

BIAFRA: ETHNIC AND POLITICAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION DURING THE  
NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR (1967-1970)

by

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## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated to the memory of my late parents -Mr. Emmanuel Akinsitan and Mrs. Mojisola Akinsitan, who sacrificed to give me education, my two wonderful children Toke and Feranmi and their mom. Most importantly, God for the grace to start and complete this program.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Suitable Target of Externalization .....	STE
NPC .....	Northern People's Congress
AG .....	Action Group
NNDP .....	Nigeria National Democratic Party
NCNC .....	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons
UMBC .....	United Middle Belt Congress
IPOB .....	Indigenous People of Biafra
MASSOB .....	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra

## **ABSTRACT**

**BIAFRA: ETHNIC AND POLITICAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION DURING THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR (1967-1970)**

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Ethnic identity was defined “as a constructed expression, communicated through textual description, symbols, public displays, rituals, and other practices, which is intended to act or differentiate a group from other groups.”(Buadaeng, 2009) Baudaeng wrote about the Karen people in Burma (Myanmar) and how they constructed their identity. Like Nigeria, Burma was a former British colony and a multi-ethnic, multi-religious nation. According to him, an ethnic group usually share common language, historical origin, cultural characteristics, and geographic territory. In the case of Nigeria, ethnic identity includes common languages, religion (Christianity. Islam and traditional religion), common cultures (mode of dressing, rituals, festivals, ceremonies etc.) and geographical contiguity. Although the major and minor ethnic groups in Nigeria have lived side by side for decades, they maintain distinct and varied identities. Even with inter-tribal wars and Jihad, the minority tribes were able to survive and retain their

identities. The aim of this study is to examine how the various ethnic groups in Nigeria (especially the major ones) construct identities and create boundaries.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

The Northern and the Southern protectorates of Nigeria was amalgamated for administrative purpose in 1914 by Lord Lugard. This act by a British officer marked the beginning of the nation - Nigeria. The country, so named by Lugard's wife, became independent from British rule 46 years later. In October 1, 1960, Nigeria began the journey into nationhood. Since then, the country has moved from one ethnic-based conflict to the other with the political elites using socio-cultural groups as the primary vehicles for promoting ethnic agenda and conflicts.

Ethnic-based, socio-cultural groups in Nigeria, rather than unite the nation has served in exacerbating the nation's fault lines by constructing identity along ethnic lines leading to the civil war in 1967.

In a country with over 250 ethnic groups, ethnic based socio-cultural groups have helped in enhancing the differences between ethnic groups. In view of this, the primary question for this study shall be: How did political and cultural elites erect "ethnic boundaries" using socio-cultural groups during this period?

To answer this question, the study will examine the roles of socio-cultural groups in ethnic conflicts in Nigeria with focus on the activities of the three major ethnic groups

– Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba. It will look at the history of socio-cultural groups during the pre-independent and the post-independent period and examine the motives behind their formation. Attention will be paid to the civil war of 1967-1970 and the roles of socio-cultural groups in the conflict.

Socio-cultural groups played an important role in the formation of political parties, the study will examine the relationships between political parties and socio-cultural groups in constructing identity and creating boundaries among groups. It will look at their influence on political parties and how they drive conflict during the period under review. It will also examine possible solutions to ethnic conflicts in Nigeria based on concepts and theories of conflict resolution by Horowitz, Volkan, and Korostelina and other existing literature. The study will provide an understanding of the roles of ethnic-based, socio-cultural groups in conflict and identity construction in Nigeria based on the theories of identity, ethnicity, and large group chosen trauma/glories. It will conduct an analysis of relevant literature and the observations of major actors and key stakeholders to arrive at a conclusion.

### **Social Identity and Ethnicity in Literature**

Karina Korostelina (2007) examined identity-based conflicts and the contributory factors by using conflict analysis theories of Horowitz, Tilly, and others to examine the meaning of social identity and conflict. Thus, providing a strong theoretical foundation for the study and understanding of ethnic identity and conflict.

For example, she explained that “cultural and political elites play an important role in the process of boundary enlargement or contraction, stressing the resemblances and disparities that define the group and its boundaries” (Korostelina, 2007, p. 29). This explained the roles of political elites in Nigeria in the formation of ethnic-based socio-cultural groups and political parties with ethnic coloration. Political/cultural elites like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sir Ahmadu Bello enlarged or contracted resemblances and disparities among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria using socio-cultural organization.

Citing Tilly (2005), she defined such boundary as “any contiguous zone of contrasting density, rapid transition, or separation between internally connected clusters of population and/or activity for which human participants create shared representations” (Korostelina 2007, p. 30). On socio-cultural identity, Korostelina (2007) wrote that “people exist in a complex system of interrelations with their social environment: culture influences the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior of persons just as they influence their cultural environment” (p. 40). She enumerated ten features that differentiate cultures. These are - national character or basic individuality, perception, conception of time, thinking, language, non-verbal communication, values, behavior, and social groups and relation. She proposed that the duality of “collectivism and individualism” guides a society’s view of public good (Korostelina 2007). According to her, “collectivism” is one based on group orientation with the group given priority over the individual, while “individualism” is one where the individual is given priority. She cited Asian societies as collectivist and Western societies (Europe and America) as individualistic societies.

Based on her explanation African states, including Nigeria, can be grouped as a collectivist society. Vamik Volkan (1997) analyzed the reasons behind the demand for Biafra by the Ibo in Nigeria and the roles of socio-cultural groups in conflict in Nigeria. Volkan (1997) seeks to “fill a gap in the literature of diplomacy by using the principles of psychoanalysis to search for the meaning of cultural identity, ethnic attachment, and the passions related to such relationship” (p.18). Volkan (1997) examined what drives ethnic conflicts in a multicultural environment like Nigeria. The erection of ‘ethnic tents’ by politicians led to ethnic conflict and culminated into the civil war of 1967-1970 in Nigeria. The behavior of large groups and associated conflict was examined, according to him, “given the pervasiveness of ethnic, religious, and cultural conflict, there is an urgent need to understand why, beyond their individualized motivations, people killed for the sake of protecting and maintaining large-group identities.” (Volkan 1997) Volkan looked at the psychology behind conflict and large-group identity around the world. He also looked at its effect on diplomacy. Beyond diplomacy, the author provides a valuable understanding of ethnic conflict and large-group identity such as we have in Nigeria. According to Volkan (1997), “large-group identities are the end result of a historical continuity, geographical reality, a myth of a common beginning, and other shared events.” Such a definition of large-group identity is applicable in the analysis of socio-cultural groups and ethnic conflict in Nigeria. He went further to describe the interaction between large group thus: “when one large group interacts with another, “we-ness”, whether it is described with reference to religious, ethnic, national, or racial affiliation, acts as an invisible force in the unfolding drama.” (Volkan, 1997)

Volkan (1997) wrote about “Chosen Trauma, Unresolved Mourning” (p.36), he examined the psychology of mourning and large group. This is particularly interesting given the continuous agitation for the creation of Biafra (a separate Ibo nation) forty-nine years after the end of the civil war. According to him, “when mental representation becomes so burdensome that members of the group are unable to initiate or resolve the mourning of their losses or reverse their feelings of humiliation, their traumatized self-images are passed down to later generations in hope that others may be able to mourn and resolve what the prior generation could not resolve.” (Volkan, 1997) There is no doubt that the Ibos felt cheated and humiliated from their losses during and after the civil war. The issue of Biafra and the socio-cultural groups fighting for its creation is very central to the study, it will be used as a reference point for other ethnic socio-cultural groups in this study.

According to Volkan (1997), “the influence of a severe and humiliating calamity that directly affects all or most of a large group forges a link between the psychology of the individual and that of the group. In the wake of such an event a mental representation of it, common to all members, begins to take shape” (p. 45). Volkan (1997) went further, “when the mental representation becomes so burdensome that members of the group are unable to initiate or resolve the mourning of their losses or reverse their feelings of humiliation, their traumatized self-images are passed down to later generation.” Are the Ibos suffering from “chosen trauma” as described by Volkan? This question will form the secondary question for this study.



