

PIRATES BROADCASTING AND SEPARATISTS AGITATION IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF RADIO BIAFRA

Prof. R.N. Amadi, Dr. J. C. Njoku and Nosike Esther Obiageri

^{1,2,3}Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14809448

Abstract This study examined Pirates Broadcasting and Separatists Agitation in Nigeria. A study of Radio Biafra. The objectives of the study were to; ascertain the awareness of the existence of Biafra radio, find out the states where the Radio Biafra signal is mostly received in Nigeria, evaluate the level of listenership, identify the overriding messages dished out to Nigerians by radio Biafra, and ascertain the influence messages from Biafra radio. The theoretical framework of the study was drawn from Biafra radio. The theoretical framework of the study was drawn from indoctrination theory and Agenda setting theory. The study made use of survey method. The population consisted of five South-East States of Nigeria. (26 million according to National Population Commission. Using Taro Yamane Formula, the sample size is given as 400. Bourley's proportional allocation technique aided the proportionate allocation of sample size to each states. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. Data was analysed using simple percentages, mean and standard deviations. Findings revealed that the signal of Biafra radio is received in the entire South-East Region of Nigeria and also revealed high level of listenership. Based on the foregoing therefore, the study recommends amongst other that Nigerian Government should provide employment for the youth and tone down the threats of crumbling the agitation, but endeavour to look into the demand(s) of the agitating group and call for peace talk. Secondly, the government should encourages the South-East leaders to persuade protesters to channel their grievances and demand through constitutional means/avenues.

Keywords: Pirate, Broadcasting, Separatists, Agitation, Radio, Biafra, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian government in 2013, greeted with the re-opening of Radio Biafra which was last heard during the civil war (1967-1970). According to the Daily Sun Newspaper the new Radio Biafra had been "broadcasting from London, on short wave frequency" since 2009. The 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) and unknown gunmen towards achieving perceived goal. At first, the radio station was not entirely critical and seemed to pose no threat to the then government of former president Goodluck Jonathan but it became a major concern to the Buhari administration as radio employed different frames, slants and languages in criticizing the

government, thereby, raising the tension for succession and disintegration of the various federation units of the Nigerian state (Osamwonyi, & Amenaghawon, 2017).

This resulted to arrest and detention of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu the prophet of Biafra nation whose persuasion 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 radio 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.

The submission of Soley (1999) revealed that Radio Biafra historical underpinning is traceable to the Nigeria Civil war when the then Biafrans used it to as a propaganda mercenary to mobilize the people within the reach but was disbanded after the war. 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 south-eastern 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 the people 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 which 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). This re-emergence of Radio Biafra and the its instrumentality to the renewed agitation for the restoration of Biafra Republic especially among the Indigenous People of Biafra who has staged series of protests in Onitsha and other parts of South-eastern states in the recent past as well as the implications of government failed attempts to shut down the pirate station, form the background to this study.

The Unknown Gunmen operating in the South-East are terrorists. They are also human beings which we see every day. The Unknown Gunmen started causing havoc in the South-East since the leader of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra, IPOB, had been arrested. They are terrorists and they are dealing with people seriously. Unknown Gunmen (UGM) are now addressed as ỤMỤ ỌMA (nice people) in the South-East.

Several communities are beginning to witness the invasion of Unknown Gunmen, who go from house to house, even vigilante groups are disarm and attack seriously. To identify the invaders, some residents, who do not want to be seen as leaking information on the identity and operations of the UGM, prefer to discuss their activities in hushed tones, describing them as Ụmụ ọ ma (the nice People).

