

When Propaganda imitates Truth: Analysis of the Perception of Messages from Radio Biafra by members of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

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ABSTRACT

Separatist agitations have characterized the Nigerian political journey since the days after the 1960 Political Independence but the most prominent of all the movements for self-determination is the one by the defunct Republic of Biafra. One of the greatest features in the renewed agitation led by Nnamdi Kanu is the establishment of a pirate radio station, Radio Biafra, as a medium to promote the course of the movement. All efforts by the government of the day to shut down the channel and stop the transmission of message(s) through it proved abortive as it still reaches its audience on 102.1 FM and 15.6 AM. This paper, therefore, analyzes the effectiveness of Radio Biafra in influencing the opinion and action of the members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a secessionist movement in the South East of Nigeria. The study sought to determine how the members of this movement perceive the messages they receive from the radio channel dedicated to champion the secessionist cause and the extent they believe every message they receive as true. The study was anchored on two media theories - the Media Dependency and the Hypodermic Needle theories. Employing survey research method, the researchers found that members of the Indigenous People of Biafra are highly exposed to Radio Biafra and they perceive every message they receive from the station as true. It was also found that they consider their leader as a deity whose words are creed. The researchers concluded that Radio Biafra is very effective medium in propagating secession message among the members of IPOB. They recommended, among others, that the Management of Radio Biafra should change the themes of their broadcast to reflect ethnic cohesion rather than hatred, violence and disunity.

Keywords: *Indigenous People of Biafra, Radio Biafra, Propaganda, Truth*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since Independence, there has been separatist agitation in virtually every component part of Nigeria. Almost all the ethnic nationalities had, at one time or the other, sought to define their place in the geographical entity (Nigeria) put together by Lord Fredrick Lugard in 1914. From the majority tribes to the minorities, the case has been the same. For instance, among the Yorubas in South West Nigeria, the echoes of separatism come in forms, ranging from a direct call for Oduduwa Republic to those championing a Sovereign National Conference to decide if the federating units of the country still want to continue to live together, and, if so, under what arrangements. The many talks about the Arewa Republic among the elements from the northern part of the country most of the time portray the “north” as “a country within a country.” In the Niger Delta region, the quest for resource control has shades of separatism by regional actors. But the most prominent of all the movements for self-determination is the one by the Republic of Biafra. In essence, there is a fairly generalized feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction among the various constituents of the Nigerian federation, a situation that has also deepened mistrust and separatist agitations. However, because there has never been a referendum in any of the areas agitating for separation, it is difficult to know whether the leaders of the various separatist groups actually reflect the wishes of the people of those areas or whether the agitations are mere masks for pursuing other agenda.

The current agitation for the actualization of Biafra has its roots in the Republic of Biafra - a secessionist state in the former Eastern Nigeria, which existed from 30 May 1967 to January 1970. The former Eastern region was dominated by the Igbos, who led the secession. Views differ on the causes of the war depending on which side one stands on the matter. For those on the federal side, the civil war was caused by the attempt by the mainly Igbo-dominated Eastern Nigeria to secede, meaning for such people the civil war was fought to keep Nigeria one. In fact, the mantra during the civil war on the federal side was “to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done.” For those on the side of the short-lived Republic of Biafra, the civil war was

precipitated by the pogrom in the North following the counter coup of July 1966. For such people, the civil war was a war of self-preservation (Daily Trust, 2016).

Several factors have been adduced to contribute to the civil war: the 1962/63 census controversy, the Western regional election crisis of 1965 and the federal election crisis of 1964. These crises created the condition for the unnecessarily bloody coup of 1966, which was initially well received (Ejiogu, 2011). As it turned out, most of those who plotted the coup were Igbos whereas most of those killed were non-Igbos. While the Igbo political leaders went unhurt. This scenario triggered off anger in the Northern section of the country which led to the counter coup of July 1966 in which the then Head of State, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi, an Igbo and several Igbo army officers were killed. That was the genesis of what later turned out to be a pogrom against the Igbo in the North, in which an estimated 30,000 Igbos and others of Eastern Nigerian origin were killed (Kalu, 2008).