### **Literature on Nigeria**

There are many studies on the history of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, which are focused on the roles of leaders, political parties, and ethnic groups in such conflicts pre- and post-independent era. An account of the civil war and the conflicts that accompanied it was captured in the book titled - *There Was a Country – A Memoir* by Chinua Achebe. It was an account of Achebe's personal story and his experience during the civil war. Achebe (2012) traced the origin of Nigeria and the conflicts in the country to the Berlin Conference of 1885. According to him, the “controversial gathering of the world's leading European powers precipitated what was called the scramble for Africa, which created new boundaries that did violence to Africa's ancient societies and resulted in tension-prone modern states.” (Achebe, 2012) Achebe (2012) asserted that after the conference, “Great Britain was handed the area of West Africa that would later become Nigeria, like a piece of chocolate cake at a birthday party.”

In other words, Nigeria's problems, ethnic conflict included, could be traced to the foundation of the country. He buttressed this by saying, “Africa's post-colonial disposition is the result of a people who have lost the habit of ruling themselves.” According to him, “we (Africans) also had difficulty running the new systems foisted upon us at the dawn of independence by our “colonial master.” (Achebe, 2012)

Achebe examined the roles of the major players in the Nigerian civil war. However, his view was colored in favor of the Ibos – his people. Although the Ibos were the victims of the war, the factors that led to the first military coup and the civil war that followed were a complex series of events and the Ibos cannot be exonerated from some

of the blames. Achebe painted Ibo people as a superior tribe who are more successful than other tribes in Nigeria, thus erecting an 'ethnic tent' for the Ibos.

For example, in narrating the role of nationalists in the fight for independence from British rule, Achebe described Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Ibo leader, as the only nationalist leader whose intention was to build a unified country. He elevated Azikiwe above Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Yoruba leader) and Sir Ahmadu Bello (Hausa/Fulani leader). According to him, "the father of African independence was Nnamdi Azikiwe. There is no question about that." (Achebe, 2012) He further wrote about Dr. Azikiwe's exploit in Ghana, his return to Nigeria, and his establishment of the West African Pilot, a newspaper that helped fight colonial rule at that time. However, the truth is that political parties and newspapers were in existence and they were fighting colonial rule before Dr. Azikiwe's return to Nigeria after his studies in the United States.

On Nigeria's federalism, Rotimi T. Suberu traced the history of Nigeria and its federal structure. According to him, "a chief asset of federalism is that, in providing for the concurrent existence of multiples arenas of power, it disperses the stakes in political competition and reduces the intensity for the struggles for the control of any one level or center of government authority" (Suberu 2001, p.10). He went further to say that in the case of Nigeria, "economic resources and political power remain concentrated heavily at the central level" (Suberu, 2001, p. 10). In other words, what exists in Nigeria is a quasi-federal system of government which cannot meet the aspirations of the component ethnic groups that made up the federation. He cited the centralized system of revenue allocation as an example of a deficient federal system, which according to him "cannot be absolved

from the destructive “intensity of political conflict.” (Suberu, 2001) Apart from the history of federalism in Nigeria, he took a critical look at revenue allocation among component states; creation of states since independence; the federal character principle; and the politics of population census.

Suberu (2011) was able to successfully connect all the factors of Nigeria federalism, drawing conclusions along the way. For example, on the principle of federal character, a constitutional provision that was supposed to bring equity in government appointment among the various ethnic groups, he concluded that “although the federal character principle was intended to promote national integration, its politics have proven to be extremely divisive in regional, ethnic, and religious terms.” (Suberu, 200) The book is important in understanding the political structure of Nigeria and the interplay of ethnic forces.

On political parties in Nigeria, Bolaji Aregbesola, a freelance writer with a keen interest in Nigeria’s public affair said, “the major responsibility for building political bridges among the diverse linguistic and cultural groups fall on political parties.” (Aregbesola, 2014) in other words, a political party is an instrument of building political harmony among the diverse groups in a country. He traced the history of political parties in Nigeria from the formation of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1922 to the present era of multiple political parties. He provides a comprehensive list and background of these parties. For example, on NNDP (the first political party) Aregbesola wrote, “the elective principle in respect of a newly inaugurated legislative council established for the colony of Lagos and the protectorate of Southern Nigeria brought

about the formation of the first Nigerian political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party in 1922” (Aregbesola 2014, p.21).

It is important to put the facts behind the formation of political parties in the right perspective because it will help in understanding the roles of socio-cultural groups in their formation. It will also help understand subsequent conflicts arising from their activities and throw some light on the evolution of political parties in Nigeria, especially, during the period of military rule. Aregbesola (2014) started by looking at political parties from “pre-independence and first political parties (1906 – 1966) to the pre-colonial and colonial history” (p.38) and ended with “political parties in the fourth republic (1999 – present) – founding of the fourth republic” (p.378). In examining the political parties, the book focuses on the roles of political leaders who are mostly leaders of their ethnic socio-cultural groups. It provides an ordinary man’s view of Nigeria’s political landscape and history.

Nkemdirim Bernard (1975) provides a background on the history of Nigeria from 1900 to 1960. He provides “the analysis of structural changes and how these changes in turn generated the social climate that was conducive to political protests and collective violence in Nigeria during the period 1900-1960” (Nkemdirim, 1975, p.14). It is important to have this background in order to fully understand what happened immediately after independence in 1960 till the end of the civil war in 1970 – the period covered by this proposal.

Sir Rex Niven (1971) was the first Speaker of the Northern Nigeria House of Assembly. It was from this position that he gave insight into the Nigerian civil war and

issues surrounding it. He wrote about the politics of states creation in Nigeria, a highly contentious issue and examined the various indents that led to the civil war in 1967.

Okpaku Joseph (1974) “brings together some of the best African minds in an attempt to analyze and synthesize the forces that led to a historic crisis in a major Africa country (p.21). Okpaku (1974)) examined topics like “The Nigeria – Biafra Conflict – A Political Analysis,” “Secession, Federalism and African Unity” among other topics. He sheds more light on the political situation in Nigeria during the civil war.

Kirk-Greene A.H.M. (1971) chronicled the events before and during the civil war. He provides a “simplistic approach to one of the prime responsibilities of contemporaneous historiography – in this instance enhanced by some personal knowledge of the people who have come to endure the crises and the conflict here recorded” (Kirk-Greene, 1971, p. ix). His writing and compilation are important in learning the roles played by socio-cultural groups before, during, and after the civil war. It contained speeches, press clippings, and propaganda materials used during the civil war by major actors on both sides of the conflict.

Crowther (1978) “is an attempt to bring together in one short volume the history of the various groups that go to make up modern Nigeria, to trace their connexions with each other and to dispel assumptions.” (p. 15) He traced the history of major ethnic groups in Nigeria from the days of the slave trade to the period of colonization and independence. This is important in understanding the evolution of ethnic, socio-cultural groups and their roles in politics and conflicts in Nigeria. Lastly, Odumegwu Ojukwu’s (1996), the leader of the Republic of Biafra expressed his thoughts about Nigeria’s unity,

ethnicity, and socio-economic development. His writing is important in understanding his motives and views on socio-cultural groups and ethnic conflict in Nigeria.

### **The Methodology of Data Collection and Analysis**

The study will be based on the analysis of literature and archival materials on ethnic groups and conflict in Nigeria covering the period between 1960-1970. It will also utilize information from government sources that are available publicly to explain the role of socio-cultural groups and ethnic conflict in Nigeria. As stated earlier, the study will use twelve books as its primary sources. These books cover personal experiences, history, political parties, ethnic conflict, and personalities in Nigeria with maps, speeches, announcement, details of meeting and conferences, personal notes, memos, and other information.

Phenomenological analysis will be used in analyzing data to provide answers to the relevant questions in the study. This approach was chosen because ethnic conflict is a “lived experience” of the people. Such experiences are narrated in books, music, and folklores, which are passed from one generation to the other. However, the problem with such narrated experiences is that they are based on personal biases and are not always objective or factual. Therefore, a more qualitative and reliable approach is needed for this study. Because of this, the study will rely on Kirk-Greene A.H.M. (1971), *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria – A Documentary Sourcebook 1966-1969. Vol. I.* and Kirk-Greene A.H.M. (1971), *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria – A Documentary Sourcebook 1966-1970 Vol. II, July 1967-January 1970. Volume II.* These books contain about 345 documents

(real text), ranging from speeches, interviews, press release, memorandum of understanding, cartoons and other documents that cover the period between 1966-1970. The two volumes will provide valuable resources and insight into historical occurrences during the period under study. The information sourced from these books will be complemented with the narratives from other sources to give a broad analysis of events.

