

The Federal Character Principle and Political Exclusion of Southeast Nigeria, 2015–2019

Emmanuel Onyebuchi Ezeani¹, Kingsley Ekene Okoye^{1*} and Emmanuel Terkimbi Akov²

¹*Department of Political Science, Faculty of the Social Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 410001, Nigeria*

²*Department of Political Science, Faculty of the Social Science, University of Uyo, 520003 Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria*

ABSTRACT

The incidence of political exclusion in the world has continued to increase among different ethnic groups, and this has continued to generate tension. However, in Nigeria, the inception of the current democratic dispensation in 2015 led to the politics of exclusion in sheds of opinions of individuals whose contributions are required for the development of the country and in political appointments of people from particular religious and ethnic groups. Though the federal character principle of affirmative action has received reasonable scholarly attention, these studies have failed to examine how non-adherence to this policy initiative has increased the marginalization of the Southeast zone of Nigeria from 2015 to 2019. Based on the expository strength of the social exclusion theory and through a rigorous content analysis of data collected using the documentary method, it was argued that the non-implementation of this principle increased the marginalization of the southeast zone. Tables and figures validated these results in our analysis. Thus, emphasis is not only placed on affirmative action but rather on the manner in which it is performed. Our thought for policy implications considered the urgent need to review extant laws and policies enacted on inclusiveness, focusing on the yearly release of data by the commission across the country and effective sanctions for defaulters.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 15 October 2021

Accepted: 15 March 2023

Published: 12 June 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.32.2.14>

E-mail addresses:

emmanuel.ezeani@unn.edu.ng (Emmanuel Onyebuchi Ezeani)

kingsley.okoye@unn.edu.ng (Kingsley Ekene Okoye)

akovterkimbi@uniuyo.edu.ng (Emmanuel Terkimbi Akov)

*Corresponding author

Keywords: Affirmative action, federal character principle, governance, marginalization, political exclusion

INTRODUCTION

The challenge associated with governance has become a topical issue as nations and international institutions search

for more effective ways of improving the transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of government decisions and policies (Committee for Development Policy, 2014). These efforts notwithstanding, Nigeria's history has continued to be marked by a crisis of governance, which started immediately after the country's independence on 1st October 1960 (Omoleke & Olaiya, 2015; Ozohu-Suleiman, 2013). The crisis contributed to the first military coup in the country on 15th January 1966 and the subsequent coups that followed. In Nigeria, the right to occupy any strategic political position often depends on the particular ethnic nationality that one belongs to. Also, the ability of any ethnic group to attract substantial developmental projects from the central government is usually a function of the level of the ethnic group's affinity with the powers that be (Adeshina, 2017). In a nutshell, this sums up the type of politics that is in operation in the country.

One of the thought-provoking issues that has not only remained unsolved but has the propensity for inducing high sensations on the part of all concerned is the issue of exclusionary politics in Nigeria (Jameson, 2006). It is an issue that has been politicized by successive administrations in Nigeria, including Military and Civilian regimes (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). It has manifested in federations where its laws allocate power between the central and regional governments and for each level within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent. There appears to be a clear effort of one ethnic group to dominate the

others in the country. Hence, the issue of marginalization and the question of the realization of social justice have been topical issues in Nigeria at the moment (Rindap & Mari, 2014). There has also been an attempt by one ethnic group (the Igbo) to secede in the 1960s on the grounds of the inherent inequality in the Nigerian polity (Adetiba, 2019; Agbo et al., 2021). The Yoruba have equally agitated for self-determination because they felt that their interests were by no means given any consideration by the federal government (Ozoeze, 2005). These developments elicit questions about the real essence of the 1999 Nigerian constitution (as amended), which states in its preamble as follows: "We, therefore, present a Constitution with the ultimate goal of advancing good governance and the well-being of all people in our country based on the principles of liberty and fairness and to strengthen our people's unity" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, p. 3).

Over time, the Nigerian state has produced leaders who felt that the 1999 constitution was impracticable because it lacked the fundamental elements for facilitating the implementation and consolidation of the Federal Character Principle (FCP) in the country. However, a renowned novelist, the late Professor Chinua Achebe, wrote in his book entitled *The Trouble with Nigeria* that the major challenge facing Nigeria as a country lies in its leadership structure. To him, there are no issues with Nigerian land, atmospheric conditions, or anything else within the country. Thus, he concluded that the

country's problems lie in the indisposition of its leaders to rise to the responsibility of showing personal examples, which is the actual trait of true leadership (Achebe, 1983).

The foregoing suggests that Nigeria is facing a great crisis of governance. The oath of office of a Nigerian President, as recorded in the seventh schedule of the 1999 Constitution, states as follows:

...As President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I will discharge my duties to the best of my ability, faithfully and in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the law, and always in the interest of the sovereignty, integrity, solidarity, well-being and prosperity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; that I will strive to preserve the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy as contained in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; that I will not allow my personal interest to influence my official conduct or my official decisions.... (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, p. 1)

Given this oath, it is expected that every holder of the office of the President will see to the effectuation of the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy as enshrined in the constitution. The FCP is seen to be a fundamental element of these principles because of its potential for eliminating ethno-religious marginalization. To this end, Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution shows the different efforts

to reduce the unhealthy rivalry between different groups in the country. Despite this provision to promote inclusion, political exclusion appears high in the country. The challenges encountered in implementing the Federal Character Principle in Nigeria have been widely discussed in the literature. For example, while Okoye et al. (2021) argued that it undermines political participation, Onimisi et al. (2019) focused on the bottlenecks in its application to public servants. Furthermore, Obiyan and Akindele (2002) show that it instigates conflicts and mutual trust, and Demarest et al. (2020) underscore how it leads to stagnancy in balancing the public service employment ratio. Other studies conclude that the FCP has contributed to undermining meritocracy (Mustapha, 2007; Olusoji et al., 2014). However, this paper examines if non-adherence to the FCP exacerbated the perceived marginalization of the Southeast zone in Nigeria. Our observation is from 2015 to 2019, which coincided with the rise in exclusionary politics of the zone, following the transition from the administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) to President Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC). This paper is divided into five segments. Following the introduction is a review of related literature. The third segment deals with methodology, where we build up the materials and methods used as well as the theoretical framework for analyzing them.

Federal Character Principle and Political Marginalization—A Thematic Review

Extant literature has interrogated the impact of political exclusion on the victims worldwide. For instance, Riley et al. (2010) noted that the world is presently witnessing an era of alienation from conventional politics due to discriminatory practices that tend to exclude people from governance. Colman and Götze (2001) also enthused that estrangement from conventional politics and its structures marks the swift change in the contemporary political setting. According to Vecchione and Caprara (2009), some factors that have heightened exclusion include gender, education, and age, which, in their opinion, are significant for influencing marginalization levels.

Some studies have also examined the effect of political exclusion in Third World countries (Afigbo, 1989; 2000; Awolowo, 1947; Bello, 1962; Ezigbo, 2007; Onu, 2008). These groups of scholars argue that in most Third World countries, political exclusion was entrenched by colonialism and ethnic competition and has continued to persist despite the various strategies initiated to reduce marginalization and the domination of one group by another. They conclude that the aftermath of colonialism and its legacy of ethnic politics contributed in no little way to stoking political alienation in developing societies. The problem with the above line of thinking, however, is that it sees colonialism and ethnicity as having preceded, engendered, and instigated political exclusion in Third World countries.