Statement of the Problem

There is a gap in the narratives around the renewed agitations for Biafra and the influence of the resurgent Radio Biafra in the struggle. Most discussions on the issue are mono-dimensional, reflecting one bias or the other. Other studies on the subject are historically selective, placing overwhelming emphasis on the period of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War and since 1999, thereby, presenting an incomplete picture and neglecting the links between the current agitation for Biafra, which has led to the formation of many more groups such MASSOB, as Unknown Gunmen and the previous experiences dating to colonial days. Moreover, there has not been a satisfactory attention paid to the discussion of the governance issues that are at the heart of there newed separatist agitation. There is therefore the need for a systematic inquiry in to understanding why the agitation has persisted nearly fifty years after the Nigerian Civil War, and the influence of the Radio Biafra in the renewed struggle, as well as the implications of the agitation, and ways it can be addressed. This is to say that a search or literature on the

chosen area shows paucity of intellectual academic conversations on the issue, except for a few on the 1967-1970 Civil War, and scanty reports in the social media. An attempt at filling this gap and knowledge lacuna necessitated this study.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. to ascertain the awareness of the existence of radio Biafra.
2. find out the reach of the Radio Biafra radio signal.
3. to ascertain the influence, messages from Biafra radio has on the listeners.

Research Questions

To realize the objectives of the study following research questions were raised:

1. What is the level of awareness among people regarding the existence of Radio Biafra?
2. What is the reach of the Radio Biafra radio signal?
3. What influence do messages from Radio Biafra have on its listeners?

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is narrowed to the pirates broadcasting and separatists agitation in Nigeria naturally, the scope of the study will cover the four states in the sought – East of Nigeria because these states constitute area where the agitators reside.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Indoctrination and The Agenda Setting theories,

Indoctrination Theory

Indoctrination theory, commonly abbreviated as it is borrowed from the field of the Theatrical and Performing Arts. It was conceived in the year 1997. It has its origin from a dramatic piece in which one of the two leading characters: 'the Reapers' and 'the Shepards' slowly and unknowingly indoctrinated the other. In the series, Commander Shepard has had much exposure to Reapers and their technology. At some point, long-term indoctrination was initiated on the commander. At first, it seemed that nothing at all had changed. Shepard's strong willpower was able to repel and delay the effects of indoctrination for a moderately large amount of time, but the simple resistance of mind eventually started to prove unfruitful. Shepard gradually began to experience the symptoms and effects of indoctrination as his mental barriers started to wear down. He began seeing hallucinations, hear strange noises, and have unusual dreams (Cugelman, 1987).

The relatedness of this theory to this study is later expanded in the works of Cugelman (1987), the theory talks about the use of insidious means of corrupting organic minds, 'reprogramming' the brain through physical and psychological conditioning, using electromagnetic fields, infrasonic and ultrasonic noise, and other subliminal methods. Through this means, it is believed that the victim will gradually become susceptible to the suggestions

being propagated. Applied to this study, the theory better explains how the subtle exposure to Radio Biafra broadcasts has the tendency of altering the perception of the listeners towards the directions of the messages propagated.

The Agenda Setting Theory

Another theory used in this study is the Agenda Setting Theory. The Agenda Setting Theory was propounded by Dr. Maxwell McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw in 1972, they 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).

This theory relates to 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). Communications research provides evidence that the news media are the primary agendasetting 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 for listeners who acts it out by engaging in several protests.

Conceptual Review Radio Biafra: A Historical Overview

The history of Radio Biafra is traceable to the Nigerian Biafra war which took place between 1967 and 1970. 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. It was Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the then military governor of the Eastern Regions who announced the independence of Republic of Biafra on 30 May 1967 citing the killing of Easterners in the post-coup violence as a major reason for the break up. The large amount of oil in the region also created conflict, as oil was a major component of the Nigerian economy. (Minahan, 2002).

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 (1977:334) 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 rumours. Radio remained the only channel through which*

the Biafran government could communicate to the populace both in English and in local dialects. Nkpa (1977:4) 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 (1977:4).

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 1977:334).

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.

Radio Biafra Broadcasting, IPOB and Renewed Agitation

A Pro-Biafra group, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), is led Nnamdi Kanu, he has reinvigorated the quest for Biafran realization since 2012. He recently set up a registered radio station, Radio Biafra, which has been broadcasting at various frequencies around the world. 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 Umuahia North, Abia State.