Such information includes historical narratives of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria from the period of amalgamation (1914) till the end of the civil war (1970). It also includes speeches by the major political actors, top military chiefs, and foreign actors, who are major participants in the political landscape during the period under consideration.

For example, Vol. 1 contains the various speeches by Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon, the military head of state and Major Odumegwu Ojukwu, the military administrator of the eastern region before and during the civil war. Also included are the speeches of major political actors like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Ahmadu Bello. Beside speeches, there are communiques, press statements, and text of broadcasts by the major actors in the period before and during the civil war. Vol. II detailed the speeches and communiques released during the war and the various interventions to resolve the conflict. This includes transcript of the Aburi Peace Conference of 1967 and the speeches of the leaders that attended the conference. Another example is the General Yakubu Gowon speech creating 12 federating states, an action intended to pull the rug from under the secessionists. The two books contain real documentation of speeches, communiques, posters, radio announcement, press release and other documents necessary for this study. The books also cover the period under study – 1967-1970, by documenting the activities

of the main political actors through their speeches. Extracts will be taken from these books for analysis. The study will scrutinize these documents to detect the motives, intentions, and biases of the major actors in the conflict.

The phenomenological analysis will be based on preset code (Identity code/concept code) related to identity theories as explained by Karina Korostelina (2007) and Vamik Volkan (1997). Korostelina's "Psychodynamic Approach to Social Identity" and Volkan's "Theory of Group Identity" will be used to explain the components of ethnicity and socio-cultural groups. Concepts such as – chosen trauma and glories, "we vs others," shared reservoir, differentiation and integration, and projection will be used to understand the roles of ethnic-based socio-cultural groups in conflicts during the period under study. The theories of Horowitz and Tilly will also be applied to this study.

These theories will form the basis of examining the roles of socio-cultural groups in conflict within Nigeria during the period under study. It will be used to provide answers to the thesis questions: How did political and cultural elites erect "ethnic boundaries" using socio-cultural groups during this period? Are the Ibos suffering from "chosen trauma?"

The concept code is designed based on the peculiarities of ethnicity and prevalent factors causing ethnic conflict in Nigeria. While the identity code is designed to explain the concept of majority and minority ethnic groups, which are important factors in the interplay of ethnic relations within the country. Ethnic dominance is determined by sheer size in the form of language, religion, population, and geographical contiguity.



Although the study is focused on the period between 1967-1970, it will cover the period before this to provide a clear understanding of the issues that occurred during the period under study. The study is limited by the inability to gather data directly through interviews and surveys. Consequently, I have decided to do a phenomenological analysis of the materials available based on my knowledge of Nigeria. However, I have tried to be objective in my analysis using the concepts and theories by experts in the field and utilizing well researched materials for historical studies.

### **Coding System: Identity**

Nigeria is a highly diversified multi-ethnic nation with many languages and religion. However, there are three dominant or majority ethnic groups – Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Ibo. Although the Hausa and the Fulani are different in origin and language, the group is generally regarded as one, politically. The Fulani jihad of Othman Dan Fodio (1804-1808) resulted in the conquering and assimilation of the Hausa under the Fulani rulership. Hence, Hausa/Fulani will be regarded as one ethnic group in this study.

After the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates by Lord Lugard in 1914, Nigeria was divided into Northern, Southern, and Eastern regions with Lagos as the capital; before and after independence in 1960. Although the political map has been altered many times (Nigeria is now a federation of 36 states), this regional arrangement is still valid in locating and identifying the different groups that make up the country.

Incidentally, the three major ethnic groups are strategically located in each of these regions – Hausa (Northern region), Yoruba (Western region), Ibo (Eastern region). However, there are minority ethnic groups within each of these regions. Some of these ethnic groups are Edo, Itsekiri, Ijaw, Efik, Jukuns, Tiv, Nupe to name a few. These ethnic groups shall be referred to as the minority ethnic group in this study. It must be noted that in most cases the name of an ethnic group is synonymous with the language they speak. For example, the Yoruba speaks Yoruba Language and the Ibo speaks Ibo or Igbo Language.

Furthermore, for this study identity shall be based on majority and minority ethnic groups with factors such as - common language, population, geopolitical location, and religion as the determining factors.

**Table 1: Coding Identity (Majority/Minority)**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Geopolitical/ Regional Location</b>
<b>Majority</b>	Yoruba Hausa/Fulani Ibo	Yoruba Hausa/ Fulani Ibo	Christianity Islam	Yoruba (Western Region) Hausa-Fulani (Northern Region) Ibo (Eastern Region)
<b>Minority</b>	Ijaw Efik Nupe Itsekiri Jukuns	Minority ethnic groups	Traditional African Religions	Minority ethnic groups scattered around the country
	Tiv Other minority tribes/ethnic groups			

I have chosen to classify the ethnic groups as minority and majority because ethnic groups are seen mainly through this political lens. In other words, the dynamics of inter-ethnic relationship is determined by the group you belong – whether it is a majority or minority group. Factors like language, population, religion, and geopolitical location determine where a group is placed. In conclusion, whether an ethnic group is a majority or minority group is salient in identity discourse in Nigeria as we shall see in the study.

### **Coding System: Concept Code**

Ethnicity and socio-cultural groups are the central ideas and the major concepts in this study. Although ethnicity is an easily defined word, its meaning could be complex depending on the context in which it is used. Also, socio-cultural group is a peculiar phrase which may not be easily understood by someone without a strong ethnic background. The phrase is unique in describing a specific ethnic-based group formed to promote the interest of the group in relation to other ethnic groups or interests.

According to Volkan (1997), the word ethnicity is derived from the Greek word *ethnos*, which means - company, people, or tribe. Volkan (2007) quoted the anthropologist George De Vos, who described ethnicity as those “who hold in common a set of traditions not shared by others with whom they are in contact.” He listed such tradition to include “folk religious belief and practices, language, a sense of historical continuity, a common ancestry, place of origin, and shared history” (Volkan 1997). De Vos further said that such a group has a mythological beginning “which includes some

concept of an unbroken biological-genetic generational continuity, sometimes regarded as giving special characteristics to the group” (Volkan, 1997). This view of ethnicity by Volkan and Devos is easily applied to ethnic groups in Nigeria in the context of this work.

Ethnic groups in the country tend to have a common religious belief, language, ancestry, place of origin and shared history different from other groups in the country. This is in addition to the concept of majority and minority ethnic groups, which describe the population and the area occupied by an ethnic group in relation to other groups. Volkan (2007) asserted that “group maintains its ethnic self-esteem, vanity, and superiority in comparison with another ethnic group, usually a neighbor.” One way of demonstrating superiority between ethnic groups is by sheer size and numbers. Hence the importance of the concept - majority and minority ethnic group.

In the context of this study, ethnicity is a social identity used by groups in the formation of social boundaries. According to Barth (1981), “social identity as a product of the process of border formation: it is articulated at the boundary and is defined and moderated by the contrast between “them” and “us” (Korostelina, 2007). In other words, ethnicity as a form of social identity is used by the various groups in Nigeria to define boundaries and articulate the differences between the different ethnic groups. Tilly (2005) further explained such boundaries as “any contiguous zone of contrasting density, rapid transition, or separation between internally connected clusters of population and/or activity for which human participant create shared representative” (Korostelina 2007,

p.30). This explained the quest for representation by the various ethnic groups in form of ethnic based socio-cultural groups to further their interest within Nigeria.

In view of this, the study shall use Korostelina's (2007) "Psychodynamic Approach to Social Identity" and Volkan's theory of group identity to explain the components of ethnicity and socio-cultural groups. These components are – chosen trauma and glories; shared reservoir; minor differences; differentiation and integration; and projection (Korostelina 2007) each of which is manifested by every ethnic and socio-cultural group in Nigeria.

According to Volkan, "group identity is like a "large canvas tent" that protects individuals as if they were family members" (Korostelina 2007). This is demonstrated in chosen glories like the Fulani Jihad (Sokoto Caliphate) and beliefs that Ibos are Jews and that Yorubas descended from heaven – usually mythologized and idealized achievement of the past. On the other hand, chosen trauma includes - losses, defeat, and humiliation. (Korostelina 2007)

**Table 2: Psychodynamic Approach to Social Identity**

<b>Components</b>	<b>Manifestation</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Chosen Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnic losses in battles/ war with rival ethnic groups.</li> <li>• Defeat and humiliation by others related through stories and myths usually difficult to mourn.</li> <li>• Killing of specific leaders.</li> <li>• Rape of women belonging to the other group</li> </ul>	Killings of Ibos in the north, Fulani jihad and the conquering of other tribes, oppression by major tribes.
Chosen Glories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important usually mythologized past achievements.</li> <li>• Narratives of positive and glorious historical kinship</li> </ul>	Old Oyo empire, Fulani jihad and caliphate, Ibos are descendants of Jews.
		Formation of sectional political parties.  Exhibition of wealth in the form of flamboyant dressings.

