for concern. It appears that the agitation for Biafra has remained a cause celebre by the youth and for the youth and not for the Igbo elites. The ideology and identity for Biafra have taken the shape and assumption of the youth marginalized against the elites beneficiaries. It becomes clear that following recent happenings and reactions to suffix that the Igbo elites are tight-lipped over the identity politics of Biafra agitations. The implication is that the continued

silences by the elites in the South East Region speak volume of the position of the elite's alienation towards one cause for Biafra and the recreation of the identity politics by the elites.

On this, we suffice that the killing of demonstrators demanding the restoration of the sovereignty of the Republic of Biafra by the Nigerian Security Operatives recently across the South-eastern region was indeed not only unfortunate but also the height of atrocity. In fact, the most notable of all was the incidents that took place in Onitsha and Aba where several lives of the Indigenous People of Biafra were killed clandestinely. Even the prescription of IPOB as a terrorist organization by the Nigerian Army and Federal Government did not raise the consciousness of the Igbo elites to speak unanimous and unambiguous on the issues raised by Biafra. It is important to state that anyone that believes that identity-based agitations can be stopped by the force of arms alone is not a good student of world history. This is because, the more people are killed, tortured and imprisoned, the more agitations and agitator will resurrect, blossom and grow in lips and bounds.

We see identity as a share distinguished trait of a group against other groups both in character, speech, and orientation that aimed to unite that particular group. Alubo (2009), maintained that identity politics is used to denote the process of categorizing and de-categorizing people into groups on the bases of shared and presumed similarities. The point of articulation is that identity apart from the shared distinguished trait generally raises questions on the centrality of citizen-based shared values and believes because of its exclusion and inclusive character. Ntalaja (2012), maintained that social exclusion is not only a function of class and other identity-based distinctions, but social exclusion has increased the level of ethnic wars in Africa. The point is that social exclusion is a symptom of the reawakening of wide verities of issues associated with opportunities, rights, entitlements, and privileges. Besides, in order to actualize the inadequacies of nature, identity becomes inescapable within the preview of groups shared value and principles and a sense of belonging in the scheme of things. Based on this, Kuo and Margalit (2012), assert that in order to address the issue of social exclusion which is a product of identity-based agitations, we must answer and determine what guide identity, we must understand the political significance of one's proclaimed identity. As a result, following the end of the cold war on ideology, politics of ideology was replaced in Africa by politics of identity that focus on the perspectives and interests of groups: race, class, religion ethnicity, and gender (Taoheed 2006).

Nearly five decades after Nigeria's bloody civil war ended, identity politics have assumed the direction of ethnic agitations in Nigeria. Alubo (2006), averred that one striking figure of the post-military era in 1999 is the frequent civil strives and crisis along and among ethnic and religious groups, identity politics and attendant violence that have to assume unprecedented dimensions. The fact is that the increasing political relevance of identity-based politics that have continued to rare its ugly head in the Nigerian states are by-product of the divisive mechanism of manipulative and unscrupulous political elites in Nigeria. In fact, despite successive government effort at quelling the agitations and finding the lasting solutions for Biafra quest for a separate entity, the Biafra identity agitation have continually defeated all odds ascribed to it.

Mustapha (2004) argued that the politics of identity are central to the Nigerian democratization process and as such, a threat to the unity of Nigeria. This is because the process and strategy of molding and developing a nation-state is as intriguing as it is challenging when the components parts of the intended states are perhaps socio-politically diverse (Franc Ter, 2016) The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) precisely on the 26 August, 2004, was formed by Ralph Uwazurike's in 1999 when he called on the Igbo both in the Southeast and the cities across the country to shut down their businesses of which was a success (Ojukwu, 2009) and subsequently in May 2005, it embarked on demonstrations in Canada, France, Germany, and Italy and also established a radio station in the US for the purposes of reaching out to Igbos in the Diaspora and attracting international attention. Starting with Uwazurike's MAS SOB to Kanu's IPOB, there have been countless protests with each coming administrations. Sometimes it has led to outright detention without trial of Biafra protesters or their leaders.