Yet, during the pre-colonial era, some traditional systems had structures conducive to political alienation because they were inherently discriminatory. A good example is the *Osu* caste system, which was an age-long traditional practice in Igboland characterized by segregation and restrictions on interactions with a group of individuals known as *Osu* (Outcast). It was considered an abomination for the *Osu* to mix up with other community members or participate in the leadership selection process in Igboland (Ugobude, 2018). This practice of denying people rights to inclusion was in place long before the colonial era and when the issue of ethnicity was not yet profound (Ibenekwu, n.d.).

Other scholarly works have tried to explain the perceived marginalization of the southeast zone from the perspective of ethnicity and competition (Ibrahim, 2015; Okonta, 2012; Owen, 2016). They contend that the current perceived marginalization of the Igbo results from their leader's inability to make it to federal power. To them, the perceived marginalization of the southeast zone signifies a completed rupture, crack or breakdown of the Igbo elite and their masses, which could account for the former's failure to occupy the presidential position. It was even noted that "...the Igbo elite has a strong empirical basis to read Nigerian political history as one of failure and frustration for them...with this failure of the elite, the Igbo lumpen have seized the initiative of following the path of disintegration" (Ibrahim, 2015 as cited in Ibeanu et al., 2016, p. 5).

While existing explanations for the marginalization of the southeast are profound, their position that the zone's marginalization was due to the Igbo elite's inability to capture the presidency presents an incomplete picture of what is obtainable in Nigeria. First, Nigeria has six geopolitical zones, and a president is expected to be appointed from one of them. Therefore, their argument on this ethnic competition and division failed to account for why it is not a common feature attributed to other geopolitical zones in the country that have also failed to make it to the presidential position. Secondly, ethnic competition as a variable of political power in the southeast zone hardly had a similar effect on other minority ethnic groups such as the Urhobo, Itshekiri, Ijaw, Igala, Nupe, Efik, Ibibio, Idoma, Kanuri, Nupe, and Tiv in the country. Thirdly, it has been noted in the literature that, sometimes, healthy competition can create avenues for economic development (Ononogbu, 2017). For example, the era following independence saw vigorous economic competition between the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria; the west produced cocoa, the north cultivated groundnuts and cereals, and the south was noted for its palm products and root crops. This competition galvanized economic development in Nigeria.

Another argument common in the literature on the reasons for the non-inclusion of citizens is centered on the nature of state-society relations. Scholarly works like Gurr (1970), Ibeanu (2015), Onuoha (2011), O. Ukiwo (2009), and U. Ukiwo

and Chukwuma (2012) saw the FCP as the activities of some leaders which hardly translated to good governance but rather led to the degeneration of relations between the state and individual citizens. Some of the activities, as noted by the studies, include diversification of political space, which was followed by the emergence of "confrontation between state-led nationalism and state-seeking nationalism" (Onuoha, 2011, p. 407), state violence arising from the physical or mental injury against persons, property of law-abiding citizens or group of citizens (O. Ukiwo, 2009), and the nature of political settlement (patronage). They saw fragmentation as a major consequence of this problem, which could hamper social cohesion in the relationship.

Peters (2009) explored the issue of exclusion in terms of its impact on disabled individuals. To him, disabled individuals, including children and adults, are handicapped people who may find it difficult to participate in an activity, which could lead to their being sidelined from society. The data on disabled persons as a vulnerable group and their accumulated experiences frequently indicate an image of exclusion rather than marginalization. This kind of exclusion is apparent in the finding that 98% of young people with disabilities in developing countries do not go to school (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009). In regions like the Middle East and North Africa, educational systems are noted to have kept out about seventy-five percent (75%) of disabled school-age children from the academic environment

(Hakim & Jaganjac, 2005). Consequently, it may not be necessary to emphasize that the conception of the experiences of disabled people as marginalized take too lightly their experiences. However, articulating these factors as the only reasons for marginalization might be a misnomer because it focuses on disadvantaged groups—individuals like children and adults (Hammoud, 2005).

Other scholars have also tried to establish a link between heterogeneous societies and the marginalization of people in developing countries. For instance, Sanchez (2019) and Reinhold et al. (2000) argue that a heterogeneous society, as measured by the multiplicity of ethnic groups, tends to reduce a country's inclusiveness. In their view, the word 'heterogeneity' denotes the state of being possessed of different elements, different from 'diversity,' which is the inclusion of diverse people (for example, different genders, races or customs and traditions) in a group. Heterogeneity describes the sociocultural intricacy and separation of social structures in contemporary societies (Reinhold et al., 2000; Sanchez, 2019). It enables individuals to have a sense of belonging or what may be described as 'we feeling.' However, the heterogeneity of societies can sometimes attract relevance once it is politicized, mobilized and organized.

While the extant but relevant literature reviewed on this laid emphasis on how political alienation was caused by factors like ethnicity, colonialism, age, gender, heterogeneous society, nature of state-

society relations, and globalization, less emphasis was placed on examining how non-adherence to the FCP increased the marginalization of the Southeast zone in Nigeria. Though previous studies on the non-implementation of FCP argued that it undermines national integration, meritocracy, and political participation, none of the above studies specifically explored the link between exclusionary politics and the policy safety net of the FCP in the zone. More so, the overall implication of this to the well-being of the people of the southeastern zone has not been exhaustively dealt with in the academic debate in Nigeria.

METHODS

This study adopted the documentary data collection method, which constitutes a broad category of data obtained from secondary sources. It involves information from other scholarly works—published, unpublished journals, periodicals, and government publications. It was limited to the literature on affirmative action, the federal character principle, the quota system, and political exclusion. We utilized this to elucidate our argument from the existing literature as it was used to determine the relationship between non-adherence to the FCP and the perceived marginalization of the Southeast zone of Nigeria. Our reason for adopting qualitative research was to discover and probably understand the reasons for the observed patterns of exclusionary politics in Nigeria, especially the unseen or ignored ones. The method is well-suited for contextual analysis and

useful when the task is to glean, illuminate, interpret and extract valuable information to draw inferences from the available evidence. Moreover, the advantage of qualitative research involves its “ability to have access to organizational structure, bureaucratic processes... this could lead to the discovery of the unexpected phenomenon” (Obikeze cited in Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2006, pp. 360-370). The adoption of this method of data analysis is thus justified due to the following reasons:

1. The study largely used qualitative data generated from secondary sources.
2. The method helps facilitate the analysis (p. 372).