Shared Reservoir	○	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable Target of Externalization Language</li> <li>• Supreme traditional rule</li> </ul>	Ethnic symbols, flags, songs, dishes, ethnic titles and honors etc.
Projection		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of superiority and leadership.</li> <li>• Scapegoating</li> </ul>	<p>Powerful and respected traditional rulers like – Obas, Emirs, Obis.</p> <p>Blaming the other.</p> <p>Presentation of “them” as always aggressive, cunning, and having negative intentions.</p>
Politicization of Boundary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large canvas tent “We” vs “Others”</li> </ul>	Formation of ethnic based



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnic Boundaries</li> <li>• Difference with other</li> <li>• Stories of “otherness”</li> </ul>	socio-cultural groups and ethnic-based political parties. Shared representation in the form of socio-cultural groups, common religion and language. Emphasis on differences
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The study will employ these components to explain and define the relationship between the different ethnic groups and the socio-cultural groups that arose out of them. The components will also be used to examine how conflict are generated through this interaction.

## CHAPTER TWO

**Table 3: Thematic Analysis**

Document/Extract	Theme/ Subtheme
<p><b><i>There Was A Country</i></b>  <i>Chinua Achebe</i></p> <p>"The new arrivals, missionaries of a new religion, Christianity, had already "conquered" the Yoruba heartland and were expanding their footprint in Igboland." (p.7)</p> <p>"My initiation into the complicated world of Ndi Igbo... a number of wonderful stories from our ancient Igbo Igbo tradition." (p.9)</p> <p>"In Igbo cosmology there are many gods. A person could be in the good stead with one god and not the other - ogwugwu could kill a person." (p.12)</p> <p>"The headmaster of St. Philip's Central School was a colorful, extraordinary Igboman... He was one of a handful Nigerians who had attained the the distinction of headmaster." (p.15)</p> <p>"I was introduced to <i>mbari</i> and the sophistication of Igbo phenomenological thought." (p.18)</p>	<p><b>Boundary/ Emphasis on difference</b> - "the new arrival"</p> <p><b>Projection/Superiority</b> - "Conquered the Yoruba heartland and were expanding their footprint."</p> <p><b>Chosen Glory/ Cultural rite</b>  "Initiation into the complicated world of Ndi Igbo"</p> <p><b>Chosen Glory/Traditional myth</b> - "Our ancient Igbo tradition."</p> <p><b>Shared Reservoir/ Traditional myth</b> - "In Igbo cosmology there are many gods... ogwugwu could kill."</p> <p><b>Chosen Glory/ Ethnic Pride</b>  "One of a handful of Nigerians who had attained the distinction of headmaster."</p> <p><b>Shared reservoir/ Chosen glory/ Religious symbols/ Myths</b> - "mbari... Igbo phenomenological thought."</p>

"The father of African independence was Nnamdi Azikiwe... There is no doubt at all about that." (p.41)

**Chosen Glory/ Historical reference -**  
"the father of African independence."

"Herbert Macaulay, for instance, often referred to as the 'father of Nigerian nationalism.'" (p.44)

**Chosen Glory/ Historical reference -**  
"father of Nigerian nationalism"

"Chief Awolowo and close associates reunited his ancient Yoruba people with powerful glue- resuscitated ethnic pride - and created a political party, the Action Group... from an amalgamation of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, the Nigerian Produce Traders' Association." (p.45)

**Chosen Glory/ Ethnic pride -** "reunited... Yoruba people with powerful glue"  
**Ethnic Boundary/ Ethnic based political Party -** "the Action Group"  
**Projection/ Cultural Elite -** "Chief Obafemi Awolowo and close associates"

"Awolowo transformed the Action Group into a formidable, highly disciplined political machine that often outperformed the NCNC in regional elections... by meticulously galvanizing political support in Yoruba land." (p.45)

**Ethnic Boundary/ Ethnic appeal -**  
"meticulously galvanizing support in Yorubaland."

"When Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto decided to create the Northern People's Congress... he knew the educationally disadvantaged North did not have as rich a source of Western-educated politicians to choose from as the South did." (p.46)

**Projection/ Cultural elite/Title -**  
"Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto"  
**Boundary/ Regionalism**  
"educationally disadvantaged North"

"The minorities of the Niger Delta, Mid-West, and the Middle Belt region of Nigeria were always uncomfortable with the notion that they had to fit into the tripod of the largest ethnic groups that

**Boundary/ Minority tribes -** Ijaw, Kanuri, Tiv, Itsekiri etc.  
**Boundary/Projection/ Domination/ Majority tribes -** Hausa/ Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba.

was Nigeria - Hausa/ Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo  
Many of them - Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, Tiv,  
Itsekiri, Isang, Urhobo, Anang, and Efik-  
were from ancient nation states." (p.47)

"The Northern People's Congress of the  
Sardaunians was supposed to be a  
national party, yet it refused to change its  
name from Northern to Nigeria's People  
Congress, even for the sake of  
appearance." (p.51)

"In a country in which tribalism was  
endemic, the rumor of an "Igbo coup"  
began to find acceptance." (p.66)

"The week following the coup saw  
Easterners attacked... there seemed to be  
a lust for revenge which meant an excuse  
for Nigerians to take out their  
resentment  
the Igbos who led the nations in virtually  
every sector - politics, education,  
commerce and arts." (p.66)

"This group, the Igbo, that gave the  
colonizing British so many headaches and  
then literally drove them out of Nigeria  
was now an open target." (67)

"As we packed our belongings to return  
East some of the people we had lived  
with for years, some for decades, jeered  
and said, "Let them (Igbo) go; food will  
be cheaper in Lagos." (p.68)

"The origin of the national resentment of  
the Igbo is as old as Nigeria... The Igbo

**Projection/ Ethnic appeal** - "Northern  
People's Congress of the Sardaunians"

**Projection/Blaming/ Hostile action/Threat**  
"The rumor of an Igbo coup"

**Chosen Trauma/ Hostile action** - "Lust for  
revenge"

**Chosen Glory/ Educational achievement** -  
"the Igbo led the nation in virtually every  
sector"

**Chosen Glory/Historical achievement-**"the  
Igbo, that gave colonizing British so many  
headaches and then literally drove them  
out"

**Projection/ Hostile action/ Victim  
mentality** - "Let them (Igbo) go"

**Chosen Trauma/ Flight from home** - "As  
we packed our belonging to return East"

**Projection/ Victim mentality** - "national  
resentment of Igbo"

culture, being receptive to change, individualistic and highly competitive, gave the Igbo man an unquestioned advantage over his compatriot... Unlike the Hausa-Fulani he was unhindered by a wary religion." (p.74)

"Seeing this development as a strategic political opening, the Yoruba leader, Obafemi Awolowo, the West's political kingpin, heretofore nursing political trouble himself... insisted that the federal government removed all Northern military troops... throughout the Western region -- a demand similar to those Ojukwu had made." (p.86)

The movement toward a declaration of independence was very clear and sharp, because it was a result of a particular group of Nigerian citizens from the the Eastern region attempting to protect themselves from great violence." (p.87)

"On May 27, the Consultative Assembly mandated Colonel Ojukwu declare... Eastern Nigeria as a free sovereign and independent state by the name and title of the Federal of Biafra." (p.91)

"On May 30, 1967, Ojukwu, citing a variety of malevolent acts directed at the mainly Igbo Easterners - such as the pogrom that claimed over thirty thousand lives... Proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Biafra." (p.92)

**Chosen Glory/Ethnic pride** - "The Igbo culture... gave the Igbo man an unquestionable advantage over his compatriots"

**Projection/Cultural/Political elites** - "the Yoruba leader, Obafemi Awolowo," "Ojukwu"

**Ethnic boundary/"Us vs them"** - that the federal government remove all Northern military troops"

**Projection/Blaming** - "heretofore nursing political trouble himself"

**Ethnic Boundary/"Us vs them"** - Nigerian citizens from the Eastern region attempting to protect themselves"

**Projection/ Historical reference** - On May 27, the consultative Assembly mandated Ojukwu."

**Projection/Historical reference** -"On May 30, 1967... Ojukwu proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Biafra."