The pogrom in the North against the Igbo after the July 1966 revenge coup, and the refusal of Col. Emeka Ojukwu, who was military Governor of Eastern Nigeria to recognize Col. Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from the Middle Belt, as the new Head of State, generated a series of events that eventually led to the declaration of the Republic of Biafra by Odumegwu Ojukwu and the subsequent 30-month civil war. In the two-and-a-half years of war, there were an estimated 100,000 overall military casualties, while between 500,000 and two million Biafran civilians died from starvation (Information Nigeria, 2017). When the Biafran forces surrendered, the federal government under General Gowon, he declared that there was “No Victor, No Vanquished” and began the arduous process of trying to reintegrate the Igbos back into the Nigerian society.

Statement of the Problem

The re-emergence of Radio Biafra in Nigeria has thrown up many unresolved questions relating to the civil war and the plight of the Igbos. Radio Biafra, which is an information tool especially, to the Indigenous People of Biafra, seems to have contributed immensely to the renewed agitation for the restoration of Sovereign State of Biafra in that it was adopted to propagate the ideology of the former secessionist Republic of Biafra. Hence, Radio Biafra to the Nigerian government is both a propaganda and pirate channel (Osamwonyi, & Amenaghawon, 2017). It is difficult, therefore, to divorce the instrumentality of Radio Biafra in the mobilization, recruitment and instigation of members of IPOB into participating in the various activities of the group in several parts of the Southeastern states as well as parts of the world. Based on the foregoing, it is, therefore, pertinent to interrogate the place of the new Radio Biafra in the renewed agitation for restoration of Republic of Biafra which has resulted to arrest and detention of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and others, myriad of protests in the southeast, military invasions of the South East and the declaration of IPOB as a terrorist group. This is the gap in knowledge this study was designed to fill.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were formulated to guide the study:

1. To find out the respondents' level of exposure to Radio Biafra
2. To find out what particular messages the respondents could recall from Radio Biafra broadcasts
3. To ascertain the perception of members of IPOB on the dominant themes from Radio Biafra broadcast
4. To find the extent to which members of IPOB were influenced by the messages from Radio Biafra to participate in the Pro-Biafra protests

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to help achieve the research objectives:

1. What is the respondents' frequency of exposure to Radio Biafra?
2. What are the particular messages the respondents could recall from Radio Biafra broadcasts?
3. What is the perception of members of IPOB about the dominant themes from Radio Biafra broadcast?
4. To what extent are members of IPOB influenced by the messages from Radio Biafra to participate in the Pro-Biafra protests

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Post-Civil War Agitations

Like all people who fought and lost a war, Biafra evokes something in an average Igbo, making it possible for it to be tapped as a shared victimhood narrative for mobilization. The first attempt to organize a movement for Biafran re-secession was in 1999, when Ralph Uwazuruike, an Indian trained lawyer, formed the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). At the early stage of MASSOB, he claimed it was a peaceful group and advertised what it called a 25-stage plan to achieve its goal peacefully (Felix, 2014). Notwithstanding, the strategy adopted was seen as being aggressive, though peaceful, which led to his arrest on several occasions during the reign of President Olusegun Obasanjo. For example, in 2005,

Uwazuruike was arrested and charged with treason but the case never reached the trial stage as the first two years were spent hearing his bail application. He was granted bail in 2007 to enable him attend to the burial of his mother who died while he was in detention. As MASSOB members battled the federal government and the police, many of the State Governors in Igboland also saw them as irritants. In 2006, for instance, Governor Obi of Anambra State ordered a shoot-at-sight against the Biafran activists who were often fingered in disturbances in the commercial town of Onitsha (Sahara Reporters, 2006).

The memory of the civil war is very strong among the Igbos - just as the memory of the Igbo-led January 15, 1966 coup which killed several leaders of the North - is also very strong in the North. It is possible that Igbos' bitter memory of the war and their attempt to aggressively contest the narratives about the war create residual anger among those who fought on the federal side or animate among many in the North the bitter memories of their lost leaders during the January 15, 1966 coup. The anger and suspicion around the agitations for Biafra maybe subtle but they help to feed into Igbos' feeling of being unwanted, which in turn fuels separatist sentiments.