Therefore, the agitations through identity politics by Biafra and the continued silence of the elite has made many to view the act by the Igbo elites as a sign of cowardice and self-defeat syndrome. By and large, the study, interrogate what factor account for continued Igbo elite silence in the face of mass killings of the Biafran as well as investigate why despite these brutal approaches of the Nigerian Army and the Federal Government, the states governors and representatives of the eastern regions have failed to take proactive steps in tackling and presenting a uniform voice on the Biafra issues. Through this, we x-ray why huge suspicion exists between the Biafra agitators and the Igbo elites and representatives. All this will be possible by taking the elite theory as a form of departure in understanding the dialectics of the Biafra agitations and the elite self-defeat syndrome. Doing this, we conceptualize the discourses on identity-based politics in Nigeria, a suitable framework of analysis, methodology, and the dialectics surrounding identity-based agitations by Biafra. Finally, the paper draws conclusive remarks concerning possible means to address the identity-based agitations in a pluralistic society like Nigeria.

II. LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL DISCOURSES

Opinions vary as to what constitute the narratives that accounted for identity-based politics. Classified here as broadly into two: material and non-material. However, we identified the identity-based politics and its agitations in Nigeria as a product of these two influencers. On the former, Sanchez (2006), believed that the root cause of identity-based politics is traceable to material causes. He argued that as regard identity-based politics, emphasized must be placed on the material as the underlying cause. This perspective is strongly influenced by Marxist who believed that identity as a structural problem are caused by the alienation of the workers and other marginalized groups in a society by the bourgeoisie and this, create a disparity between the two classes from which social exploitation, social exclusion, and oppression take place (Bernstein, 2005). For the proponents of the material orientation of identity politics, economic inequality and economic exploitation form the root causes of identity-based political agitations in any society. On the other hand, Bondi (1993), differs on the causes of identity-based politics by the material and Marxist scholars. He argued that culture, social values, traditions, language, belief systems, and technology are the major suppliers of identity-based politics. They argued on the role of religious beliefs, language and charismatic authority shaped the decision and behaviour of groups and individuals. According to Sawyer (2006), historical speeches and language of Martin Luther King was a major influence of social movements in the 1950s in America and other parts of the world. However, Critics such as Bell (1975) and Bernstein (2005), maintained that such social movements' role played by the language, belief system, and social values cannot be relevant in the contemporary society.

In defence of the non-material causes of identity-based politics, we aver that in everyday conversation, identity easily refers to the qualities and attitudes of any group that makes such group feel that his own character is unique from the others. For Eghosa and Rotimi (2005), identity is seen as any group attribute that provides recognition, reference, affinity, and meaning for individual members of the group, acting collectively or individually. Identity, therefore, create awareness for a group, and differences in the character of the individual in that group. Reflecting on this, Jega (2003), believes that identity is largely about identification with and commitment to shared values and beliefs in a social collectivist into which a group or person belongs. It is vital to maintaining that although, an individual may have multiple identities and while such identities are more or fixed, identity consciousness is flexible which an offshoot of mobilization, provocation, are and agitation that are central to identity-based politics (Jega, 2003). Hence, these offshoots provide us with the essential character of identity-based politics that is of conflict-based bearing in mind the view of Lasswell in (1936), who see politics as "who get what, when and how". That is why, Horowitz (1985), Diamond (1987), posited that the central point from the conflict-based perspective, which cannot really be disputed, is that these mobilization, provocation, and agitation that took different structures or configurations of identities do generate different layers or patterns of conflict which the Biafra agitation cannot be exempted.

In view of this, Amadiume (2000), argued that the cause of Biafra agitations in view of identity-based politics played in Nigeria are engineered from arsenal for the marginalization of South East Region since the end of the civil war boasts a motley assortment of deadly peacetime weapon. This marginalization may be in forms of economic strangulation and political alienation amongst others which have reignited identity politics and the Biafra agitations. Regrettable, while the identity politics continues, the Igbo elite have remained silent in the face of these agitations. The reason is that the issues surrounding identity politics in Nigeria have generated controversies only in the minds of the citizenry against the thinking of the elites. Probably because for years the elites and ruling class have failed to address the surroundings issues that give rise to identity politics in Nigeria. On the other hand, Smith (2015) and Akinwotu (2016), maintained that "the failure of Nigeria's successive governments to engage with this emotionally charged chapter of the country's history and the notion of a pan-Igbo ethnicity laid the foundation for the issue of Biafra's independence to resurface. In fact, identity politics and agitations are the product of a civil war of 1967 and those who died in it are still not officially commemorated, thereby giving a window for conspiratorial voices, like Kanu's, to thrive on the underlying suspicions that remain between the Igbo and Hausa populations.