The qualitative data were generated from written and unwritten documents and analyzed using descriptive analysis. It enhanced our ability to objectively summarize the data sets obtained while underscoring the pattern of cause and effect of the independent and dependent variables utilized in the study. According to Asika (1991), “qualitative descriptive analysis essentially borders on summarizing the information generated in the research work so that appropriate analytical methods could be used to further discover relationships among the variables” (p. 118). It is a dynamic form of verbal and visual data analysis oriented toward summarizing the informational contents of that data (Altheide, 1987; Morgan, 1993). In contrast to quantitative descriptive analysis, in which the authors systematically apply a pre-

existing set of codes to the data, qualitative descriptive analysis is data-derived: that is, codes are also systematically applied, but they are generated from the data during the study (Sandelowski, 2000). The qualitative descriptive analysis moves further into the domain of interpretation because the effort is made to understand not only the manifest but also the latent content of data to discover patterns or regularities in the data. Implicit in qualitative descriptive analysis is that it enables us to achieve our set objectives. The study uses logical induction to test our hypotheses. Tables and figures were adopted to better understand and clarify the issues in the paper.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of social exclusion is the theoretical framework adopted to explain the link between FCP and political exclusion in the Southeast zone of Nigeria. The concept of social exclusion as a theory can be traced to Aristotle. The present-day awareness of the concept started in the early 1970s during the tenure of Rene Lenoir as the Secretary for Social Affairs of the French Government (Eflova et al., 2017). The theory was espoused as a means of getting a better explanation of issues relating to poverty and marginalization. Topical issues relating to social exclusion were analyzed in the works of other scholars such as Max Weber, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger. The theory was further developed in Europe to solve different problems/challenges of societal disintegration emanating from the socioeconomic crises of the time. Aristotle’s

theory of the state and society, where he viewed man as a political animal', has become the bedrock of the social exclusion theory (Eflova et al., 2017). It implies that man is the only animal capable of associating with other men with articulate speech both in the planning and execution of different activities. Other animals do not go further than recognize or distinguish pain and pleasure and signify these distinctions with an ordinary sound. The object of man's ability to speak is to indicate a certain level of advantage and disadvantage as well as justice and injustice in society.

In 1895, Emile Durkheim also gave fastidious attention to social cohesion and the challenges formed by pathetic social bonds in his work on the association between groups of people in society. Furthermore, topical historic actions like the painful end to France's colonial era or the socio-political disorder of 1968 toughened concerns with the responsibility of France's government in upholding social cohesion towards reducing or invalidating exclusion. The primary initiative of social exclusion in France in the early 1970s was to attract major developmental projects in the state and avoid unnecessary crises.

The basic characteristics of the theory are:

1. Social exclusion is a projection of conditions different from its outcome.
2. It is multidimensional, implying that policies requiring attending to it must be holistic.
3. Patterns of social exclusion have a lot of shortcomings and numerous drawbacks.
4. It goes beyond the 'primacy of material condition' and extends to non-inclusiveness in social relationships and public engagement.
5. Social exclusion is positioned and entrenched within a community, a term different among separate nations in cultural diversities.
6. The threats embedded in exclusion could be based on individual qualities like (the person's status), including health conditions, sex category, age, religious sect, nationality or ethnic group, political affiliations, personal communication, and personal contacts.
7. Social exclusion deals more with social relationships relating to two different parties: excluders and excluded.

Following these perspectives, the attitude of the Nigerian government in policy-making prioritizes elites at the expense of the poor masses or the disadvantaged groups. In the social science discipline, social exclusion is, among other theories, one of the theories researchers adopt to analyze the problem of social discrimination, marginalization and disparity in society. Other factors include sex (male or female), social class (rank or category),

religious sect (Christianity, Muslim, Hindu), caste (social standing or social order) and ethnic groups (racial, cultural or tribal) are multifarious associations that are being contested. Possibly, at a minimal level, there are significant relationships linking the social realities this theory seeks to explain in society; for instance, a contribution to the knowledge of this theory could be to concentrate on the social relations of individuals and how such impacted multiple exclusionary processes.

Apprehension concerning the degree of associational difference connecting different dimensions of social discrimination, marginalization and disparity of individuals/groups in the society and the relative salience of these processes are necessary because of the considerable methodical prospects social exclusion has towards understanding and informing policy and action of the basic things required of them. Nevertheless, the insight offered by its theoretical perspective cannot change those obtainable by the lens of social status, ethnic groups, social group standing or order, age, and disability, among others. When the role played by these terminologies is considered separately, one tends to underscore the efforts toward realizing just, fair and unified societies in Nigeria.

It should be noted that a significant pattern of social exclusion as a theory centers on advanced asymmetrical power associations, which helps us to understand the basis of poverty and the implications of the discrimination of individuals and groups in society. These factors control

and relate to economic, socio-political and cultural aspects in associations built by individuals, different communities, institutions of learning, or nation-states. Given this perspective, what could account for any government policy on benefit levels or different entry conditions is likely to influence poverty levels. Often, poverty is linked to its sufferers in the action of benefits and denials from governmental agencies or individuals and groups as the fault of those individuals concerned. Therefore, differentiating poverty and the social exclusion theory via organizational discrepancies appears to have failed. To this end, the best way to look at both is to consider or reflect on the roles played by different governmental structures that are likely to raise the threat of poverty and marginalization of people in society. Under these are procedures and processes that can be taken by individuals who were deprived of access to resources by the powers. Schuyt and Voorham (2000) showed how citizens of a particular society may instigate marginalization of other citizens by outright undermining people who are different in appointive positions, employment opportunities, and developmental projects. In most cases, this is done using bases such as ethnic group, gender, religious affiliation, social status, and age.

Sometimes, transitional businesses are used to carry out government policy objectives, which could make them serve as instruments of poverty and social exclusion via vague policy initiatives or goals and unproductive work initiatives

while accommodating some individuals in employment opportunities over other people. The state and the central government can be regarded as the initiators of these processes if their policy inputs and outputs increase the chances of people being marginalized and excluded from the country's mainstream politics. At a more abstract level, the welfare state may even be regarded as an actor that causes poverty and social exclusion. It follows the well-known neo-liberal critique, which assumes that the welfare state does not help people but makes them dependent and passive (see Murray 1984, 1997). Exclusion, as an inevitable outcome of the institutions of the modern welfare state, takes away the incentive for people to shape their own lives, both through the safety net they provide and through the incentives administrative organizations have in sustaining a passive attitude of their clients. In addition to the possibility of actors at various levels functioning as excluders, social exclusion may also result from more general socioeconomic developments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are some indicators of the non-adherence to the FCP in Nigeria.