**Chosen Trauma/ Claim of genocide** - "pogrom that claimed over thirty thousand lives."

"As we fled "home" to Eastern Nigeria to escape all manner of atrocities that were being inflicted upon us and our families in different parts of Nigeria, we saw ourselves as victims." (p.95)

**Projection/ Victim mentality/Chosen trauma/Flight from home** - 'As we fled "home"... to escape all manner of atrocities... we see ourselves as victims."

"The point here and the crux of the whole matter is the fact that the North wants to dominate... Gowon is not capable of doing anything. He is only a front man for the whole NPC/NNDP coalition." (p.122)

**Ethnic Boundary/Regionalism/Projection /Domination** - "the North wants to dominate"

"There has been genocide, for example on the occasion of the 1966 massacres... Two areas have suffered badly (from fighting). Firstly, the region between the towns of Benin and Asaba where only widows and orphan remain." (p.134)

**Projection/Victim mentality/Chosen trauma** - "there has been genocide" "Firstly, the region... where only widows and orphan remains"

"It did not escape Biafra's founder that a great nation needed to be built on a strong intellectual foundation. Our modest attempt to put the beginning of our thinking down on paper resulted in what would be known as the Ahiara Declaration."

**Chosen Glory/ Ethnic pride** - Ahiara Declaration

"We learned to refine our own oil during the two and a half year of the struggle, because we were blockaded. We were able to demonstrate that it was possible for African people, entirely on their own, to refine oil." (p.157)

**Chosen Glory/ Ethnic pride** - "We were able to demonstrate that it was possible for African, entirely on their own, to refine oil."

"It is my impression that Chief Obafemi Awolowo was driven by an overriding

**Ethnic Boundary/ Ethnic appeal** - "Overriding ambition for power for

ambition for power, for himself in particular and for the advancement of the Yoruba people in general." (p.233)

himself in particular and for the advancement of the Yoruba."

**Projection/ Blaming** - "Chief Obafemi Awolowo was driven by an overriding ambition"

***Social Change and Political Violence in Colonial Nigeria* - Bernard Nkemdirim**

"The Northern region was predominantly inhabited by the Fulani-Hausa speaking population; the Western region by the Yoruba; and the Eastern by the Ibo. Each of these regions also contains a few minority groups, e.g. in the North we have the Tiv and Nupe." (p.37)

**Ethnic Boundary/Emphasis on difference-**  
"Northern region was predominantly inhabited by the Hausa-Fulani..."

"Ethnic identity was reinforced by endogamous marriage, observance of common traditional ceremonies, rituals and holidays, peculiar to each group, and the formation of ethnic and cultural organizations. (p.38)

**Shared Reservoir/Ethnic Identity** -  
"endogamous marriage, observance of common traditional ceremonies, rituals..."

"The Ibo State Union allied with the National Council of Nigeria and Citizens (NCNC); the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba cultural organizations... Fulani-Hausa organization allied with the (N.P.C.) and the Tiv Progressive Union with the United Middle Belt Congress (U.M.B.C.)" (P.38)

**Shared Reservoir/Ethnic based political party** - "the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba cultural organization"

"The founders of political parties sought support mainly among their own ethnic groups. The local communities with each ethnic group grasped the advantage of organizing along ethnic lines to promote

**Ethnic Boundary/ Ethnic appeal** - "the founders of political parties sought support mainly from their own ethnic groups."

their own welfare and interests and to protect their own social identity against encroachment of other groups."

"Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Leader of the Action Group: "It seemed clear to me that (Azikiwe's) policy was to corrode the self-respect of the Yoruba people as a group: to build up the Ibo as a 'master-race'." (p.42)

"Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe: "It would appear that the God of Africa has created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the ages... The martial prowess of the Ibo nation at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the role of a preserver... The Ibo nation cannot shrink its responsibility from its destiny." (p.42)

"Mallam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa: "Many (Nigerians) deceiving themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one... particularly some of the press people... I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial and it ends outside this chamber... The Southern tribes who are now pouring into the North in ever increasing numbers, and are more or less domiciled here, do not mix with the Northern people... and we in the North look upon them as invaders."

"A most unpleasant feature of our last three days in Lagos was the band of hooligans who were organized by

#### **Projection/ Superiority/ Domination -**

"corrode the self-respect of the Yoruba people as a to build up Ibo as a master-race'."

#### **Chosen Glory/Projection/Superiority -**

"God of Africa has created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from bondages of ages"

#### **Projection/Political/ Cultural elite -**

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe

**Ethnic Boundary/"Us vs them"-** "Many (Nigerians) deceiving themselves by thinking Nigeria is one"

**Differentiation/ "Us vs them" -** "We in the North look upon them as invaders"

#### **Projection/ Political/ Cultural elite -**

Mallam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa

#### **Projection/ Victim mentality -**

"abuse anyone seen to wearing Northern dress"



unscrupulous politicians to abuse anyone seen to be wearing Northern dress, who appeared to be a member of the house of representative." (p.71)

"The Northerners have a peculiar psychology and with no political education were apt to take unduly serious any such thing as booing or reference to their ancestors." (p.76)

"Another sign of differentiated membership lay in the kind of dress worn. Ordinarily the Northerners in general wore traditional dress called Abuba (made out of white cotton cloth) while Southerners especially the Ibos, wore European dress." (p.88)

"The Tiv had wanted a state of their own in which they would constitute the dominant ethnic group and perforce be in a viable position to control the principal organs of government of that state." (p.148)

**Projection/Demonstration of superiority -**

"Take unduly serious any such thing as booing or reference to their ancestors"

**Ethnic boundary/ Emphasis on difference -**

"Differentiated membership lay in the kind of dress worn"

**Projection/Domination/Differentiation -**

"The Tiv had wanted a state of their own in which they would constitute the dominant ethnic group"

***Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria - Rotimi Suberu***

"The most politically salient feature of Nigeria's ethnic diversity, however, was the distribution of ethnic groups into a relatively centralized ethnic structure, with the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo formations predominating." (p.20)

**Projection/Superiority/Differentiation -**

"relatively centralized ethnic structure with the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo formations predominating"

"For instance, in 1951, there was only one university graduate among Northerners, whereas there were hundreds of Yorubas, Igbos and other Southerners with graduate and post graduate degrees." (p.23)

**Projection/Superiority** - "there was only one university graduate among Northerners"

"The dominant Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba elements in these regions perceived federalism as a means of protecting regional power and resources from the poor but ambitious Ibo." (p. 25)

**Projection/Domination** - The dominant Hausa-Fulani... perceived federalism as a means of protecting regional power and resources from the... Ibo"

"The demand for new states came predominantly, though not exclusively, from the nation's ethnic minority, who sought political autonomy from regionally hegemonic ethnic majority group." (p.80)

**Projection/Ethnic domination** - "Ethnic minority, who sought political autonomy from regionally hegemonic groups."  
**Ethnic boundary/ Emphasis on difference** - "the demand for new states"

"Fearing or alleging political repression, socioeconomic discrimination and even cultural extinction by the majority groups, the minority groups sought independent region or states of their own in which their minority status will be mitigated." (p.82)

**Projection/ Ethnic dominance** - "Minority groups sought independent regions or states of their own"

"The Yoruba-led Action Group aligned at various times with such ethnic minority movements as the United Middle Belt Congress, the Borno Youth Movement, the Ilorin Talaka Parapo in the North and the Efik-led United National Independent Party in the East. (p.83)

**Ethnic Boundary/ Ethnic based political party/ Group** - "Action Group, United Middle Belt Congress, The Borno Youth Movement, Ilorin Talaka Parapo, United National Independence Party"

***Because I am Involved* - Emeka Ojukwu**

"I have elsewhere (Okigbo, 1986) recounted how the Igbo rearranged their political economy in the face of major adversity and under a threat of extinction during the civil war... How the authorities responded to problems of food shortage by establishing a land army and cultivating practically every path of land." (p.65)

"I have also recounted the achievements of the Directorate of Research and Production (RAP). Under the most severe difficulties, including frequent shifts in locations, they produced, perhaps crude, but effectively usable military equipment." (p.66)

***Nigeria Dilemma of Nationhood***

*Joseph Okpaku*

"The NCNC started as a national party ... However, between 1946 and 1948, the tribal tension which had been initiated by the Ikoli-Akinsanya dispute of 1941, coupled with the dissatisfaction of the Yoruba elite, who felt the NCNC was dominated by Azikiwe and the Ibos culminated in the tribal cold war of 1948." (p.19)

"We were bunched together by the British who named us Nigeria. We never knew the Ibos... We have tolerated enough from a class of Ibos and addled-brained

**Chosen Glory/Positive historical**

**reference** - "I have elsewhere... recounted how the Igbo rearranged their political economy in the face of major adversity"

**Chosen Glory/ Historical achievement -**

"achievements of the Directorate of the Directorate of Research and Production (RAP). Under the most severe difficulties... they produced, perhaps crude, but effectively useable military equipment"

**Projection/Ethnic appeal/Ethnic political party** - "The NCNC started as national party"

**Differentiation/Domination** - "the Ikoli-Akinsanya dispute of 1941, coupled with the dissatisfaction of the Yoruba elite, who felt the NCNC was dominated by Azikiwe and the Ibos."