In the early years of the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan, the Biafran agitation continued despite the fact that he was adopted by many Igbos as 'their own', coming from the neighbouring Niger Delta region of Bayelsa State and who in addition adopted an Igbo name of 'Azikiwe' out of his love for Igbos. However, the movement was not as intense as it was under both the administrations of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) and Umaru Shehu Yar'Adua (2007-2010). For instance, in 2011 Jonathan gave a presidential directive that all MASSOB members detained across the country - estimated to be over 1000 at that time - should be released immediately, including Uwazuruike (The Nigerian Voice, 2011).

As with most secessionist movements, MASSOB attracted a 'mixed multitude' - people of different tendencies and conflicting ambitions. Therefore, fractionalization within the movement was only a matter of time. One of the early factions, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by a United Kingdom-based Nnamdi Kanu, started in 2013 on the allegation that the Ralph Uwazuruike-led Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) had been compromised by the Nigerian government and politicians after his incarceration." It also claimed that IPOB had to revive the "defunct" Radio Biafra as a "platform to educate and sensitize Biafrans who have been biased and made dormant by the propaganda fed to them by the Yoruba dominated media in Nigeria."

Apart from MASSOB (which renamed itself Biafra Independent Movement or BIM) and IPOB, there are other Biafra separatist groups such as the Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM), which is led by Benjamin Onwuka. The group - which is also sometimes called Biafra Zionist Federation, came to public notice on November 5, 2012, when it declared a new state of independence at an event in which at least 100 peaceful protesters were arrested (Lacinnno, 2014). On March 8 2014, BZM attacked Enugu State Government House in a bid to hoist the Biafran flag there. It struck again on June 7, 2014 when its members attempted to seize the radio and television stations of the Enugu State Broadcasting Service to announce the secession of Biafra (Vanguard, 2014). He was charged with treason and detained. He was released after nearly three years in detention in February 2017. Perhaps sensing that Nnamdi Kanu has dominated the Biafra secessionist space while he was in detention, Onwuka audaciously announced the secession of Biafra effective from August 1 2017. He also announced the formation of an 'interim cabinet' for Biafra, with himself as the 'interim President.' He equally appointed Ministers and top government officials for the said nation (including some from the North Central States of Nasarawa and Niger States) - apparently without consulting those so appointed (The Punch, 2017).

One of the major causes of Biafran separatist agitations is what Amy Chua called the market dominant minorities' thesis. In her highly regarded book, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*, Yale Law Professor Amy Chua explored the ethnic conflict caused in many societies by disproportionate economic or political influence wielded by "market dominant minorities". According to her, "market dominant minorities" are ethnic groups which tend to control a disproportionate share of the local economy whenever they are - often in such a manner that it triggers the envy and bitterness of the majority against them. For Chua, tension and conflicts are inherent in the relationship between 'the economic dominant minority' and the poor majority in the context of liberal democracy. She argued that when free market democracy is pursued in the presence of a market-dominant minority, the almost invariable result is backlash because:

...overnight democracy will empower the poor, indigenous majority. What happens is that under those circumstances, democracy doesn't do what we expect it to do - that is, reinforce markets. .. [Instead,] democracy leads to the emergence of manipulative politicians and demagogues who find that the best way to get votes is by scapegoating the minorities (Chua, 2003).

Chua listed the Igbos among the 'market dominant minority.' In virtually every part of Nigeria, the Igbos would be the largest ethnic group - after the indigenes. Chua's thesis of market dominant minorities - coupled with the belief that humility and diplomacy do not seem to come naturally to many of the Igbo traders,

according to Reno Omokri in his article entitled 'Hegemony: What the Igbo can learn from Yoruba and Fulani about Power' (Vanguard, 2017), create a generalized feeling of a group not liked by the rest of the country. For many supporters of Biafra agitators, it is this sense of 'not being wanted' in Nigeria that justifies the quest for Biafra.

Another possible cause of the unending crisis is the inability to conclusively resolve group grievances (Adibe, 2017). Nigeria seems to struggle with the skill to conclusively resolve grievances by several groups in the country. One of the consequences of this is that many groups appear to have institutionalized memories of hurt or perceived sense of injustice, which they popularly express as "marginalization." This inability to conclusively resolve group grievances has contributed to the rise of the notion that only groups with the capacity to hold the state to ransom will have their grievances addressed. The ethnic factor is yet another cause of the agitations. Ethnicity is often used as a veneer by the elites to mask their intra-elite and intra-class struggles over power and resources. Over time, however, in Nigeria, ethnicity has acquired a more objective character, tending towards more or less an ideology and a prism through which most government measures are filtered. It is also a potent instrument of mobilization.