Exclusive Appointment of Northerners as Heads in The Security Architecture

As one of Nigeria's fourteen Independent Federal Executive Bodies, the Federal Character Commission (FCC) was established by Section 153(1) of the 1999 constitution, as amended. Its establishment predates the constitution by three years. An enabling Act, Decree No. 34 of 1996, was set up specifically to foresee, monitor and manage its affairs in line with the recommendations of the 1994/95 Constitutional Conference. The establishment of the FCC was facilitated by Section 14(3) and (4) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended. Details of the exclusive appointment of Northerners as heads in the security sector can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Heads of National Security Institutions appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari

S/N	Name	Position	State of Origin	Geopolitical Zone	Date appointed
1.	Brig Gen Mansur Muhammadu Dan Ali (Rtd).	Minister of Defence	Zamfara	North-West	15/11/2015
2.	Lt Gen Abdulrahman Dambazzua	Minister of Interior	Kaduna	North-West	15/11/2015
3.	Maj. Gen Mohammed Babagana Monguno (Rtd)	National Security Adviser	Borno	North-East	13/07/2015

Table 1 (Continue)

S/N	Name	Position	State of Origin	Geopolitical Zone	Date appointed
4.	Abubakar Malami	Attorney Gen of the Federation	Kebbi	North-West	15/11/2015
5.	Lt Gen. Abayomi G. Olanishakin	Chief of Defence Staff	Ekiti	South-West	13/07/2015
6.	Lt Gen Tukur Buratai	Chief of Army Staff	Borno	North-East	13/07/2015
7.	Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar	Chief of Air Staff	Bauchi	North-East	13/07/2015
8.	V Adm. Ibok-Ete Ekwe Abas	Chief of Naval Staff	Cross River	South-South	13/07/2015
9.	Lawal Musa Daura	Director General Department of State Service	Katsina	North-West	02/07/2015
10.	Abdullahi Gana Muhammadu	Commandant General Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps	Niger	North-Central	17/07/2015
11.	Col Hameed Ibrahim Ali (Rtd)	Comptroller General Nigerian Correctional Service	Bauchi	North-East	27/08/2015
12.	Muhammad Mustapha Abdullah	Chairman National Drug Law Enforcement Agency	Adamawa	North-East	11/01/2016
13.	Ibrahim Idris Kpotum	Inspector General of Police	Niger	North-Central	21/03/2016
14.	Muhammed Babandede	Comptroller General Nigerian Immigration Service	Jigawa	North-West	17/05/2016
15.	Ja'afaru Ahmed	Comptroller General Nigerian Prison Service	Kebbi	North-West	17/05/2016
16.	Ahmed Rufai Abubakar	Director Gen National Intelligence Agency	Katsina	North-West	11/01/2018
17.	Boboye Olayemi Oyeyemi	Corps Marshall Federal Road Safety Corps	Kwara	North-Central	24/01/2018

Source: Adapted from Nwangwu et al. (2020, p. 15)

Some of the official documents of the FCC show that the exclusive appointment of northerners as heads of the country's security agencies was facilitated by the fact that first, the Nigerian Constitution is silent on where and how to draw the heads of security agencies in the country. Second, expertise and necessary skills may be required for such positions. Third, the broad view of Section 14(3) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution made it possible for some legal luminaries to find loopholes to favor some serving presidents. For example, Mustapha (2007) notes that in March 2005, during his last tenure in office, former President Olusegun Obasanjo was accused by the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) of marginalizing the Muslim faithful in his ministerial appointments. Out of 42 listed, there were only 16 Muslim ministerial nominees (38.1%), as opposed to 26 Christians (61.9%). However, this accusation could not be substantiated against the former president, given the lacuna in the wide-ranging view of Section 14(3) of the FCP Act. Implicit in this development is the Nigerian government's attitude in policy-making, which prioritizes the elites at the expense of the poor or disadvantaged groups (Okoye et al., 2021). More so, empirical evidence has it that the application of the FCP in Nigeria was marked by subjective appointment in different spheres across the country (Gboyega, 1989). Social exclusion as a theory adopted in this study tends to concentrate more on the multifaceted fundamental patterns that instigate poverty and disadvantaged groups

on the multidimensional nature of the occurrence or results of these processes.

Weak Enforcement Capacity of the Federal Character Commission

In 1979, the Nigerian government established the FCP to solve the problem encountered with the quota system through a constitutional provision (Agbaje, 1989; Osaghae, 1989). It was considered necessary at that time because inequalities existed at different levels—between the regions, within the major and minor ethnic groups, and in religious circles (Mustapha, 2007). The fear of being dominated by one ethnic group became more prominent in the country's politics. Thus, it became imperative to act to ensure that there would be no individuals or groups of individuals within the country that would dominate others. It led to the introduction of Section 14(3) of the 1979 Constitution, which stated as follows:

The total structure of the government at the center, its agencies and institutions should be done in a way that will represent the federal character of Nigeria and the call for unity, loyalty and progress, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or a few ethnic or sectional groups in government or any of its agencies ("Nigeria's Constitution," 2011, p. 35).

The FCC was established during the General Sani Abacha regime through Decree 34 of 1996 to achieve these objectives. Mustapha (2007) highlighted the power of

the Commission to be: to map out effective methods for the distribution of posts and services, consistency in monitoring these posts and services, ensure conformity through a better legal process, review and order for data on staffing, and institutional investigations. Even as these roles are comprehensive, the FCC has not been able to implement this policy effectively. Hardly will one see efficiency in the distribution of posts and services nor consistency in monitoring those posts and services in the country (Omeje, 2018; The Nation, 2017). Babawale (n.d.) also notes that salient decisions which should be the exclusive preserve of the Commission are being carried out by the executive and approved by the legislature. It indicates the weak and subservient character of the commission, which creates the impression that it is a stooge in the hands of the executive and legislature. The weak structure of the commission can be seen from the Policy Act in Section 153 of the constitution, where the FCC's responsibility/task is made clear. Further clarifications about the commission's duties were also made in sections 8(1) and 8(3) of the extant law. Unfortunately, the commission was assigned a role it lacked the capacity to carry out. It is compounded by the politics inherent in the selection/emergence of members of the FCC. Also, none of the commission's legal action against erring individuals, including Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), can be effectuated without the consent of the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF). Okoye et al. (2021) show

that the weak enforcement capacity of the FCC can be traced to its faulty foundations, which have resulted in the president's discriminatory appointment of key officials to the commission.

Lopsided Distribution of Infrastructural Facilities

In the FCC Act established in 1996, the commission was lawfully authorized to follow a second directive centered on allocating and sharing socioeconomic and infrastructural facilities. Section 4(1d) of the FCC Act stated the modus operandi of the commission as follows:

1. An impartial method of sharing, pending the authorization of the President, for the allocation and distribution of socioeconomic and infrastructural facilities.
2. Proper forms and patterns, pending the authorization of the President, are needed to rectify or resolve the problem of exclusion in the federal system of Nigeria, which is obtainable in the public and private sectors.

Some sectors noted in (2) above are Education, Electricity, Health, Commerce and Industry, Telecommunications, Transport and Youth Development (FCC Act, 4,2b). Sadly, the commission has not followed these directives. Some studies noted that the main challenge lies in the non-implementation of the provisions, including a lack of commitment to the distributional principles outlined in the Act (Demarest

et al., 2020; Mustapha, 2007). It could be noticed from the perceived marginalization of certain areas of the country, especially the Southeast and South-South zones (The Nation, 2017).

In 2013, the FCC brought out a blueprint directing that a minimum of 2% and a maximum of 5% of the total budget of different agencies should be allocated to states (Demarest et al., 2020). It aimed to limit the absolute control of the FCC to implement equal distribution. Also, a three-year external borrowing budget sent to the National Assembly in 2016 for infrastructural development by the APC-led government shows that the Southeast zone was not properly captured (Balogun, 2016). Festus and Saibu (2019) note that this borrowing initiative increased Nigeria's

total external debt to \$41 billion in just three years. While unjust treatments perceived in the political appointment of people of the southeast continue to occur, the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), a federal government's social security scheme, followed a similar pattern. Figure 1 attests to the uneven distribution of CCT across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

A cursory look at the figure shows that the Southeast zone had the least share of the CCT, which is less than 4% of the portion distributed to the Northeast (Nwangwu et al., 2020). The Nation (2017) argued that the attitude of the APC-led Federal Government contributed to why the South-South and Southeast governors decried the absence of federal presence in their respective zones.