During November 2015, Biafran independence protests have erupted in cities across Nigeria's south-east; analysts believe the scale of these protests is unprecedented. Though peaceful, the protesters have been attacked by the Nigerian Police and army. Scores have been reportedly killed. Many others have been injured and others have been arrested. On December 23, 2015, the federal government charged Nnamdi Kanu with treasonable felony in the Federal High court in Abuja. According to the South-East Based Coalition of Human Rights Organizations

(SBCHROs), security forces under the directive of the Federal Government have killed 80 members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and their supporters between August 30, 2015 and February 9, 2016.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a secessionist movement for the restoration of the sovereignty of the defunct Republic of Biafra. It is led by Nnamdi Kanu, a United Kingdom-based political activist who was illegally detained by the Nigerian government since October 2015 despite court orders for his release. IPOB peacefully agitates for the restoration of the sovereignty of the Republic of Biafra comprising the South-East and South-South regions of Nigeria. However, their recent attitudes and threats to a sovereign state (Nigeria) have forced many to see them as political jobbers. Their attitudes and threats to the Nigerian government stem from the government's unlawful attacks and careless killing of the peaceful protesters, who for the most parts are peaceful civilians.

The Customary Government of the Indigenous People of Biafra (CGIPB) is a shadow government established for the Republic of Biafra through the merger of Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) as well as all other smaller pro-Biafra movements, with Nnamdi Kanu as the current globally acknowledged Igbo leader of the Biafra shadow government.

Causes of Biafran Separatist Agitations

Separatist desires are not abnormal in ethnically and culturally diverse countries.

It is not abnormal that some groups in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nation-states will nurse desires for independence. This is perhaps why Scottish separatism persists in the United Kingdom despite being part of the UK for over 300 years.²⁰ The same is true in Canada where Quebec separatism has been part of Canadian life since the 1890s.²¹ In the United States, some people, especially from the Southern part of the country still fly the confederate flag even though the American civil war was won and lost 150 years ago.

Narrativizing the Civil War

The memory of the civil war is very strong among the Igbos just as the memory of the Igboled 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 creates residual anger among those who fought on the federal side or animates 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.

Inability to Conclusively Resolve Group Grievances

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

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. For instance, the fact that Nnamdi Kanu was detained for a long period of time and denied bail despite court rulings for him to be so released, stoked ethnic solidarity even from people averse to his brand of harsh rhetoric. The more his ethnic brethren use the refusal to grant bail as another instance of injustice against the Igbo or more evidence of Buhari's alleged hatred of the Igbo, the more Buhari's 'kith and kin' from the North feel compelled to defend one of their own. The dominant ethnic groups routinely use threats of secession as bargaining tools when things are not going their way. The pervasive hate speeches and ethnic profiling in the media may have given some ethnic groups the belief that they are better off being on their own.

Crisis in Nigeria's Nation-building Processes

Nigeria's nation-building processes seem to be mired in deep crisis, which feed into the crisis of underdevelopment in the country to create an existential crisis for many Nigerians. For many young people, a way of resolving the consequent sense of alienation is to retreat from the Nigeria project into idealized primordial identities often with the Nigerian state as the enemy. For most of the Biafra agitators, Biafra represents that utopia which will shield them from all the challenges of underdevelopment and state failure experienced in Nigeria. Additionally, there is a heavy burden of institutionalized sectional memories of hurt, injustice, distrust and even a disguised longing for vengeance. One of the consequences is that no individual or political authority enjoys universal legitimacy across the main fault lines. ²⁴In this sense, neo Biafra movements and agitations are symptomatic of the crisis in Nigeria's nation-building processes, with the Biafra agitators contesting the legitimacy of the Nigerian state the manner in which the state is constituted and the mode of leadership recruitment into its structures.

What Is to be Done?

The typical response of Nigerian governments over the years to separatist agitations is to brand the agitators "troublemakers," and send law enforcement agencies to use force to quell their agitations. This often results in casualties, stoking ethnic tensions in the process, which further fuels or hardens separatist agitations. For instance, Amnesty International accused the Nigerian security forces, led by the military, of embarking "on a chilling campaign of extrajudicial executions and violence resulting in the deaths of at least 150 peaceful pro- Biafra protesters. The report by Amnesty International was exploited by IPOB supporters who saw it as a legitimization

of its argument that its protests were peaceful and that the Buhari government used it as an excuse to kill the Igbos. Nigerian authorities denied the claim by Amnesty International, saying it was only aimed to tarnish the reputation of the country's security forces. Although in recent times the government appears to be showing more willingness to use dialogue to solve some of the country's separatist challenges (such as the remark by Acting President Yemi Osinbajo that citizens have right to discuss their continued existence in Nigeria, much more needs to be done. Below are recommendations to address these separatist challenges:

Power Sharing

At the root of the various separatist agitations is the issue of power sharing among the various regional and ethnic factions of the elite as well as access to infrastructure and privileges at the federal level. Following from this, it will be helpful to institutionalize or codify the existing conventional system of power sharing and rotating the presidency between the north and the south as an interim measure - until the country's democracy matures and trust among Nigerians has improved. Strengthening the Federal Character Commission (FCC) - an agency created in 1996 to ensure fairness in the distribution of jobs and socioeconomic amenities among different parts of the country - will help to build trust among groups. Making it a mandatory requirement that certain federal appointments and distribution of infrastructure must have the imprimatur of the FCC will reduce the suspicion that the ethnic group in power will privilege its in-group and disadvantage others. This move will, in turn, help to reduce inter-ethnic suspicion and attenuate the anarchic character of the country's politics.

Exploring the 'Apology' Option

The Igbos have a very bitter memory of the civil war and the pogroms against their people in the North following the revenge coup of July 29, 1966 – just as the Northerners have bitter memories of the Igbo-led January 15 1966 coup that killed several of their leaders. For this it may be worth exploring whether an apology by the Igbos to the North for the January 15, 1966 coup (through the council of Igbo traditional rulers and the pan umbrella Igbo organization Ohaneze) could help mollify the North for the pains caused by the January 15, 1966 coup. At the same it is worth exploring if an apology to the Igbos by the North for the pogrom that followed the revenge coup of July 1966 and by the rest of the country to the Igbos for some of the excesses of the Civil War such as using starvation as an instrument of war could mollify Igbo separatists.

Referendum

Referendum is another time-tested instrument for blunting separatist tendencies in the mature democracies. It is also a way of testing whether the leaders of the separatist movements really reflect the wishes of those they claim they represent and want to "liberate." Following from this, perhaps Nigeria should consider a constitutional provision allowing for a referendum among nationalities that want to secede from the union, say, once every 30 years. This will allow earnest conversations between supporters and opponents of each separatist movement.

Though opponents of referendum in Africa argue that it may actually encourage secession, the counter argument by its supporters is that it could force states in Africa to be fair to all its component parts, which will convince them beyond doubt that the benefits of remaining part of the country clearly outweigh the benefits of becoming an independent state.

Prioritizing Nation-building Processes

Ultimately, the greatest weapon against separatist agitation is for each constituent party to feel treated fairly and be convinced that the gains of being part of the Nigerian federation far outweigh the benefits of existing as an independent country. This means the country must prioritize its nation-building processes, which currently seem to be engulfed in crisis. In addition to the tools mentioned above, the government should also consider creating a separate Ministry of National Integration to drive and coordinate efforts at the country's nation-building processes.

Nigerian government should realize that while the Biafra separatist threat is receiving the most attention at the moment, many other groups hold similar goals. Consequently, the government should not wait for other separatist agitators in hibernation to get re-energized before acting.

Overview of Unknown Gunmen

It is imperative to disentangle the term 'unknown gunmen' which has recently become a popular catchphrase in Nigeria's insecurity imbroglio. The term has been used to refer to criminal elements from a particular part of the country (, p. 1) thus giving the incidence of insecurity in Nigeria a religious and ethnic colouration. 'Attacks by unknown gunmen' is a phrase often used to describe sectional violence taking place in the south-east of the country. This submission was corroborated by the Governor of Ebonyi Nda-Isaiah, 2021State, Dave Umahi, who at a briefing in June 2021, said:

Let our people come out to speak out that the unknown gunmen are not really unknown gunmen, they are our young men and women who will defend our land tomorrow. They should stop being killed; they should stop giving themselves to be killed.

He further claims that three factors are responsible for the menace: people being brainwashed and unaware of what they are agitating for; people who go to a talisman to be fortified against bullets yet end up being killed; and the use of hard drugs (Channels TV, 2021).