Separately, Ter ABAGEN (2016), linked identity-based politics to the activities and mechanism of the elites. He asserts that the cosmological values of the group the ruling elite belong to lay the firm foundation of the constant reinforcement of the in-group dichotomy that has constantly reinforced the mutual fear, dislike, and suspicion the cogent ethnic groups in Nigeria have had towards each other. That is why the attempts to forge a common platform for national cohesiveness and identity in Nigeria has rather been arduous and without the desired level of success and attainment. These particular reasons given by scholars such as Lentz (1995), Jibo (1996), and Nnoli (2008) is the strong identification by the ruling elite with the fundamental norms and beliefs of ethnic cleavages. To buttress the inherent struggle of the country, Ebegbulem (2012), posits that since Nigeria achieved political independence in 1960, there has been a struggle among the various ethnic nationalities in the country over control of political power and natural resources.

Therefore, the struggle amount to identity politics played by each region of the country for a place in the control of resources.

Importantly, the fear of domination and struggle among rivalry groups among over the issues of power sharing in Nigeria are part and parcel of the issue of identity politics in Nigeria. Thus, Remi (2016), maintained that the prevent framing of such incendiary issues in Nigeria remains identity politics that have continual been a recurring decimal in Nigeria socio-political formation since I 966. The point is that Nigeria, generally, comprises of groups competing for not only for resources within the political landscape but also for the assertion of their various identities (Emmanuel 2017). Thus, critically speaking, identity politics is at the centre of the neo-Biafra agitations with a feel of neglect of the old eastern region by successive government. As a neo-Biafra agitation, identity politics becomes a group concept in the sense that it is based on groups identifying with the belief system of that group, delineation in a group membership, and its traits from which responses to questions on the existence of such groups can be expressed and answered (Olick, 1999).

Raheem, Oyeleye, Adeniji., & Aladekoyi, (2014), posit that the political-economic activities of the few Nigerian elites and petit bourgeoisie who took over the administration of the country after political independence in 1960 undoubtedly perpetuated the development of spatial inequalities and identity that has now taken different forms of violence and shapes of crisis in Nigeria such as ethnic, religious and political. As a result of this, we insist that these spatial identities played politics created fears during the 1950s in the period preceding independence. Commenting on the place of regional inequalities, as the cause of identity-based politics in Nigeria, Ebenezer (1995) cited in Aladekoyi, *et al* (2014), assert that the present overwhelming regional inequalities that are products of agitations are likely to have evolved during the one hundred year-1861- 1960 period in Nigeria. The implication is that any society where the regional imbalance is noticed, there is the tendency for agitations by groups which is traceable to the cumulative activities of the ruling elites in that society. This view made Richard (2005), believes that identity politics is nothing new because politics at its emergence in human history is identities; and all identities is political. Therefore, what underlines the rationale for every decision in politics is it in the developed or developing countries is identity. That is why identity politics have constituted the fulcrum of all human history as related to the governance of men.

III. THEORETICAL FRAME OF ANALYSIS

We anchored our analysis on the proposition emanating from Elite theory as the framework of analysis. Accordingly, Chuma in Onu, Umeriruike. Biereenu-Nnabugwu and Nwankwo (2009), believed that the Elite theory arose as critique of egalitarian ideas such as those related to the principles of democracy and socialism, and is rooted in the philosophical idea that every society is divided into two major groups: the elite and the non-elite; the rulers and the ruled; the political class and the non-political class: and the governing and the non-governing etc. It is important we express the view that the concept of elite is considered and ascribed by many to Weber (1922) as the founding father of elite theory due to his work on power and domination (1922). However, the theory was developed by classical elitists Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858 1941), and Robert Michels (1876-1936).