The Emergency of IPOB

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a group that leads the calls for Biafrans freedom from Nigeria. Its main aim is to restore an independent state of Biafra for the people of old Eastern Region of Nigeria through a referendum (Allison, 2019). Founded in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu, a British- Biafra political activist, the group is a movement that stems from perceived injustice orchestrated by the Federal Government of Nigeria on the southeast and south-south regions of Nigeria. To the group, there was total lack of infrastructural development, poor investment, neglect in resources distribution, skewed railways, militarization of the zone, over- grazing and destruction of lives and crops by Fulani herdsmen and lot of others. Having failed in the Nigerian Civil war that lasted between 1967 and 1970, the secession group decides to fight for freedom and emancipation from their perceived enemy this time through weaponless means especially as it concerns propaganda mechanism.



Figure 1: The political map of the proposed Republic of Biafra

The IPOB rose to prominence after previous Biafran independence organizations was weakened. The Nigerian government has been cracking down on IPOB members who peacefully protested due to Kanu's arrest and incarceration despite various court rulings for his release. Today, IPOB has metamorphosed from a group to a movement of the Indigenous Biafran population who are fed up with the Nigerian depleting state. Biafrans all over the world have identified with the movement, thereby making IPOB to be a face of Biafra restoration movement. Nnamdi Kanu, who maintains dual (British and Biafran) citizenship created IPOB after he initially gained fame from his broadcasts on Radio Biafra, which was established in 2009. This was a radio station from London that broadcast messages that called for "freedom of Biafrans" and criticized corruption in the government of Nigeria. Radio Biafra catalyzed Kanu's rise to the public scene, as he was previously an unknown figure. Kanu was arrested by Nigerian security forces on 19 October 2015, on charges of "sedition, ethnic incitement and treasonable felony" (Ibeanu, Orji, Iwuamadi, Okechukwu, Nkwachukwu & Chijioke, 2016).

Radio Biafra was the official radio of Biafra Republic that existed from 30 May 1967 to 15 January 1970, taking its name from the Bight of Biafra (the Atlantic bay to its south). The inhabitants were mostly the Igbo people who led the secession due to economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions among the various peoples of Nigeria. The need for Radio broadcast became imperative for Biafra because during the war, newsprint became very scarce and the government-owned newspaper, the *Biafra Sun*, could print very few copies. Nkpa (1977, p. 334) notes that:

...the major difficulty in the dissemination of information was the fact that only about 15 percent of the population of Biafra was literate. The commonest source of information for the average citizen was by word of mouth; a situation that is known to be very conducive to the formation of rumors. Radio remained the only channel through which the Biafran government could communicate to the populace both in English and in local dialects.

Nkpa (1977, p. 4) further notes that “The radio, the newspapers, and official pronouncements were not very much trusted, and the average Biafran made no distinction between radio broadcasts and official pronouncements”. He explained that “the two came from the same source - the radio - and were regarded as one and the same thing” hence “transistor radios which were owned by many young men were very useful both to the literates and the illiterates as those who cannot understand the broadcasts in English can understand the ones in vernacular” (Nkpa (1977, p. 4). According to Nkpa “The mistrust of the newspapers and the radio broadcasts started even before the outbreak of the hostilities as “Politicians had many a time used these media to make promises to the people, and in many cases these promises were never honoured” (Nkpa 1977, p. 334).

Radio Biafra Broadcasting and IPOB Renewed Agitation

In 2013, the Nigerian government was greeted with the re-opening of Radio Biafra which was last heard during the civil war (1967-1970). According to the director Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, the new Radio Biafra had been “broadcasting from London, on short wave frequency” since 2009 (*DailySun*, 2013). Kanu revealed that Radio Biafra broadcast was brought home to intensify the struggle for Biafra restoration by creating awareness and mobilizing the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and other Pro-Biafran groups like the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) towards achieving the goal. At first, the station was not entirely critical and seemed to pose no threat to the then government of former President Goodluck Jonathan but became a major concern to the Buhari administration as station employed different frames, slants and languages in criticizing the government thereby raising the tension for secession and disintegration of the various federation units the Nigerian state (Osamwonyi, & Amenaghawon, 2017).