Taking a different stance, Security Peace and Development (SPD) (2021, p. 1) avers that the unknown gunmen phenomenon appears to be connected to the banditry malady confronting the north-west. The attacks by unknown gunmen have increased since the government placed a ban on open grazing. Meanwhile, it is not clear whether the unknown gunmen are individuals masquerading as bandits or a repeated case of farmer-herder conflict or

vengeance. It is however clear that the incidence requires prompt attention because the spate of killings in the country shows that violent death is fast becoming a norm.

The position above is noteworthy given the incidence of such attacks in other states such as Taraba and Plateau. According to Nanlong (2021, p. 1), the Governor of Plateau state, Simon Lalong, expressed concern over the state of insecurity caused by unknown gunmen in the state.

Separatist Agitations

A common definition of 'separatism' is that, it is the advocacy of a state of cultural, ethnic, tribal, religious, racial, government or gender separation from the larger group. While it often refers to full political secession, separatism groups may seek nothing more than greater autonomy. While some equate separatism with religious segregation, racist segregation, or sexist segregation, most separatists argue that separation by choice may serve useful purposes and is not the same as government enforced segregation (Ngwu, Ekwe & Chiaha, 2015). Separatist groups practice a form of identity politics, or political activities and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice visited upon members of certain social groups. Such groups believe attempts at integration with dominant groups compromise their identity and ability to pursue great self-determination.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed survey design method to examine Pirate Broadcasting and Separatists Agitation in Nigeria, using Radio Biafra as case study. The design was selected because it allows for the collection of data from a representative group, providing an opportunity to draw data from a portion of a large population. The area of the study was South Eastern Nigeria. The population of this study comprise of the five South-East states of Nigeria that make up the defunct Republic of the Biafra. They include Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Imo, and Ebonyi states, with the total population of 26, million according to National Population Commission (NPC) estimation figure in 2023 census. A sample size of 400 was determined with the use of the Taro Yemane formula; while the Bourley's proportional allocation technique aided proportionate allocation of sample size to each of the states. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire designed to capture respondents' perceptions of the Radio Biafra broadcast signal.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to expert review. Research supervisors and other experts in the field of mass communication and educational research evaluated the instrument to ensure its relevance, clarity, and ability to accurately capture the variables of interest. The reliability of the instrument was achieved from a pilot test conducted by the researcher. The pilot test involved 20 selected respondents from Ipob members in Onitsha, Anambra State, and this consists of ten states of the federation that make up the defunct Republic of Biafra of 10 males and 10 females from each state. To further strengthen the reliability of the

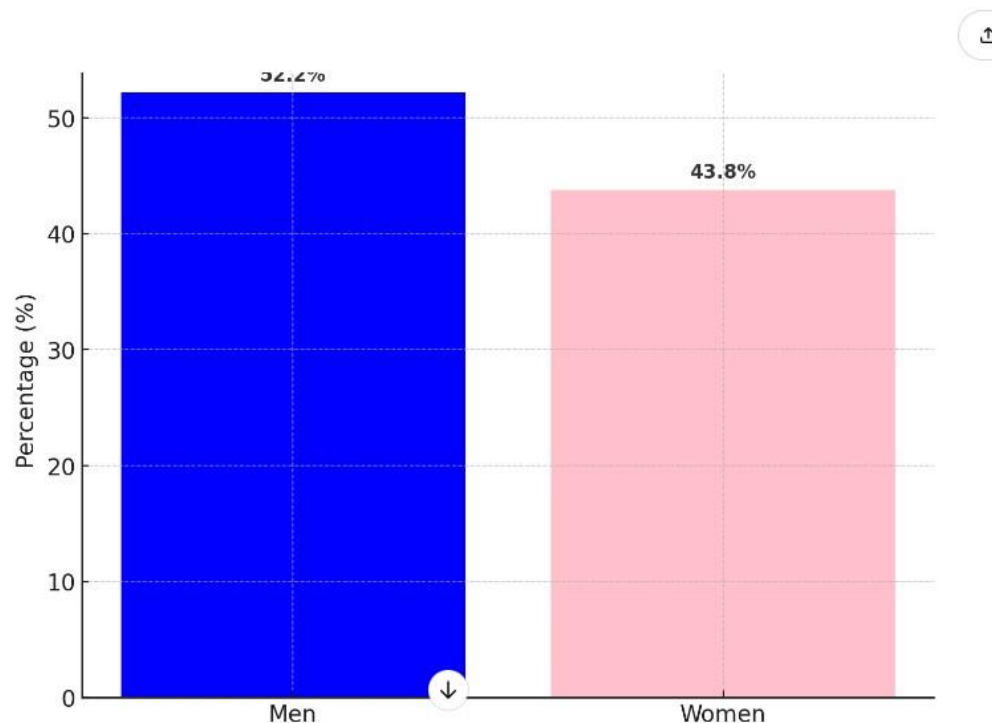
instrument, the test re-test method was also adopted and the SPSS an online software was used to calculate the reliability of the instrument which stood at 0.98.