Generally. This scholar believed that the idea and concept of democracy for instance is and was an illusion or imaginary because in every society a privileged group is known as the minority (elite) an: in existence to exercise political power on behalf of the average citizens. Elites are referred to as a particular set of people who distant themselves based on special characteristics such as economic, social, political, and military possess within any society (Ademola and Adenuga. 2015). Apart from being a particular set of a group with distinguished character, elitism is selected groups that are superior in terms of ability or qualities to the remaining members of a group. In fact, these superior groups are drawn disproportionately from the upper socio-economic strata of the society; they share a consensus on the basic values of the social system, on its preservation, and the allocation of the value of the society Onu et al (2009).

In a classical elitist literature, elitism was often defined as the capacity, personality, and skill. That is why, Gusset (1883-1955), believes that a nation's greatness depends on the capacity of the "people", "the crowd", "the masses" to locate their symbol in certain "chosen people", in any society on whom it pours out the vast stores of its vital enthusiasm. This "chosen people" Pareto (1935), sees as those who resembled the lion (domination by force) while "the crowd" are those who resembled the fox (domination by persuasion and skill), a viewpoint that is similar to Machiavelli's political philosophy. It is important to state that the elite believed that these dominations by persuasion and skill are vital for the proper organization of the unorganized majority. Here, we define elite as a dynamic dominant individual in a group within groups who have control and pilot affairs in that group in which he/she belongs. This dominant group aimed at maintaining the status quo, which is, maintaining the society in the form in which elite members continue to receive the benefit accruing to their position. Thus, Verma (1999), insist that these dominant individuals can be elite of lawyers, mechanics, thieves, and even elite of prostitutes. Accordingly, Yamokoski and Dubrow. (2008), argues that currently, these group of dynamic individuals are actors controlling resources, occupying the key position and

relating through power networks. Fundamentally, at the heart of the proponents of the elite theory is a clear presumption of the average citizen's inadequacies. Hence, the core assumption of the elite's theory includes:

- ❖ In every society, there is and must always be a minority that rules and that minority rule is the reality in all societies developed, underdeveloped, simple or complex.
- ❖ This minority that rules derived its original power almost invariably from force or coercive services such as the monopoly of military function. But over time, this coercive power is transformed into hegemony through utilization. That is mythical and ideological rationalizations.
- ❖ As an inevitable characteristic of the human society, the elite argues that they are necessary for any socio-political organization to function effectively. Within these minority, governing elites exist to take an active part in the running of government directly or indirectly and the non-governing elites set influence major decision of government through various means.
- ❖ The minority ruling circle is composed of all those who occupy commanding political positions. It is over time undergoes changes in different ways. At times, it is through a recruit of people from the lower strata of society into the ruling elite group. At other time, a new group is incorporated into the governing elite or by a complete replacement by a "counter-elite" through a revolution. These changes in the composition of the elite group have been termed circulation of elite.
- ❖ The changes in the composition of the elite group affect merely the form and not the structure of society, which remain at all times minority dominated.

In sum, the elite theory sees society as divided into major two groups namely: the elite and the average citizens. In applying the basic propositions of the elite theory to the study, it is pertinent to state here that the nature and structure of the elite politics in any society is a total reflection of the socio-political formation. Nwabueze (2002), posits that the socio-political formation is by nature, a form of that society that is the product of social positioning of individuals, groups and social classes with a dense network of social relation of subordination and domination between and among them. In Nigeria, from the era of colonialism to independence, military, and post-military era, the elites in Nigeria are at the climax of all struggles as nationalist, for political and economic interest. This is because by controlling the source of power, the political elite: the minorities assume the position in the distribution of power and organization of the social system on behalf of the average citizen at all levels of the society. Henry (2011), notes that elite circulation in Nigeria is drawn from the circle of minority membership with political influence and positions at the national executive echelon circulated among the same minority who are part and parcel of dominant groups. From independence till date, the minority ruling circle in Nigeria have constantly occupied and composed the commanding political positions.

Unfortunately, the elite since the return of democracy, have been seen to be sentimental, uncontrollably dependent, greedy or materialistic, and in most cases non-nationalistic (Adela and Adenuga, 2015). That is why, the quest for state power, dominance, and exploitation in Nigeria have therefore consisted only been an elite divisive struggle. In other word, politics in Nigeria be it at the local, senatorial, and national level have an elite contest. A contest that is exclusively executed by the elite and for the elites. In order to exclude the masses from participating, the elite set financial and legislative barriers to deny the "average" entries to political positions in Nigeria. The point is that in Nigeria because of these exclusive barriers, the political class or upper class constitute the minority who control and dominate the political system.