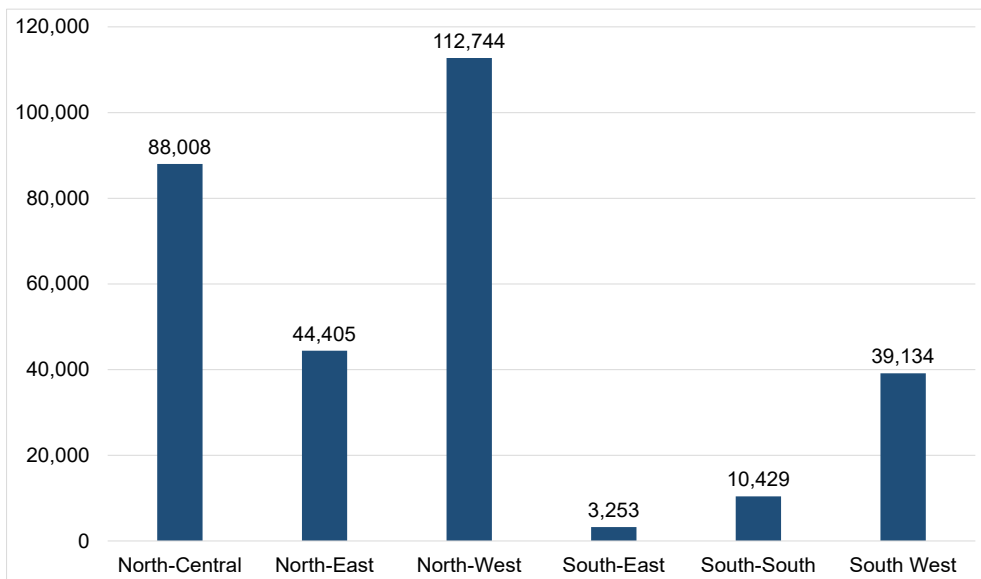


Figure 1. Beneficiaries of the Federal Government's CCT scheme

The Implication of Non-Adherence to The FCP to The Southeast Zone in Nigeria

Increased Agitation for Inclusion and Secession in the Southeast. The outright exclusion of the southeasterners in appointments to political positions in the country was evident during the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari (2015 to 2019). This development not only led to a series of agitations for inclusion but also triggered a secessionist agenda from groups such as the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Some scholars have recounted how the leadership quagmire at various levels has failed to address nagging socio-political, economic and marginalization challenges in the nation's polity (Simon, 2022; U. Ukiwo & Chukwuma, 2012). The feelings of marginalization and deprivation nursed by the people of the Southeast zone were orchestrated by the high spate of negligence by the leadership of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). This allegation of marginalization was perceived as denying their right to properly allocate values (Ikegbunam & Agudoso, 2020). The situation legitimized the separatist groups' case for inclusion and secession. These perceptions can equally be linked to issues relating to government neglect, deprivation, and marginalization of the Southeast region of Nigeria. Corroborating this, Okonta (2012) avers that the actions of the FGN have continued to pave the way for the marginalization of the people in the zone.

Some studies even hold that the Igbos in Nigeria are being subjected to different kinds of marginalization as a punishment for the Biafran war (Okonta, 2012; Orji, 2001). Consequently, the FGN tends to respond to all complaints and claims from the zone with suspicion and repression because the government of Nigeria uses force to stop any form of orientation aimed at exposing the younger generations to the pains of the war. Secession often occurs among countries with multi-ethnic nationalities and different sociocultural and ethno-religious diversities. Among the basic causes of secession are injustice and inequality resulting from a power imbalance, as in Nigeria (Osaretin, 2019). These groups are united by their desire to uphold their oneness and collective identity. Moreover, indigenous leaders worldwide are united by the burning desire for their people to be respected, given their dues, and then left to make their share of mistakes and progress (McMullen, 2010). Anything beyond this very desire brings about fear of domination and demand for self-determination, which are at best expressed through the media. It explains why IPOB resuscitated Radio Biafra to express the perceived marginalization of the Igbos in Nigeria. It also introduced a 'sit at home' in the zone every Monday to further ventilate their grievances against the Nigerian state.

Excessive Exclusion of Southeasterners from Key Political Appointments.

The imbalance problem in the Nigerian federation dates to the 1914 amalgamation

of the Southern and Northern protectorates. However, Richard's 1949 constitution tried to correct that anomaly by creating three different regions in Nigeria: the North, East and West. In 1963, however, the structural imbalance problem resurfaced when the Mid-Western region was carved out of the Western region. Accordingly, Bretton (1962) observed that the unusual or unique way the Northern region was created served as the foundation for what, once the nation gained its independence, was considered one of the biggest cases of gerrymandering in history. For example, the Northern region had 77% of Nigeria's land mass; the Eastern region had 8.3%, the Western region 8.5% and the Mid-Western region 4.2%. As for population, the 1963 census indicates that Northerners represented 53.3% of the total population of Nigeria, the Eastern region accounted for 22.3%, the Western region had 18.4%, and the Mid-Western region was 4.6% (Orluwene, 2018). The increase in the population of the North and the South-West region and the reduction in the population of the Igbos in the Southeast zone were attributed to the manipulations that always take place during census exercises in Nigeria. For instance, the population of the Igbo decreased from 17% in 1952/53 to 13.48% in 1991 (a decrease of 3.68%), while the population of the Yorubas in Western Nigeria increased from 16.00% in 1952/53 to 17.60% in 1991, an increase of 3.88% (Ohaneze, 2002).

This structural imbalance continued even after the creation of states by the military and the successive military regimes

in Nigeria. The creation of 12 states in 1967, 19 in 1976, 21 in 1987, 30 in 1991, and 36 in 1996 did not alter the imbalance structure in the Nigerian federation. It equally extends to the creation of local governments in 1976. For instance, figures obtained from the 2006 Nigerian Population Census (NPC) indicate that Lagos and Kano states had similar population numbers, yet Lagos has 20 local government areas (LGAs), and Kano has 44.

The Southeast zone of Nigeria has enough manpower and resources to aspire for the office of the presidency in Nigeria. However, the occupation of the presidency by the Hausa/Fulani and Yoruba is seemingly immutable. A rundown of the elective positions at the federal level attests to this fact. Taking a cue from works like Azom et al. (2019), one would see that the power relations between the South and the North remain asymmetrical. This asymmetrical relationship continued even within the six geopolitical zones' structure, where the southeast has only five states compared to the other zones, which have six states each. Table 2 shows the degree of marginalization of the Southeast zone with regard to elective and appointive positions based on geopolitical zones.