Results

The study sought to provide answers to three research questions. They are presented below; **Research Question 1:** What is the level of awareness among people regarding the existence of Radio Biafra?

To analyze the level of awareness among people regarding the existence of Radio Biafra, we can interpret the data on respondents' sex distribution and calculate the awareness level separately for men and women if that data were available. For this example, we'll use the provided sex distribution data in terms of percentage and represent it in a bar chart format.

The responses on awareness regarding the existence of Radio Biafra align with these demographic distributions, then the awareness levels based on the percentage distribution of men and women in the sample. To visualize this distribution, we can create a bar chart to show the percentage distribution of male and female respondents, which can later be overlaid or used alongside awareness data once collected.



The bar chart above displays the sex distribution of respondents, with men making up 52.2% and women accounting for 43.8% of the sample. This distribution provides a basis for further analysis of awareness levels regarding the existence of Radio Biafra.

Research Question 2: What is the reach of the Radio Biafra radio signal? Table .1: Audience Reception of Signals

Reception of signals	Enugu	Anambr a	Abia	Imo	Cross River s	Ebon yi	Bayels a	River s	Delt a	Akw a Ibom
Signals are steady & clear	22%	25%	27%	29%	5%	26%	10%	22%	16%	4%
Signals are clear but not steady	25%	23%	23%	21%	7%	19%	18%	16%	17%	8%
Signals are not clear and not steady	22%	19%	16%	21%	11%	20%	15%	12%	19%	7%
Signals are not clear and not steady	27%	30%	29%	16%	26%	31%	33%	27%	31%	27%
Signals are not received at all	4%	2%	5%	3%	51%	4%	24%	23%	17%	54%
Total	(n=100%)	(n=100%)	(n=100%)	(n=100%)	(n=100%)	(n=100%)	(n=100%)	(n=100%)	(n=100%)	(n=100%)

This table provides insights into the reach and quality of Radio Biafra's signals across ten states. Each state has different levels of signal clarity and steadiness, which indicates the variability in the radio signal's reach.

Steady and Clear Signals

The states with the highest steady and clear reception are Imo (29%), Abia (27%), and Ebonyi (26%). States with poor steady and clear signals include Cross River (5%) and Akwa Ibom (4%).

Clear but Unsteady Signals

Enugu and Anambra lead in "clear but unsteady" reception at 25% and 23%, respectively, followed by Abia (23%) and Imo (21%). States with lower reception under this category include Cross River (7%) and Akwa Ibom (8%).

Not Clear and Not Steady Signals

The percentage of respondents who reported that the signals were "not clear and not steady" is significant in Enugu (27%) and Bayelsa (33%). This reception level was lower in Cross River (11%) and Akwa Ibom (7%).

No Signal Received

Cross River (51%) and Akwa Ibom (54%) reported the highest rates of no signal reception at all. Other states with significant levels of "no signal" responses include Bayelsa (24%) and Rivers (23%). However, High Reach are Imo, Abia, and Ebonyi have the best signal reception, indicating a higher reach of Radio Biafra signals in these areas.

Moderate Reach are states like Enugu, Anambra, and Rivers experience moderate reach, with a mix of steady and clear signals, but also instances where the signals are not steady or clear.