Based on this, as an inevitable characteristic of the Nigerian society, the elites become desperate and necessary for the socio-political governance in Nigeria to function effectively. This inevitability is traceable to the circulation and activities of these elites in Nigeria both in political, economic and social spheres etc which explain the general outcome of every decision in Nigeria as a consensus of the elites and how these elites exert influence on government. The reality of politics in Nigeria and its struggle for power and influence is constantly an activities of the minority: the elites. As such, the elites play vital roles in recognizing, defending, defining and shaping crucial public policy issues and deciding which and what should receive priority in relation to others (Ojukwu and Shopeju, 2010). This made the masses or the crowd to remain at their mercy because the various mediums of governance are occupied by the elites be it governing or non-governing elite. Therefore, major decisions on public policies in any society are basically the views of the elite, by the elite and for and against the average inadequate citizenry.

Identity Politics and Dialectics of Biafra Agitation: The Elite Departure.

The tension that exists between identity and politics makes the Biafra agitation take the elite theory recognition. This is because beyond identity formation and construction lies the politics of competitive struggle in the concrete reality of who gets what, when and how. The point is that individual and groups that form identity have an interest-based motive that also distinguished them from others which they intend to actualize. Therefore, the interest-based of identity makes politics a recurring feature and instrument of the

elite's alliance in Nigeria that not only seek political power but also an objective force of the ruling class in their factional struggle in the accumulation/processes (Jega, 2003). Reflecting on this, Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2014), argues that identity has become a tool of manipulation for politicians in the inordinate struggle to gain access to power and state resources. We suffice, therefore, that part and parcel of the reason for the Biafra agitation not to have received public pronouncement by the Igbo elites and its backing are majorly an inherent contradiction of the Igbo elite position to what the struggle for Biafra might achieve. In other words, the interests of the elite in Nigeria and in Igbo land are part and parcel of why the struggles by Biafra have failed to receive a backing from the elite in Nigeria. This is because the agitations are dialectical to the interest of the elites in Nigeria.

The point is that the governing and non-governing elites in Nigeria believed that the actualization of the Biafra agenda will fragment the hegemonic order of the two divided-the elites and the average citizen in Nigeria. To neutralize the Biafra agenda and the series of agitations by any group interest, the governing elite uses the state as an instrument of coercion to maintain and perpetuate their elite dominance. This point is that such an act serves as a focal point on the primacy of political elite as argued by Mosca and Pareto when they insisted that members of the elite act in order to preserve their position within their societies. Therefore, in order to preserve their status and circulation in politics, the elite's employ all forms of identities to create division in the minds of the people. This is central because the cultural identity to the political domain by the political elites in Nigeria was to hijack power by using identity as a template for condemnation, discrimination, and marginalization. To be sure, Kia and Vurasi (2013), believed that such antics by the elite along so many identities such as ethnic and religious are employed to discriminate not as the reason may be but as a fall out in the competition to control the economic spoil of the nation by the elites. It is unfortunate that the idea of identity as a political tool in Nigeria have been dualistic adopted by the Nigerian elites and the Igbo elites precisely. Firstly as a most vicious mechanism for their interest articulation, domination, and maintenance of their status; secondly as antics to create division in the minds of the average citizens whenever there is fallout in the elite's circulation of power. Therefore, identity-based politics in Nigerian and the Biafra agitation can be likened to a clash of identities on the part of Biafra positioned to dismantle the two status quo of the divided between the elites and the average citizens. By clash of identities, we mean an interest structural divided relations existing between the elites and the citizens.