This resulted in arrest and detention of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu whose rhetoric on the radio station was viewed as treasonable and effrontery to sovereignty of the Nigerian government. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in charge of broadcasting in Nigeria took drastic steps to shut down the station which they described as a pirate radio station. The Commission subsequently announced that the station had been shut down and cautioned Nigerians to totally “ignore all propaganda designed to sow seeds of discord among them to promote a separatist agenda against national unity, solidarity and progress” (*Premium Times*, 2015). This effort failed because the operating license of the new Radio Biafra was obtained in London and it utilizes digital facilities like satellite and the internet in broadcasts on 102.1 FM and 15.6 AM at different wavelengths.

Similarly, Soley (1999) who describes pirate radio stations as unlicensed broadcasting stations operated by political and cultural dissidents to protest government restrictions on expression over the airwaves also identified two of such that remained prominent in the Nigerian history to be the Radio Biafra and Radio Kudirat. He further explains that Radio Biafra provided the Biafran framing of the civil war against the Federal government’s use of state media apparatus to justify the war while Radio Kudirat was the platform from which the acclaimed winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, M.K.O Abiola vociferously condemned the annulment of the election. Soley avers that there are many other pirate stations that came up but only these two played indelible roles in the nation’s politics and society at large. However, Radio Biafra is licensed in London and therefore provides an exception to the description of pirate radio station as offered by Soley (1999).

The new Radio Biafra started broadcasting from London on short wave frequency since 2009 with the help of the then MASSOB members but commenced broadcast in Nigeria in 2013. It started broadcasting in Nigeria as a mobile station, on FM frequency 88.2. It is being received in Enugu, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, Nnewi, Abakaliki, Owerri and some other parts in the southeastern region. According to the Director Radio Biafra, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu:

The broadcast in Nigeria, on FM frequency, other than the initial short wave frequency from London, is aimed at giving Igbo and other Nigerians the opportunity to receive the message from the station without much difficulty. It was moribund for about two years but it came back online again on April 13, 2012 following the killing of Igbo people in the North. The station was revived to bring hope, enlightenment and knowledge to Igbo aborigines. (*Daily Sun*, 2013, p.10)

Kanu further explains that the new Radio Biafra was established to promote “the ideology of Biafra which is the freedom, the emancipation of all the Biafra people, which includes all the people bound genetically, culturally and by the same value system” (*Daily Sun*, 2013).

Osamwonyi and Amenaghawon, (2017) conclude that Nnamdi Kanu’s remark on the commitment of the new Radio Biafra to truth rather than a propaganda machine seems to distinguish the Radio from what it was during the civil war, explaining that his expression of the re-emergence of Radio Biafra reveals their determination and commitment to the restoration of the Biafra republic. But Nigerian government, however, has described Radio Biafra as a new network that has become controversial for propagating what was the ideology of the former secessionist Republic of Biafra. Operators of the station are also accused of instigating hate and violence (*Premium Times*, 2015).

It is pertinent to recall that Radio Biafra also known as Voice of Biafra, is a radio station that was originally founded by the government of the Republic of Biafra, and “it is believed to have its first transmission before the Nigeria-Biafra war, the radio station was instrumental in the broadcast of speeches and propaganda by Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu to the people of the Republic of Biafra” (*Adibe, 2015; Barnaby, 2000*). Based in the United Kingdom, Radio Biafra currently transmits via the internet and shortwave broadcast targeted majorly around Eastern Nigeria. Radio Biafra claims to be broadcasting the ideology of Biafra - "Freedom of the Biafra people" (*Udchukwu, 2015*).

Radio Biafra has been met with mixed reactions. While some critics have criticized the station for "inciting war" through its programmes and "preaching hate messages" against Nigeria which it refers to as a “zoo”, an editor for Sahara Reporters wrote in defense of the radio station after he compared Radio Biafra with the British Broadcasting Corporation Hausa service (Onyiorah, 2015). On 14 July 2015, it was reported in the media that the radio station had been jammed because it did not have a broadcast license from the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission. However, the radio station in a swift reaction labeled such claims as "lies" and went on to release its new frequency details to the public.