In Nigeria, issues relating to asymmetric power relations have been an old-age issue that could be traced to the colonial era. It was in consideration of the loyalty of the Northern elite to the colonial masters. The lopsided nature of leadership positions and political appointments is so glaring that it has become clear that a certain zone was deliberately meant to be sidelined. The

Table 2
Zoning of key positions and their distribution in Nigeria by geopolitical zones, 2011–2019

S/N	Positions	May 2011– May 2015	Name	Geopolitical zone	May 2015– May 2019	Name	Geopolitical zone
1.	President	Bayelsa	Goodluck Jonathan E.	South-South	Katsina	Muhammadu Buhari	North-West
2.	Vice-president	Kaduna	Namadi Sambo	North-West	Lagos	Yemi Osibanjo	South-West
3.	Senate President	Benue	David Mark	North- Central	Kwara	Bukola Saraki	North- Central
4.	Speaker, house of representatives	Sokoto	Aminu WaziriTambuwal	North-East	Bauchi	Yakubu Dogara	North-East
5.	Secretary to the government of the federation	Ebonyi	Anyim Pius Anyim	Southeast	Adamawa	Babachir David Lawal	North-East
					Adamawa	Boss Gida Mustapha	North-East

Source: Authors' compilation

then President General of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Chief John Nnia Nwodo (2017) states as follows:

Under the current Federal government, Igbo representation is abysmal and falls extremely short of the constitutional provisions for the reflection of federal character in the appointment into important government positions. No arm of government, namely, the executive,

judiciary or legislature, is headed by an Igbo. No section of the armed forces or paramilitary organization is headed by an Igbo. Neither the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, nor the Federal High Court is headed by an Igbo.... (p. 5)

Table 3 gives a clearer view of the incidences of lopsided appointments in the country compared to other regions.

Table 3
Group Managing Director of NNPC from 2015–2019

S/no	Name	Appointed by	Period	State	Geopolitical zone
1.	Mr. Andrew Yakubu	Former President Goodluck Jonathan	2012–2015	Kaduna	North-West
2.	Ibe Kachikwu	President Muhammadu Buhari	2015–2016	Delta	South-South
3.	Dr. Maikanti Baru	Muhammadu Buhari	2016–2019	Bauchi	North-East
4.	Mallam Mele Kyari	Muhammadu Buhari	2019–	Borno	North-East

Source: Odo (2019, p. 70); modified by the authors

From the tables above, it is obvious that the Northern region has dominated political positions in Nigeria, and this has been rationalized on various grounds of political, economic and social factors. Implementing the FCP in relation to ministerial appointments and permanent secretaries across the federation has been more successful, perhaps because it is specified in the 1999 Nigerian constitution. Otherwise, doing so would be considered unconstitutional (Adekanye, 1989).

Deplorable State of Federal Roads in the Southeast Zone of Nigeria

Road networks are seen to be important in many ways. Quality roads help develop and connect a wide-ranging network of people in society. The broad view of road networks cannot be overemphasized as they offer more than 90% of local passengers better opportunities to sell their products and meet and interact with others outside their locality. It accounts for why road networks are taken seriously in most advanced countries and are considered twice as important as other resources. In spite of how important good road networks are, the general state of roads in many African countries is still deplorable owing to poor management/maintenance of road infrastructure by different national and sub-national governments across the continent. Nigeria is one of the countries with similar challenges in terms of the quality of its road network. Although the worth of the country's national road network will improve when many of the ongoing projects are finished, some areas

or zones, such as the southeast, have been marginalized in the award of federal road infrastructure contracts in the country (Federal Road Maintenance Agency, 2019).

Perhaps the best way to explain the deplorable condition of federal roads in the Southeast zone is the cynical remark made by a citizen as follows: "that even an individual with poor sight needed not to be deceived on the nature of pitiable road networks in the zone, therefore, when a journey becomes tortuous and irregular, the Southeast region is nigh" (Anyaduba, 2011, p. 4). Almost all the federal roads in the five states that make up the zone are in bad condition, thus creating a nightmare for travelers around the zone. Clearly, this has created unpalatable experiences for road users in the southeast who are forced to spend huge sums of money on vehicle maintenance/repairs. The bad roads have also led to ghastly accidents that have led to the untimely death of many people in the zone (Anyaduba, 2011).

On 27th August 2018, the federal government released a record of 69 road projects and bridge construction works it had undertaken to alter the claims by people in the southeast that the zone had been neglected in the distribution of road projects. The alleged 69 projects were said to be part of the existing Niger Bridge works and the rebuilding process of the second Niger Bridge, which was estimated to cost over N680 billion. The then Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, also noted that the 69 roads and bridges in the country, which extended

across the Southeast zone, were at different conclusion phases. Notwithstanding, the President-General of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo has this to say about the condition of the transportation network in the Southeast zone:

No railway construction is being done in Igboland. The Enugu/Port-Harcourt and Enugu/Onitsha Expressways have become a national embarrassment. State governors in Igbo state are now rehabilitating federal roads in Igboland from their lean budgets to keep the mobility of production factors alive. (Nwangwu et al., 2020, p. 14)

CONCLUSION

The motivation behind this paper emerged from the perceived increase in exclusionary politics against the Southeast zone of Nigeria. This incidence has taken many dimensions, culminating in the denial of opportunities for the enjoyment of social and political rights, deprivation of access to material resources, and unequal representation in key political appointments of the people of the Southeast zone. The extant literature reviewed reveals that there has been enormous scholarly research on political exclusion in many countries around the globe. The studies have variously etched their arguments for political exclusion on gender, educational level/attainment, age, colonialism, ethnicity, ethnic divisions and competitions, state-society relations, disabled individuals, heterogeneous societies and globalization. However, these studies failed to account for why a policy safety net such as the

FCP, which was implemented to address marginalization, has exacerbated it. It is the puzzle this paper set out to answer.

Data were assessed using the documentary method of data collection and analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis to authenticate and validate our hypothesis. Social exclusion theory was adopted to strengthen the analysis. Thus, the federal government's non-adherence to the FCP increased the marginalization of the Southeast zone in Nigeria. Of course, a common notion of affirmative action is that it is built relatively on justice, parity and fairness. In this way, affirmative action is considered necessary for fostering unity, reducing acrimony and enhancing national integration. While acknowledging that FCP at inception was meant to solve the problems emanating from unnecessary civil strives, identity politics and conflicts resulting from ethnic and religious cleavages, it was also found that the FCC, which was instituted to help in checkmating the excesses from different government institutions, Ministries, and MDAs have not achieved much. Part of the reason observed was that some of the enabling laws and policies enacted in the country were contradictory, which hindered the operational success of the commission. The implication is that the commission has not maintained proper accountability in discharging its duties across the 36 states in Nigeria. The situation is compounded by some elites who use their leadership position to strategically allocate material resources and political positions to their members in the name of affirmative action.

It has contributed to instigating an increase in agitation for inclusion and secession from members of the marginalized or shunned geopolitical zones such as the southeast.