Fundamentally, due to a clash of identities between the elite and the average citizens represented by elite's composition and Biafra respectively, identity-based politics will continue to a recurring issue basically due to its inherent dialectics of the two groups. That is why, Cronin (1999), argued that identity' is an inter-subjective concept that is manifested in group consciousness. The point is that there is consciousness on the part of the elites behind the rationale for the Biafra agitation which aimed to resist their dominance in the society. While there is increasing consciousness to resist the dominance of the elites in Nigeria, the elites are aware of the real danger and threat of the Biafra agitators and any agitation to restore society to balance. The point is that, for decades, these contradictions have been inherently part and parcel of the pre-independent and post- Independent Nigeria as groups struggle and tries to demonstrate its identity. Interestingly, consciousness in any group is vital to agitation because it gives identification which acts as a catalyst to an individual's or group ability to seek and advance the interest of those particular groups in society. The implication is that interest and the identity which individual belong lies at the heart of any group agitation the moment feeling of exclusion is noticed and drawn, and when deprivation insecurity set in (Laidi, 1998). That is why, the identity of any oppressed group such as Biafra gives rise to a political platform around which they may unite and begin to assert themselves in society (Zweiri and Zahid, 2007).

Reflecting on the above view, Tardelli (2013) while exposing the techniques and strategies of the elite maintained that the elites are ambitious people driven by the need to secure coercive tools, seek political power and maintain their authority thereby legitimizing and extending their elite formula to an entire community. In order to suppress any agitations and unite in their identity-interest, the elites gamer their unity, legitimacy, and form varieties of occupational identity-based affiliations to maintain further their dominance in power (Kaiser, 2005). Such occupational affiliation over the years used to legitimize their dominance is through the formation of political parties. Omobolaji (2008), contend that political parties in Nigeria are elite groupings. Nnoli (2003), define a political party as a group of people who share a common conception on how and why state power should be organized and used. To buttress political party further as the platform for domination, by the elite, Akubo and Yakunu (2014), see it as associations, factions, cliques, and, networks for power and resources struggles. The point here is that political parties serve as major institutions where most of these elites emerge from, occupy the highest positions in society and placed in a position of power.

By and large, this mechanism and ambition of the elites today make any agitations by groups to be unrealistic. More so, how best and the instruments, processes to make the demands of agitators realistic are at the disposal of the elites. This is because; any groups whose identity differs from the elites' identity preposition and interest are tags as an enemy of the state. It is however important to note that while the elites in Nigeria

dominate the polity, other two critical affiliations it has always adopted in their struggle for dominance and preservation of the elite circulation have been the politics of ethnic and religious identity. In his own analysis, Fawole (2014), affirms that in order to gain political advantage, the elites use these antics and affiliation: primordial identity symbols such as religion and ethnicity at every recurring decimal of politicking to promote and justify their dominance in society. Mike (2015), avers that the elite has always used identity politics religiously as a tool of exploitation to achieve selfish socio-economic ends, while politically deploying religious fanaticism and favouritism to polarize the people mind and persistently sustain unhealthy tension in the country. It is perhaps in realization of these dialectics that make Calhoun (1994), contend that identity politics is basically politics at constituting a range of political activity part of which the elites set to secure their specific constituency within its larger context.

In sum, in this study, we have evaluated elites and the dialectics of identity politics in Nigeria: a discourse on Biafra agitation and examined factors responsible for not only the causes but also the persistent nature and character of the identity politics. As such, we found out that while the concept of Biafra and its dialectics continues to reappear as a locus of the articulation of an Igbo identity and the increasing nature of identities politics played by the Nigerian elites, and particularly the Igbo elites. Instructively, we offer and state that a solution to the recurring agitations in Nigeria which Biafra is part and parcel of is regionalism. This is because Nigeria practised this system prior to the 1966 with relative peace and less agitations. The point for the adoption of regionalism in Nigeria is because of what regionalism offers to multi-ethnic society like Nigeria. Through regionalism, the attendant disunity in Nigeria can be solved where regions are united to address issue confronting it regions and as such reduce the rate of inter-tribal and internal crises and suspicions, marginalization and exclusive politics. Also, key to this success on the reduction of the crisis of agitations would be weak central government that is a common characteristic of regionalism. In the context of Nigeria, the weak centre would serve as the alpha and omega to reduction of the mighty power of the federal government and its dominant class and indirectly reduced the elites influence in decision making and value allocations. However, the fact that the elite believed in stratification of society into two is the reason why a federal system with split entities will go a long way to checkmate the influence of the elites.

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