The Nigerian Government, through her broadcasting regulator, the Broadcasting Organization of Nigerian and Nigerian Communications Commission, has sought to clamp down on the UK based Radio Station without success. On November 17, 2015 the Abia Police Command seized an IPOB's radio transmitter in Umuhia North, Abia State. Some of the message reeled out on a very frequent basis from Radio Biafra include the following:

- Igbos are hated and marginalized in Nigeria
 - Nigeria is a zoo and the zoo must fall
 - Buhari is dead
 - The man in Aso Rock is a Sudanese impostor
 - The ‘cabal’ are in charge of the Presidency
 - Nigerian Judiciary is an appendage of the Presidency
- Buhari is Fake!
- The International Community are backing IPOB
-
- Date fixed for the Biafra Agenda to be discussed with US Government
- Biafra or Death!
- Freedom for Biafra!
 - We want referendum!

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Media Dependency and Agenda-setting theories. The Agenda-setting theory states that the menu of news and other information made available to the public by media decision - makers ultimately defines what is considered significant. The theory provides that there is a correlation between the level of importance ascribed to issues in the media and the priorities of the public (Weaver, McCombs & Shaw, 2004). The question for researchers then arises as to how agenda-setting influences the importance subsequently attached to the images and events presented by the media. Shaw and McCombs (1972) observed that “Agenda setting refers to the ability that the media have to not only reflect reality but also determine reality”. The media determine reality by how much attention they pay to any particular issue. For instance, if the news media "cover" violent crime extensively, there is a tendency that the public and policy makers will respond accordingly with fears of being victims (McCombs and Shaw, 1977).

Agenda-setting is the role played by mass communication media in establishing the salient issues and images to which the public reacts. It is a process by which issue proponents work to gain the attention of media professionals, the public and public policy makers (Ricke, 2010). Communication research provides evidence that the news media are the primary agenda-setting agents (Gonzalez, 2013). An issue that is covered by the

news media will set the agenda for how the public reacts as measured in public opinion polls and how policy makers will respond through legislation. In relation to this present study, it becomes clear that the various attempts and frames Radio Biafra have employed in its broadcasting amounts to setting agenda for the listeners who act it out by engaging in several protests.

Media dependency theory will be used to complement the agenda-setting hypothesis. The theory focuses on the relationship between media and audiences. It proposes that individuals tend to develop a dependency on the media to satisfy their information needs. In general, the extent of the media's influence is related to the degree of dependence of individuals and social systems on the media. Two of the basic propositions put forward by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) are: (1) the greater the number of social functions performed for an audience by a medium (e.g., informing the electorate, providing entertainment), the greater the audience's dependency on that medium, and (2) the greater the instability of a society (e.g., in situations of social change and conflict), the greater the audience's dependency on the media and, therefore, the greater the potential effects of the media on the audience. From the standpoint of this theory, the researchers assume an internal link between Radio Biafra, members of IPOB and the realities of the Nigerian political system. They have been so programmed through indoctrination to believe that whatever is served them through Radio Biafra is the ultimate truth and so serves their needs. They are so exposed to it that they now relatively depend on the information they receive through it.

III. METHODOLOGY

For this study, survey method was adopted to investigate the influence of the Radio Biafra on the perception of the members of IPOB in the renewed agitation for actualization of the Biafran Republic. The researchers listened to the station and analyzed the messages to ascertain the dominant themes and frames used. Survey method was adopted to find out the perception that IPOB members have of the messages they receive from Radio Biafra and the influence those messages have on them in relation to the renewed agitation for republic of Biafra. The essence of this is to establish the relationship between the re-emergence of Radio Biafra and the renewed agitation for Biafra republic from 2015 till date.

The researchers chose to study the members of IPOB because they were the ones that spearheaded the renewed agitation for the restoration of the sovereign state of Biafra since 2015 till date, and also the Director of Radio Biafra also doubles as the Leader of IPOB worldwide and so they are suitably qualify to provide information that would help the researchers elicit the findings of the study. The population of IPOB members in the five states in the South East is put at 2,200,000. The population of IPOB members in the three cities of Onitsha, Umuahia and Abakaliki - selected for the study is One Hundred and Sixty Thousand.