Research Question 3: What influence do messages from Radio Biafra have on its listeners? **Table 2: Perceived Influence of Radio Biafra Message on its listeners**

s/no	Perceived Influence	Frequency	Percentages %
1	Strongly Influenced (Belief in Biafra Independence, Change in Political Views)	120	30
2	Moderately Influenced (Changed Opinions, Support for Political Reforms)	140	35
3	Slightly Influenced (Increased Awareness, Cultural Pride)	80	20

4	Not Influenced (No Change in Beliefs or Attitudes)	60	15
5	No Opinion/Unsure	0	0

Strongly Influenced (30%)

120 respondents report being strongly influenced by Radio Biafra's messages. This likely includes listeners who have adopted or strengthened their support for Biafran independence and secession. These individuals might view the station's messages as reinforcing their political beliefs, prompting a deeper engagement with separatist ideas or changing their views about the Nigerian state. Some might also experience a shift in their political ideology, aligning more with the views advocated by the station, including skepticism toward the Nigerian government and support for political autonomy for the Igbo people.

Moderately Influenced (35%)

140 respondents indicate they were moderately influenced. This group might not fully adopt the call for secession but could support political reforms, anti-corruption measures, or greater autonomy for the southeastern region. Radio Biafra's content likely raised awareness of political issues, leading them to question the Nigerian government's governance, policies, and handling of resources. These individuals may also feel a greater sense of ethnic pride and a heightened interest in the Igbo culture and identity promoted by the station.

Slightly Influenced (20%)

80 respondents report being slightly influenced by the messages. These listeners may have become more aware of Biafran history, political struggles, or issues like human rights violations but do not fully support the Biafran cause or political changes. Instead, their influence might be limited to a sense of cultural pride or greater understanding of the political dynamics in the region. This group might appreciate the station's advocacy for human rights and social justice but remain neutral or indifferent toward full-scale secession or radical political change.

Not Influenced (15%)

60 respondents feel that the messages from Radio Biafra have had no influence on them. This group may either disagree with the messages conveyed by the station or simply remain unaffected by the content, possibly due to political, cultural, or religious reasons. These listeners might have entrenched political beliefs or values that are not aligned with the station's viewpoints. Some individuals in this group could also have limited access to the station's broadcasts, reducing the impact on their beliefs or attitudes.

No Opinion/Unsure (0%)

No respondents in this hypothetical analysis were unsure or neutral about the influence of Radio Biafra's messages, but in real-world scenarios, this category could represent those who are undecided or have mixed feelings about the station's influence. Radio Biafra's messages have a significant influence on its listeners, particularly in shaping political beliefs and attitudes towards the Biafran independence movement. 35% of the sample is moderately influenced, with 30% strongly influenced, indicating that Radio Biafra's content plays a pivotal role in shaping opinions on political autonomy and anti-government sentiments. Cultural and identity reinforcement also appears to be an important influence, with many listeners experiencing an increase in ethnic pride and awareness of Igbo heritage. 15% of listeners report no change in their beliefs or attitudes, showing that while Radio Biafra has a substantial influence, there remains a portion of the population that remains largely unaffected by its content.

Findings

This study was guided by three research questions and objectives. This invariably yielded major findings elucidated in this section. Research question/objective one sought to identify the states where the signals of radio Biafra are received in the South-East region of Nigeria. Data generated indicate that the state of the East-South regions receive the radio signals in varying degrees, though not steady in many parts. This finding has resemblance with that of Adibe (2017) and Atttoh (2015) which found that Biafra agitations is not just a matter of 'Igbo agenda' as referred in some quarters, but indeed, an issue of concern to many other ethnic groups in southern part of Nigeria.

The second objective which forms research question two sought to evaluate the level of listenership to the station in the region. Generated data surprisingly yields that majority of people in the area do not listen to the station. The final objective and research question indicate that the said radio station induces sympathy and enthusiasm for the Biafra's cause, promotes cynicism of the government and her policies and programmes, and encourages political apathy among the people. This is also consistent with the observations of Hindatu, Muhammad, Isaac, & Asmat-Nizam (2016), in their study entitled 'Peace and Conflict Resolution: Biafra Agitation and Zoning of Presidency in Nigeria' in which they contend that the emergence of Radio Biafra is a powerful force for inculcating messages of sympathy and enthusiasm for the Biafran course on the listeners.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it concluded that the findings offer significant insights into the role of Radio Biafra in shaping political, cultural, and social landscapes in southeastern Nigeria. The core messages communicated by the station—namely Biafran independence, political criticism of the Nigerian government, promotion of Igbo culture, and advocacy for human rights and social justice—are central to its appeal and