In light of the above, the goal of the FCP seems lucid. While the target populations have been identified, the problem of proportionality or equity in distributing political and economic benefits has not been properly addressed. The key to addressing the issues would be to repeatedly review the methodological problems of elective and appointive positions to institute an open structure where any challenges relating to political exclusion within the country can be probed and resolved. One thing noted in consideration of the workload of the FCC is that it is too broad and idealistic, especially in relation to the 1999 Constitution, as amended. In summary, we urgently need to review extant laws and policies enacted on inclusiveness, focusing on the yearly release of data by the FCC across the country and effective sanctions for defaulters.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The second and third authors wish to express their appreciation for the mentorship role of the lead author, Professor Emmanuel Onyebuchi Ezeani, who supervised them during their PhD Program. The authors are also grateful to the journal editors and the anonymous reviewers for their useful suggestions and incisive comments, which contributed to enhancing the quality of the paper.

REFERENCES

- Achebe, C. (1983). *The trouble with Nigeria*. Fourth Dimension Publishing.
- Adekanye, J. B. (1989). The quota recruitment policy: Its sources and impact on the Nigerian military. In P. P. Ekeh & E. E. Osaghae (Eds.), *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria* (pp. 41-60). Heinemann Educational Books.
- Adeshina, T. C. (2017). *Ethnic conflict in Nigeria: A challenge to inclusive social and political development* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Fort Hare.
- Adetiba, T. C. (2019). Dynamics of ethnic politics in Nigeria: An impediment to its political system. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 11(2), 132-144. [https://doi.org/10.22610/jebss.v11i2\(J\).2828](https://doi.org/10.22610/jebss.v11i2(J).2828)
- Afigbo, A. E. (1989). Federal character: Its meaning and history. In P. P. Ekeh & E. E. Osaghae (Eds.), *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria* (pp. 3-18). Heinemann Educational Books.
- Afigbo, A. E. (2000). *The tears of a nation and people: The Igbo and the human rights situation in Nigeria*. Whytem Publishers.
- Agbaje, A. (1989). Mass media and the shaping of federal character: A content analysis of four decades of Nigerian newspapers, 1950-1984. In P. P. Ekeh & E. E. Osaghae (Eds.), *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria* (pp. 30-48). Heinemann Educational Books.
- Agbo, P. O., Okoye, K. E., Uwaegbute, K., & Agbo, C. O. (2021). From Nigeria/Biafra War to increasing ethnic conflict: The imperative of Nehemiah's administrative strategy? *African Renaissance*, 18(1), 91-114. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2516-5305/2021/18n1a5>
- Altheide, D. L. (1987). Reflections: Ethnographic content analysis. *Qualitative Sociology*, 10, 65-77. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00988269>

- Anyaduba, E. (2011, August 18). *Nigeria: The deplorable state of federal roads in the Southeast*. All Africa. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201108221240.html>
- Asika, N. (1991). *Research methodology in the behavioural sciences*. Longman Publisher.
- Awolowo, O. (1947). *Paths to Nigerian freedom*. Faber and Faber.
- Azom, S. N., Alumona, I. M., & Iloh, E. (2019). The Nigerian state and the resurgence of separatist agitations: The case of Biafra. *Journal of Conflict Transformation and Nation Building*, 1(1), 95-119.
- Babawale, A. T. (n.d.). *Federal character commission: An evaluation*. Nigerian Law Guru <http://www.nigerianlawguru.com/articles/constitutional%20law/FEDERAL%20CHARACTER%20COMMISSION,%20AN%20EVALUATION.pdf>
- Balogun, A. (2016, March 28). *Infrastructure development in Nigeria: Better late than never*. Lexology. <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=7814c253-4d29-44ac-a59a-b2aa51e0276d>
- Bello, A. (1962). *My life*. Cambridge University Press.
- Biereenu-Nnabugwu, M. (2006). *Methodology of political inquiry: Issues and techniques of research methods in political science*. Quintagon Publishers.
- Bretton, H. L. (1962). *Africa: Power and stability in Nigeria: The politics of decolonisation*, Praeger.
- Colman, S., & Götze, J. (2001). *Bowling together: On line public engagement in policy Deliberation*. Hansard Society.
- Committee for Development Policy. (2014). *Global governance and global rules for development in the post-2015 era*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/cdp-policy-note-2014/>
- Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U. (2020). Nigerian Federal Character Commission (FCC): A critical appraisal. *Oxford Development Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2020.1727427>
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2009). *Youth with disabilities*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/youth-with-disabilities.html>
- Eflova, M., Minzaripov, M., & Ishkineeva, G. (2017). Conceptualization of social exclusion phenomena in sociological theories. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication*, (Special Edition), 1887-1892.
- Ezigbo, E. C. O. (2007). *The Biafra war and the Igbo in contemporary Nigerian politics*. Genius Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1999). *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999*. International Centre for Nigerian Law. <http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm>
- Federal Road Maintenance Agency. (2019). *General maintenance repairs of some federal roads nationwide (Phase II)*. Annual Report for advert final corrected. <https://ferma.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2.-SUBMISSION-OF-PHASE-2-FOR-ADVERT-FINAL-Corrected.docx>
- Festus, G. E., & Saibu, M. O. (2019). *Effects of external debt on Nigerian economy: Further evidences* (MPRA Paper). Munich Personal RePEc Archive. <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/92704/>
- Gboyega, A. (1989). The public service and federal character. In P. P. Ekeh, & E. E. Osaghae (Eds.), *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria* (pp. 17-32). Heinemann Educational Books.
- Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why men rebel*. Princeton University Press.
- Hakim, L. G., & Jaganjac, N. (2005). *A note on disability issues in the Middle East and North Africa* (Report No. 37275). World Bank Group.

- <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/912231468110689787/A-note-on-disability-issues-in-the-Middle-East-and-North-Africa>
- Hammoud, H. R. (2005). *Illiteracy in the Arab world*. UNESCO Digital Library. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000146282>
- Ibeanu, O. (2015, December 6). Resolving the Igbo non-question: Pitfalls of Jibo's single strand ethnic narrative. *Premium Times*. <http://blogs.premiumtimesng.com/?p=169904>
- Ibeanu, O., Orji, N., & Iwuamadi, K. (2016). *Biafra separatism causes, consequences and remedies*. Institute for Innovations in Development.
- Ibenekwu, I. E. (n.d.). Igbo traditional political system and the crisis of governance in Nigeria. *Ikoru Journal of the Institute of African Studies UNN*, 9(1&2), 1-13.
- Ibrahim, J. (2015, November 30). Resolving the Igbo question. *Premium Time*. <https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2015/11/30/resolving-the-igbo-question-by-jibrin-ibrahim/>
- Ikegbunam, P. C., & Agudosy, F. I. (2020). Cultivating Biafran agenda in Nigeria: Evaluation of the influence of radio Biafra's rhetoric of ethnic marginalization on rural dwellers in the South-East. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 13(1), 23-37. <https://doi.org/10.5897/JMCS2020.0698>
- Jameson, K. P. (2006). Political crises, social conflict and economic development: The political economy of the Andean Region. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 40(3), 850-853, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.2006.11506961>
- McMullen, J. (2010, September 8). *The search for common ground*. Reconciliation For Western Sydney: Building bridges between aboriginal peoples and other Australians. <https://reconciliation4westernsydney.org/building-bridges/building-bridges-2010/321-2/>
- Morgan, D. L. (1993). Qualitative content analysis: A guide to paths not taken. *Qualitative Health Research*, 3(1), 112-121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973239300300107>
- Murray, C. A. (1984). *Losing ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980*. Basic Books.
- Murray, C. A. (1997). *What it means to be a libertarian: A personal interpretation*. Broadway Books.
- Mustapha, A. R. (2007). *Institutionalizing ethnic representation: How effective is the Federal Character Commission in Nigeria?* (CRISE Working Paper No. 43). Department of International Development, University of Oxford. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08bf440f0b64974000ec6/wp43.pdf>
- Nigeria's Constitution of 1999 with Amendments through 2011. (2011). *Constitute Project*. https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nigeria_2011
- Nwangwu, C., Onuoha, F., Nwosu, B., & Ezeibe, C. (2020). The political economy of Biafra separatism and post-war Igbo nationalism in Nigeria. *African Affairs*, 119(477), 526-551. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adaa025>
- Nwodo, N. (2017, January 28). Ndigbo: Our case, a ticking time bomb. *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/01/ndigbo-case-ticking-time-bomb/>
- Obiyan, A. S., & Akindele, S. T. (2002). The federal character principle and gender representation in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(4), 241-246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2002.11892352>
- Odo, T. (2019). *Nigerian State and Neo-Biafra separatist agitation in the South-East, 1999-2019* [Unpublished bachelor's thesis]. University of Nigeria.
- Ohaneze. (2002). *The violations of human and civil rights of Ndi Igbo in the Federation of Nigeria (1966-1999)*. Snaap Press.
- Okonta, I. (2012). *Biafran ghosts: The Massob Ethnic Militia and Nigeria's democratization process*