**Ethnic Boundary/Projection/"Us vs them"-**

"We were bound together by the British who named us Nigeria. We never knew the Ibos."

Yorubas who have mortgaged their thinking caps to Azikiwe." (p.19)

"The Yoruba specific answers to the threats of the Ibo represented by the NCNC and the Ibo State Union (a quasi-cultural political organization) were the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (1948), an equivalent of the Ibo State Union and the Action Group (1951)." (p.20)

"In 1948, two cultural groups, the Bauchi General Improvement Union and the Youth Social Circle of Sokoto, both composed of young men interested in politics, amalgamated. Jamiyan Mutanen Arewa (Northern People's Congress) was the result of this merger." (p.22)

"We advocate the grouping of Nigeria into various autonomous states or regions, purely on ethnical basis. Experience of other countries shows that this is more natural." (p.52)

One people, one North, irrespective of rank and religion." (p.54)

***Nigerian Political Parties and Politicians:  
Winding Road from Country to Nation  
Bolaji Aregbesola***

"I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial and it ends outside this chamber... The Southern tribe who (sic) are now pouring into the North in ever increasing numbers... do not mix with the Northern people... we in the North look

**Shared Reservoir/ Cultural organization/ Party** - "The Yoruba specific answers to the threats of the Ibo represented by the NCNC and the Ibo State Union... were the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (1948) ... and the Action Group (1951)."

**Shared Reservoir/ Cultural organization -** "The Bauchi General Improvement Union and the Youth Social Circle of Sokoto... amalgamated."

**Ethnic Boundary/Emphasis on difference-** "We advocate for the grouping of Nigeria into various autonomous states or regions, purely on ethnical basis."

**Shared Reservoir/ Slogan** - "One people, one North."

**Boundary/Emphasis on difference/ projection** - "The Southern tribe who (sic) are now pouring into the North in ever increasing numbers... do not mix with the Northern people."

**Ethnic Boundary/"Us vs them"** - "we in the

upon them as invaders." (p.33)

North look upon them as invaders."

"The North retaliated by demanding that Lagos be separated from the West and constituted into a federal territory to ensure the main outlet for its goods should not be under the control of any other part of the federation." (p.34)

**Boundary/ "Us vs them"** - "The North retaliated by demanding that Lagos be separated."

"This reflected the implementation of a Northernization policy defined as 'if a qualified Northerner is available, he is given priority in recruitment if no Northerner is available an expatriate may be recruited or a non-Northerner on contract terms.'" (p.36)

**Ethnic Boundary/ Emphasis on difference** - "Northernization policy"

***The War of Nigerian Unity*** - Rex Niven

"The Yorubas learnt from their forefather that the creation of the world took place in Ile-Ife... Ile-Ife remained a sacred place and it's still so regarded." (p.9)

**Shared Reservoir/Myth** - "The Yoruba learnt from their forefathers that the creation of the world took place in Ile-Ife."

"From the start the late Sardauna of Sokoto was the President of the group ... The Sardauna was in fact a kinsman of the Sultan...both directly descended from great Sultan Bello, Usman Dan Fodio son and heir."(p.44)

**Shared Reservoir/ Supreme traditional title** - "The late Sardauna of Sokoto," "kinsman of the Sultan... directly descended from the great Sultan Bello," **Projection/ Powerful and respected ruler** - "great Sultan Bello, Usman Dan Fodio son

***Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria Vol. I***

AHM Kirk-Greene

"We have pretended for too long that there is no difference between the people of this country. The hard fact

**Boundary/Otherness stories/ Differentiation** - "We have pretended... that there is no differences between the

which we must honestly accept... is that we are different people brought together by recent accidents of history." (p.3)

people of this country."

**Projection/ Ethnic boundary/ Emphasis on difference** - "We are different people brought together by recent accident of history."

"Since the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Provinces in 1914, Nigeria has existed only on paper." (p.3)

**Differentiation/ Emphasis on difference** - Nigeria has existed only on paper."

"Trouble did not start until the day the House was adjourned excepting for Mr. Awolowo's unhappy and deeply resented reference Shehu Dan Fodio, a reference which was to a high proportion of Northern members little short of blasphemy. (p. 8)

**Shared Reservoir/Traditional title/ Leader** - "Shehu Dan Fodio"

**Projection/ Leadership** - "Mr. Awolowo's unhappy and deeply resented reference to Shehu Dan Fodio... a reference which was little short of blasphemy."

"I suggest that we confine ourselves to two things. Firstly, we should here and now evolve a formula for unity in Western Nigeria. Secondly, we should define in precise terms our own attitude to the future of Nigeria. (p.203)

**Projection/Ethnic Boundary/ Emphasis on Difference** - "We should evolve a formula

for unity in Western Nigeria... define in precise terms our own attitude to the future of Nigeria."

"This is a pogrom... This is intended as the Northerners final solution to end what they call the "Eastern menace." (p.58)

**Projection/ Domination/ Chosen Trauma** - "This is a pogrom... final solution to end what they called the Eastern menace."

"We the representative of the various communities in Eastern Nigeria gathered in this consultative assembly, hereby declare our implicit confidence in... Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu... In view of the great threat to our survival. (p.216)

**Projection/ Ethnic Leadership** - "We the representative of various communities in Eastern Nigeria."

**Projection/ Ethnic Leadership** - "Confidence in... Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu."

**Chosen Trauma/ Threat** - "In view of the great threat to our survival."

"I ran to the house of a Yoruba lecturer and took shelter... I also later witnessed an attack on Mr. Philips' house and I saw Mr. Arukwe dragged out dead from the house." (p.64)

"In Owerri too, where Northerners had lived for long and inter-married with the Ibos, they were attacked and killed in cold blood despite assurances from Ibo 'Ibo elder.'" (p.65)

"In Port Harcourt, a house with large number of Northern women in hiding was attacked. The women were raped and beaten to death." (p.65)

"During their last meeting the chiefs of Northern Nigeria advised me to revive the fund known as the Northern Self-Development Fund, which started in 1950." (p.73)

"The people of Eastern Nigeria have been an unjust victim of an organized pogrom." (p.74)

"I, in all sincerity, in order to avoid further friction and further killing, do submit ... a Government that controls the various of entities through people of their areas" (p.335)

"It is better we move slightly apart and survive, it is much worse that we move closer and perish in the collision." (p.33)

**Chosen Trauma/ Terror and Killing** - "I ran to the house of a Yoruba lecturer and took shelter... I saw Mr. Arukwe dragged out dead."

**Chosen Trauma/ Killing** - "In Owerri too, where Northerners had lived for long and inter-married with the Ibos, they were attacked and killed in cold blood."

**Projection/ Ethnic Leader** - "Ibo elders."

**Chosen Trauma/ Rape/ Killing** - "Large number of Northern women... raped and beaten to death."

**Projection/Shared Reservoir/ Ethnic**

**Leaders** - "Chiefs of Northern Nigeria." Chosen Glory/ Historical Achievement - "The fund known as the Northern Self-Development Fund."

**Chosen Trauma/ Claims of Genocide/ Killings** - "The people of Eastern Nigeria... victims of an organized pogrom."

**Ethnic Boundary/ Emphasis on Difference** - A Government that controls the various entities through people of their areas."