The sample size adopted for the study was Four Hundred and Fifty (450) using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample determination table. A total of 450 copies of structured questionnaire were distributed to IPOB members in Onitsha, Umuahia and Abakaliki using purposive sampling technique. Also, the researchers purposively selected 10 broadcast themes on Radio Biafra between January 2019 and January 2020. The questionnaire was used as data gathering technique while the data gathered were presented in frequency table.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS/PRESENTATION

Data generated for this study were analyzed using SPSS version 16 and presented in tables as shown below:

Table 1: Return rate of Questionnaire

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Return and found usable	423	94.0	94.0	94.0
Not usable	12	2.7	2.7	96.7
Not returned	15	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	450	100.0	100.0	

Result from table 1 shows that the return rate of questionnaire is higher than the mortality rate. The mortality rate is insignificant compared to the return rate and as such does not have any significant effect on the outcome of the study. The data generated are good enough to represent the population. The presentation and analysis of data obtained from the questionnaire were, therefore, based on the 423 copies that were returned and found usable.

Research Question 1: What is the frequency of the respondents' exposure to Radio Biafra broadcasts?

Table 2: Frequency of the respondents' exposure to Radio Biafra broadcasts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Every day	400	88.9	94.6	94.6
	Twice a week	12	2.7	2.8	97.4
	Once a week	11	2.4	2.6	100.0
	Total	423	94.0	100.0	
Missing	System	27	6.0		
Total		450	100.0		

Response to the question on listening habit to Radio Biafra showed that all the respondents studied listen to the radio and depend on it for their information needs about Biafra. Table 2 shows respondents' responses to research question one. Result from the table reveals that majority of the respondents (94.6%, n=400) listen to Radio Biafra broadcasts on daily basis, while only few of them listen to such broadcasts twice a week (2.8%, n=12) or once a week (2.6%, n=11). The implication of this result is that majority of the respondents are exposed to Radio Biafra broadcasts on daily basis resulting in a high frequency of exposure.

Research Question 2: What are the particular messages the respondents recall from Radio Biafra broadcasts?

Table 3: Respondents' response on what they recall from Radio Biafra broadcasts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Recall every message	323	71.8	76.4	76.4
	Recall most but not all	80	17.8	18.9	95.3
	Recall only few	15	3.3	3.5	98.8
	Do not recall any	5	1.1	1.2	100.0
	Total	423	94.0	100.0	
Missing	System	27	6.0		
Total		450	100.0		

Table 3 provides information on the respondents' recall of certain concepts (messages) from Radio Biafra. Majority of the respondents 323 (76.4%) could recall all the messages they receive from Radio Biafra; 80 (18.9%) could recall most but not all, 15 (3.5%) could recall only few, while 5 (1.2%) of the respondents could not recall any of such messages. The import of this result is that almost every respondent who listens to Radio Biafra on regular basis could recall phrases like "Nigeria is a zoo", "the zoo must fall", "Biafra or death", "Buhari is dead", etc.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of members of IPOB about the dominant themes from Radio Biafra broadcast?

Table 4: Perception of members of IPOB on the dominant themes from Radio Biafra broadcast

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Everything from radio biafra is true	396	88.0	93.6	93.6
	Few of the messages are not true	22	4.9	5.2	98.8
	Most of the messages are not true	5	1.1	1.2	100.0
	Total	423	94.0	100.0	
Missing	System	27	6.0		
Total		450	100.0		

Result from table 4 shows that majority of the respondents (93.6%, n=396) perceive every message from Radio Biafra as true and believable. The implication of this result is that respondents believe the message they receive from Radio Biafra as truth and not propaganda. Only an insignificant portion of the sample do not find every message from Radio Biafra to be true.

Research Question 4: To what extent are members of IPOB influenced by the messages from Radio Biafra to participate in the Pro-Biafra protests?