- (Discussion Paper 73). Nordic African Institute. <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A538466&dswid=-8874>
- Okoye, K., Ezeani, E., Ezugworie, C., Oranye, H., & Ekekwe, E., (2021). Federal character principle and political participation in Nigeria: Interrogating the relevance of the policy. *African Renaissance*, 18(4), 343-366.
- Olusoji, G., Oluwakemi, O., & Mofope, A. (2014). Meritocracy- 0 versus mediocrity-1: and mediocrity won: The case of the Nigerian Federal Character Principle (FCP). *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 7(1), 46-51.
- Omeje, C. (2018, June 27). *Investigations: Poorest Nigerians deprived of federal government's cash transfer*. International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR). <https://www.icirnigeria.org/investigation-poorest-nigerians-deprived-of-federal-governments-cash-transfer/>
- Omoleke, I. I., & Olaiya, T. A. (2015). Democratisation process and governance crisis in contemporary Nigeria: A re-examination. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 9(4), 131-140. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2014.0702>
- Onimisi, T., Ku Samsu, K. H., Ismail, M. M., & Mohd Nor, M. W. (2019). Implementation of federal character policy in Nigeria civil service. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, 8(2S9), 570-577.
- Ononogbu, D. C. (2017). Ethnicity, ethnic identity and conflict in Africa. In A. O. Onu, J. Eze, & K. C. W. Udegbonam (Eds.), *Social science perspectives to peace and conflict* (Vol. 2; pp. 55-63). Grand-Heritage Global Communications.
- Onu, G. (2008). Contemporary issues in Nigerian politics and government and implications for sustainable development in Nigerian. *Journal of Politics and Administration*, 2(1), 56-72.
- Onuoha, G. (2011). Contesting the space: The 'New Biafra' and ethno-territorial separatism in South-Eastern Nigeria. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 17(4), 402-422. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2011.622646>
- Orji, E. I. (2001). Issues on ethnicity and governance in Nigeria: A universal human rights perspective. *Fordham International Law Journal*, 25(2), 431-482.
- Orluwene, O. B. (2018). The challenges and pathologies of Nigerian federalism. *Social Science and Law Journal of Policy Review and Development Strategies*, 6(1), 72-87.
- Osaghae, E. E. (1989). The federal cabinet, 1951-1984. In P. P. Ekeh & E. E. Osaghae (Eds.), *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria* (pp. 1-25). Heinemann Educational Books.
- Osaretin, U. S. (2019). Biafra agitation and politics of imbalance in Nigeria. *Journal of Civil and Legal Sciences*, 8(2).
- Owen, O. (2016, March 8). *The new Biafrans: Historical imagination and structural conflict in Nigeria's separatist revival* [Paper presentation]. The Changing Character of War Series Seminar, Pembroke College, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- Ozoze, V. A. (2005). *Ethnicity and politics of exclusion in Nigeria: Employing Rawls' Theory of justice in plural societies* [Master's thesis, Linköpings Universitet]. <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:liu:diva-2913>
- Ozohu-Suleiman, A. (2013). Public administration and the collapse of probity and good governance in Nigeria: The impact of political superstructure. *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration*, 2(1), 8-25.
- Peters, S. J. (2009). *Review of marginalization of people with disabilities in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan*. UNESCO Digital Library. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000186600>

- Reinhold, G., Lamnek, S., & Recker, H. (2000). *Sociological-lexicon*. Oldenbourg.
- Riley, C. E., Griffin, C., & Morey, Y. (2010). The case for 'everyday politics': Evaluating Neo-tribal theory as a way to understand alternative forms of political participation, using electronic dance music culture as an example. *Sociology*, 44(2), 345-363. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038509357206>
- Rindap, M. R., & Mari, I. M. A. (2014). Ethnic minorities and the Nigerian state. *International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 3(3), 89-101. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v3i3.8>
- Sanchez, M. A. (2019). *Ethnic and cultural homogeneity: An obstacle for development?* Research Gate. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.15506.68807>
- Sandelowski, M. (2000). Focus on research methods. Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing & Health*, 23, 334-340. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-240X\(200008\)23:4<334::AID-NUR9>3.0.CO;2-G](https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-240X(200008)23:4<334::AID-NUR9>3.0.CO;2-G)
- Schuyt, C. J. M., & Voorham, C. A. (2000). *Sociale uitsluiting (Stichting Leger des Heils welzijns- en gezondheidszorg)* [Social exclusion (Salvation Army Foundation for welfare and healthcare)]. Social Wetenschappelijke Pers.
- Simon, N. (2022). Poor political leadership: Quagmire to national and political unity in Nigeria. *African Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Education Research*, 6(1), 1-12.
- The Nation. (2017, October 9). South-South, South East governors decry federal presence in regions. *The Nation*. <https://thenationonline.net/south-south-south-east-governors-decry-federal-presence-regions/>
- Ugobude, F. (2018, November 18). Culture: The Osu caste system in Igboland. *Guardian*. <https://guardian.ng/life/culture-the-osu-caste-system-in-igboland/>
- Ukiwo, O. (2009). Violence, identity mobilization and the reimagining of Biafra. *Africa Development*, 34(1), 9-30. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ad.v34i1.57353>
- Ukiwo, U., & Chukwuma, I. (Eds.). (2012). *Governance and insecurity in South-East Nigeria*. Malthouse.
- Vecchione, M., & Caprara, G. V. (2009). Personality determinants of political participation: The contribution of traits and self-efficacy beliefs. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 46(4), 487-492. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2008.11.021>
- Yagboyaju, D. A., & Akinola, A. O. (2019). Nigerian state and the crisis of governance: A critical exposition. *Sage Open*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019865810>