**Differentiation/Ethnic Boundary/'Us vs them'** - It is better to move slightly apart and survive, it is much worse that we move

closer and perish."

"I have evidence that the Governments in Lagos and Kaduna are encouraging acts of subversions and sabotage within this region. These Northern controlled Governments are prepared... to dominate and rule the Southern Regions." (p.366)

**Ethnic Boundary/ "Us vs them"/**

**Non-Recognition** - "The Government in Lagos and Kaduna."

**Projection/"Us vs them"** - "The Government in Lagos and Kaduna are encouraging the acts of subversions and sabotage."

**Projection/ Chosen Trauma/ Domination/ Hostile Action** - "Northern controlled Government are prepared... to dominate and rule the Southern Regions."

"The East will never be intimidated nor will she acquiesces to any form of dictation. It is not the intention of the East to play the aggressor. Nonetheless, it is not our intention to be slaughtered in our bed." (p.367)

**Projection/Domination** - "The East will

never be intimidated nor will she acquiesce to any form of dictation."

"From the look of things, it would appear that the people of Eastern Nigeria would be forced by external violence to surrender their birthright... Eastern Nigeria is fully prepared any action. Should any group of people make this attempt. (p. 384)

**Projection/ Aggression by Others/ Victim**

**Mentality** - "People of Eastern Nigeria would be forced by external violence to defend their birthright."

**Projection/"Us vs them"** - Eastern Nigeria is fully prepared for any actions, should any group of people make this attempt."

It turned out that a section of the country, the North had been nursing hate against the East and were eagerly looking for an opportunity to give a violent expression to this hate." (p.386)

**Projection/"Us vs them"** - "A section of the country, the North, had been nursing hate against the East."



"Many of you have met our friend, Lt. Col. Ojukwu... My own is that Lt. Col. Ojukwu is determined to make any kind of settlement impossible... every utterance of his seems calculated to divide us." (p.403)

**Projection/"Us vs Them"/ Negative**

**Intention** - "Ojukwu is determined to make any settlement impossible... every utterance of his seems calculated to divide us."

"We have become accustomed now to many unflattering descriptions. We are feudal; we are desperately poor and we are very backward." p. 405

**Projection/Differentiation/"Us vs Them"/ Negative Intention** - "Accustomed now to many unflattering descriptions. We are feudal; we are desperately poor..."

"Despite our present difficulties, our currency remains strong and the Nigerian pound is used everywhere in the country and beyond." (p.407)

**Chosen Glory/ Historical achievement/ Shared Reservoir** - "the Nigerian Pound"

"This is why I have bent over backwards to accommodate the wishes of the military Governor of the Eastern Region and ignore personal insults." (p.408)

**Projection/Leadership/ Cunning** - 'I have bent over backwards... and ignore personal insults.'

"I know that many Ibo officers and troops and the majority of the civilians in the former Eastern Nigeria are still prepared to live in peace with the rest of Nigeria. But Ojukwu will not let them. (p.454)

**Projection/ Blaming/ Scapegoating** - "Ibo officers and troops and the majority of the civilians in the former Eastern Nigeria are still prepared to live in peace with the rest of Nigeria. But Ojukwu will not let them."

***Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria Vol. II***

*AHM Kirk-Greene*

Every inch of Biafran soil desecrated by the

**Chosen Trauma/Oppression by the majority -**

filthy invaders from Nigeria must act as a gallon of fuel to the spirit of every Biafran citizens. The enemy has dealt you fatal injuries in the last one year. (p.9)

"Fellow countryman, brave and proud Biafrans... It was on this date a year ago that the pogrom started by the Hausa-Fulani vandals in May assumed the proportion which has made it the most hideous in the annals of human cruelty and depravity." (p.174)

"It is crystal clear from all available evidence, judging from what is disseminated regularly in the Nigeria mass media of information that the Ibo is not wanted anywhere in Nigeria." (p.18)

"Ojukwu sought the failure of the ad hoc conference on the constitution, first by using his agents to terrorize the delegates by bomb explosion the by boycotting the conference totally." (p.176)

"Ninety percent of the Hausas, Tivs, and Fulanis who make up the so-called Nigeria Army have never been to school, can neither read nor write." (p.200)

"Every inch of Biafran soil desecrated by the filthy invader from Nigeria."

**Projection/"Us vs Them"** - "Filthy invaders from Nigeria"

**Chosen Trauma/Terror-** "The enemy has dealt fatal injuries in the last one year."

**Shared Reservoir/Ethnic Identity** - "Fellow countryman... Proud Biafrans."

**Projection/ Aggression/ Blaming** - "the pogroms started by the Hausa-Fulani vandals."

**Chosen Trauma/ Killings/ Genocide** - "the proportion which has made it the most hideous in the annals of human cruelty and depravity."

**Projection/ Rejection** - "It is crystal clear from all available evidence... That the Ibo is not wanted in Nigeria."

**Projection/ Blaming** - "Ojukwu sought the failure of the ad hoc conference... by using his agents to terrorize the delegates."

**Projection/ Demonstration of Superiority** -

"Ninety percent of the Hausas, Tivs, and Fulanis who make up the so-called Nigeria Army have never been to school, can neither read nor write."

"The Hausas and Fulanis believe that once Biafrans are exterminated everybody will be equal. There will be no educated men, no progressive people with new ideas." (p.200)

"Bishops and other leading church dignitaries in Nigeria went to Enugu on several occasions to persuade Ojukwu not to try to break up Nigeria. It was all to no avail. (p.203)

"The Biafran delegation go to Addis Ababa with sincerity and determination to an honorable and just settlement of the current conflict... As a show of our sincerity for peace, I have ordered our troops to remain in their position and to make no attack on the enemy." (p.62)

"A number of African Heads of States had also offered their good offices in quest for a peaceful solution. It was Gowon who consistently and contemptuously spurned all such proposals. (p. 248)

In the face of the blatant refusal to implement the Aburi Agreements, and of many acts of atrocities against our people, we were forced to pass the "Survival

**Projection/ Demonstration of Superiority -**

"The Hausas and Fulanis believe that once Biafrans are exterminated...There will be no educated men, no progressive people with new ideas."

**Boundary/ Ethnic Appeal** - The Hausas and the Fulanis believe that once Biafrans are exterminated... There will be no educated men."

**Projection/ Blaming** - "Bishop and other leading dignitaries in Nigeria went to

Enugu on several occasions to persuade Ojukwu not to try to break up Nigeria."

**Projection/"Them as having negative intention"** - "The Biafran delegation go to Addis Ababa with the sincerity and determination... As a show of our sincerity for peace. I have ordered our troops to remain in their position and to make no attack on the enemy."

**Projection/ Blaming Others** - "A number of African Heads of States had also offered their good offices in a quest for a peaceful solution. It was Gowon who... spurned all such proposals."

**Projection/Blaming** - "In the face of the blatant refusal to implement the Aburi Agreements and many acts of atrocities against our people."

Edicts."  
(p.258)

"It does not lie in the mouth of any Ibo man to demand a plebiscite or referendum in South-Eastern State on whether the non-Ibo people want to be dominated or governed by the Ibos, such as demand is not only unwarranted but provocative."  
(p.114)

"Proud Biafrans, I have kept my promise. Diplomatically, our friends have increased and have remained steadfast to our cause."  
(p.376)

"From the moment we assumed the illustrious name of the ancient kingdom of Biafra, we were rediscovering the original independence of a great African people."  
(p.382)

Let any further peace talk be meaningful...  
Let it be the one that will produce results which everybody is satisfied... Ojukwu is the stumbling block." (p.138)

**Differentiation/ Otherness** - "It does not lie in the mouth of any Ibo man... whether the non-Ibo people want to be dominated or governed by Ibos."

**Chosen Glory/ Historical Achievement** -

"Proud Biafrans"

**Projection/ Demonstration of Superiority** -

"The ancient kingdom of Biafra... rediscovering the original independence of a great African people."

**Projection/ Scapegoating/ Blaming Others** -

"Ojukwu is the stumbling block."

**Table 4: Thematic Clustering Summary**

Themes were formed and data gathered using the phenomenological approach based on theories and preset codes.