influence. The study reveals that Radio Biafra has a profound impact on its listeners, with 30% reporting strong influence and 35% experiencing moderate influence. The station has proven to be an effective platform for cultivating political consciousness, reinforcing nationalist sentiments, and promoting cultural identity, particularly among Igbo-speaking Nigerians. However, its messages are met with resistance from some segments of the population, suggesting that its influence is not universal and varies by region, political affiliation, and individual beliefs. Despite its significant role in shaping political discourse, especially surrounding Biafran independence and regional autonomy, the study also highlights the diversity of opinions and responses among listeners, underscoring the complex role of media in influencing national and regional politics. Radio Biafra serves as both a source of political mobilization for some and a point of contention for others. This polarizing effect emphasizes the need for further dialogue and understanding of the underlying issues that fuel such media-driven movements. In conclusion, while Radio Biafra has undoubtedly influenced political discourse and cultural identity in Nigeria, its messages are both a catalyst for change and a source of division. A balanced approach that encourages constructive dialogue, promotes critical engagement with media, and addresses underlying social and political issues will be essential in navigating the complex landscape shaped by such influential media outlets.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. Given the influence of Radio Biafra on its listeners, it is crucial to foster media literacy among the population, especially in the southeastern regions. Educational programs that teach individuals how to critically evaluate media content can help prevent the spread of misinformation and promote balanced understanding. Government and civil society organizations should collaborate to develop media literacy campaigns that empower citizens to assess various media sources effectively.
2. The study's findings underscore the political and cultural divisions that exist due to the calls for Biafran independence. To bridge these divides, there should be an emphasis on national dialogue that includes representatives from all regions of Nigeria, focusing on addressing the grievances and concerns of marginalized groups.
3. Human rights organizations and the Nigerian government should address the legitimate concerns raised by the station regarding discrimination and political repression.

References

- Gonzalez, M.J. (2013). Media propaganda: A framing analysis of radio broadcasts from the U.S. to Cuba. A Master of Arts Thesis, Department of Mass Communications College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida. <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/4494> Retrieved on AUGUST 1, 2023.
- McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. C. (1977). The evolution of agenda setting theory: 25 years in the market place of ideas. *Journal of Communication*, 43 (2), 58-66.
- Minahan, J. (2002). *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations: S-Z*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Nanlong, M. (2021) *Insecurity: I don't want to hear of unknown gunmen again, says Lalong*. Vanguard, June 21. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/06/insecurity-idont-want-to-hear-of-unknown-gunmen-again-says-lalong/> (Accessed: 1st August 2023).
- Ngwu, C. C., Ekwe, O. C. and Chiaha, C. (2015). Nigerian Newspapers Framing of the Chibok school girls abduction (A study of the *Guardian*, *Daily Sun*, *The Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers). *Global journal of arts, humanities and social sciences*, 3(8), 78-93. Retrieved on 09/07/2018 from www.eajournals.org
- Nkpa. N. (1977). Rumours of Mass Poisoning in Biafra. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 41.3:332- 346.
- Premium Times. (July 15, 2015). Nigerian Govt. lied, Radio Biafra still broadcasting. Premium Times. Retrieved Aug 1st , 2023 at <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/186692-nigerian-govt- lied-radio-biafra still-broadcasting.html>.
- Ricke, L. (2010). The public versus CNN: Agenda setting and Youtube presidential debates in the United States. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*. Vol.2 No1. Pp.67 76.
- Security Peace and Development (2021) 'Gunmen era', *Nextier SPD*. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/gunmen-era> (Accessed: 1st August, 2023).
- Solely, L. (1999). *Free Radio: Electronic Civil Disobedience*. Colorado; West view press.

Weaver, D., McCombs, M. & Shaw, D.L. (2004). Agenda-setting research: Issues, attributes, and influences. In L.L. Kaid (Ed.) *Handbook of Political Communication Research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.