Table 5: Extent of influence on members of IPOB by the messages from Radio Biafra to participate in the Pro-Biafra activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Participate in all activities of IPOB	390	86.7	92.2	92.2
	Participate in some IPOB activities	23	5.1	5.4	97.6
	Po not participate in IPOB activities	10	2.2	2.4	100.0
	Total	423	94.0	100.0	
Missing	System	27	6.0		
Total		450	100.0		

Table 5 shows the disposition of the respondents towards the message they receive from Radio Biafra. The result indicates that more than nine tenth (92.2%) of the respondents studied participate in all the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra in response to the messages they receive from Radio Biafra. However, 23 (5.4%) only participate in some, while 10 (2.4%) do not participate in IPOB activities.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Finding from research question one revealed that the frequency of exposure to Radio Biafra by the respondents is high as majority (94.6%) indicated that they listen to the broadcast daily. This finding justifies the assertion of Bello (2017) who succinctly remarked that Radio Biafra was used in transmitting information about the conditions of the Biafran in Nigeria to fellow Igbo domiciled in Nigeria and abroad. Emphasis was mostly hinged on Igbo marginalization, enslavement, insecurity, and denial of human rights and means of survival by Nigeria, amongst others. The radio station had (and still has) strong online presence, as it also transmitted its information to its audience through other social network platforms such as twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and many more.

Finding also revealed that the respondents could recall slogans such as “Nigeria is a zoo”, “the zoo must fall”, “Biafra or death”, “give us referendum” etc. This supports the assertion of Ojukwu & Nwaorgu (2016) who aver that the Radio Biafra can best be understood as a platform the IPOB group was using to send messages of agitation for self-actualization from the Nigerian state. With its slogan “In defence of freedom,” the leader of IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu made numerous statements reiterating the desire of Igbo people both in Nigeria and in Diaspora, for a referendum to decide the fate of Igbo people in their quest towards the actualization of the Republic of Biafra. Again, finding revealed that exposure to Radio Biafra influenced renewed agitation for restoration of Biafra as respondents were triggered to participate in various Pro-Biafra activities since 2015.

From the analysis of the content of the broadcast on Radio Biafra, it was revealed that the dominant themes used in the various broadcasts by Nnamdi Kanu were: Hate for the Nigerian government, Propaganda against the Nigerian government, Hatred of Igbos by the Nigerian government and Biafra independence. This is in line with the assertion of Ojukwu & Nwaorgu (2016) who observe that the broadcast of Radio Biafra and the activities of IPOB became so provocative and disturbing that most of it were considered as threats capable of destroying whatsoever is left of Nigerian unity by the Muhammadu Buhari-led administration and other stakeholders in the country. Again, available records proved that Nnamdi Kanu had actually gone across some countries both in Europe and America to seek support from Igbos in Diaspora concerning preparation for a potential war should the Nigerian government deny IPOB a right to referendum.

The analysis also revealed that the dominant frames used in the various broadcasts of Nnamdi Kanu were hate, propaganda, secession frame, war frame and violence. This was also observed by Ojukwu & Nwaorgu (2016) when they noted that there were alleged reports of Nnamdi Kanu referring to the Federal Republic as “Zoo Republic” and President Muhammadu Buhari as “a terrorist, evil and pedophile” in most of Radio Biafra’s broadcasts. These words were considered very sensitive and provocative. It was also alleged that Nnamdi Kanu, while still under the custody of the Department of State Service (DSS), tendered an apology for all the denigrating statements he made against President Mohammed Buhari, former President Goodluck Jonathan, and the entire Igbo elders. Though, he was reported to have remained unapologetic about his demand for a Republic of Biafra (Opejobi 2015). This claim that Kanu apologized was, nonetheless, swiftly debunked by IPOB leaders (Nwaiwu, 2015).

VI. CONCLUSION

Radio Biafra, no doubt, has become a household name in Nigeria and occupies a vantage position in the history of radio broadcasting in Nigeria. The media coverage that has followed the arrest and trial of Nnamdi Kanu has drawn global attention to neo-Biafran agitations in Nigeria. The Radio Biafra of the Nigerian civil era was used in promoting the secessionist dream of Ojukwu in the civil war between 1967 and 1970. It, however, went into oblivion with the taking over of the Eastern republic by the Nigerian government in 1970. Its re-emergence in 2012 has therefore thrown up many questions. Its operators have claimed it is not a propaganda station and that they will never tell lies noting that they have sworn to close down any day they tell lies. But authorities have tagged it a propaganda and pirate station while trying all effort to crack it down.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. The management of Radio Biafra should use it to promote history and cultural integration in Igbo land and Nigeria in general
2. The Management of Radio Biafra should change the themes of their broadcast to reflect ethnic cohesion rather than hatred, violence and disunity
3. The management of radio Biafra should change the negative framing of their broadcasts by adopting languages of peace, love and national unity.

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