Theme	Codes/Sub-theme	Times
<b>Projection</b>	Demonstration of Superiority - Conquering	9
	Cultural Elite - Chieftaincy/ Traditional title/Leadership	8
	Ethnic Appeal - Formation of ethnic political parties	2
	Blaming others	10
	Hostile actions/ Threats	2
	Victim Mentality	6
	Domination	9
	Rejection	1
	Historical	
	Reference	2
		<b>49</b>
<b>Shared reservoir</b>	Religion/ Religious Symbols	2
	Traditional Myths/Stories	2
	Ethnic Identities - marriages, rituals, traditional ceremonies	2
	Ethnic cultural organizations/political parties	3
	Slogan	1
	Supreme traditional title	2
		<b>12</b>
<b>Chosen trauma</b>	Hostile actions - 'revenge'	2
	Flight from home	2
	Claim of genocide	2
	Terror and Killing	6
	Rape	1
	Oppression by the majority	1
		<b>14</b>
<b>Chosen glory</b>	Cultural rites	1
	Traditional myths	2
	Ethnic pride - higher educational achievement	6
	Positive historical reference/ achievement	9
		<b>18</b>
<b>Boundary</b>	Formation of ethnic political parties	3
<b>Politicization</b>	Formation of ethnic socio-cultural	1

	group	
	Ethnic appeal	4
	"Us versus them"	9
	Regionalism - North, South, East, West	2
	Emphasis on differences	9
	Majority/Minority tribe	2
	Otherness stories	3
		<b>33</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>126</b>

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Thematic Cluster Analysis**

The themes of this essay were derived from the data gathered from selected literatures using phenomenological approach based on Volkan's (1997) Psychodynamic Approach to Groups Identity and Korostelina's (2007) Theory of Group Identity. The three-year Nigerian civil war was a lived experience that left its marks on the nation's psyche, even till now. The Psychodynamic Approach to Group Identity and the Theory of Group Identity will help develop a proper understanding of the ethnic dynamics and the narratives that shaped the war. Based on this, I have used deductive approach in coming up with the themes, while the analysis of the themes and subthemes are based on direct or explicit interpretation of the data or indirectly reading into the data and subtext to derive meaning and assumptions (Nowell et al., 2017).

The following is an explanation of the themes and subthemes with examples from the data. This followed by a closer analysis (Final Analysis) of the themes and subthemes to show, with examples from the data, the link/connection and common elements in the themes and subthemes and to compare themes and bring out the nuances and meaning. The final analysis will also examine how the data (themes and subthemes) answer the thesis questions.

### **Chosen Trauma**

Mourning is a natural reaction to human losses, and it can be traumatic. Volkan (1997) describes the process of mourning in two stages. According to him, the first stage is the “crisis grief” stage, which involves – anger, shock, denial, bargaining, sadness, and pain for the loss. He referred to the second stage as the “work of mourning,” this stage helps the “mourner to assimilate and adapt” to the reality of the loss. Volkan compare mourning to the healing of a wound and that the process of healing will take time depending on what happen at every stage of the process. It can also result in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (p.36, 37, 41). Just like individuals, group also mourn or experience trauma. Volkan (1997) describes chosen trauma as the “collective memory of a calamity that once befell a group’s ancestors”. (p.48) According to him, it more than a simple recollection of event, “it is a shared mental representation of the event, which includes realistic information, fantasized expectations, intense feelings, and defenses against unacceptable thoughts.” (Volkan, 1997)

In the context of this essay, the violence experienced by the different ethnic groups can result in chosen trauma. Such violence is manifested or symbolized in form of ethnic losses in battles, defeat and humiliation by others, killing of leaders, rape of women. Chosen Trauma is explained under the following sub-themes with examples from the data:



**Hostile Action** – This is a group experience expressed in form of revenge or humiliation by another group. Like individuals, group can experience hostility from their neighbors or from other ethnic groups. Example, “The week following the coup saw Easterners attacked... there seems to be a lust for revenge which meant an excuse for Nigerian to take out their resentments on Igbos.” (Achebe, 2012) Number of examples in the data - 2

**Flight from Homes** – This occurs because families living among the people of different ethnicity were forced to flee their homes due to violence or fear of violence from members of their host communities. Example: “As we fled “home” to Eastern Nigeria to escape all manners of atrocities that were been inflicted upon us and our families in different parts of Nigeria we see ourselves as victims.” (Achebe, 2012) Number of examples in the data - 2.

**Claim of Genocide/ Terror and Killing** – killings or claim of mass killing by rival ethnic groups can also be a source of chosen Trauma. Example 1: “In Owerri too, where Northerners had lived for long and inter-married with the Ibos, they were attacked and killed in cold blood, despite assurances from Ibo elders.” (Kirk-Greene, 1971)(Example 2: “The people of Eastern Nigeria have been an unjust victim of an organized pogrom.” (Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples in the data - 8

**Rape** – Just as the occurrence of rape is a traumatic experience for individuals, it can also be a source of trauma for groups. The scars of rape are carried by groups who are victims sometimes from generation to generation. Example: “In Port Harcourt, a

house with large number of Northern women in hiding was attacked. The women were raped and beaten to death.” (Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of example – 1

**Oppression by the Majority** – Ethnic groups are sometimes defined as majority and minority, which refers to population size and sometimes the land mass occupied by a particular ethnic group in relation to other ethnic groups. This can determine who occupies the important positions and takes the largest share of the resources available to the groups. There is therefore the tendency for majority ethnic groups to use their size and resources to dominate other groups, which can be a source of trauma. Example: “Fearing or alleging “political repression, socio-economic discrimination, and even cultural extinction by the majority groups, the minority group sought independent regions or states of their own in which their minority status will be mitigated, if not completely eliminated.” (Suberu, 2001) Number of example - 1

### **Chosen Glory**

Like individuals, group also celebrate victory and achievement, which can be a source of pride and solidarity among members of the group. According to Volkan, chosen glory can be described as an “important usually mythologized and idealized achievements that took place in the past.” (Volkan, 1997) Also, positive narratives of glorious historical kinship, victory in past battles, educational achievements can form parts of a group chosen glory. Korostelina (2007) explained that chosen glory and chosen trauma are chosen based on current relationship status of the group with other groups and are usually linked to an external object referred to as Suitable Targets of

Externalization (STE) (p. 28). Subthemes that fall under chosen glory are explained below with examples.

**Cultural Rites** – This can take the form of religious worship, rites or other cultural activities that distinguish the group from other ethnic group and usually a source of pride. Example: “My initiation into the complicated world of Ndi-Igbo... a number of wonderful stories from our ancient Igbo tradition.” (Achebe, 2012) Number of example -

1

**Traditional Myths** – Myths are sometimes stories of the common origin of the ethnic group or stories of group’s victories in the past. These stories could form part of the group’s spiritual or religious practice and it is usually anecdotal. However, such stories can serve in unifying the group. Example: “I was introduced to *mbari* and the sophistication of Igbo phenomenological thought.” (Achebe, 2012) Number of example -

2

**Ethnic Pride** – Groups take pride in victory during battles, wealth or even higher western educational achievement. The ability to learn and speak the ‘white man’s language’ is a source of pride to groups during and after colonization. Such achievements are referred to in relation other ethnic group, who are made to look inferior. Example: “We learned to refine our own oil during the two and a half year of the struggle, because we were blockaded. We were able to demonstrate that it was possible for African people, entirely on their own, to refine oil.” (Achebe, 2012) Number of examples - 6

**Positive Historical Reference/ Achievement** – This is closely related to ethnic pride; it is also a reinforcement of it. Group narratives of positive historical reference or

achievement by a historical or mythical figure could help in uniting the group and serve in motivating it by serving as an evidence of their superiority to other groups. Example: “From the moment we assume the illustrious name of the ancient kingdom of Biafra, we were rediscovering the original independence of a great African people.”(Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples - 9

### **Shared Reservoir**

It is important for ethnic group to have common symbols, flags, food or even traditional title as these reinforce shared experience, heritage, and history. Many communities have kings and traditional title holders, who are seen as the custodian of group’s heritage and culture. Shared reservoir is closely linked with chosen trauma/glory because of their connection to real or symbolic object – also referred to as Suitable Target of Externalization (STE). (Volkan, 1997) In other words, STEs like flags, dishes, cuisine, title, shrine or place of worship are also shared reservoir and it can be positive or negative. Positive STEs are usually associated with the ingroup while negative STEs are associated with outgroups. The subthemes capture under shared reservoir are described below.

**Religion** – Most religion share common symbols, icons, and strong leaderships that are associated with the ingroup and revered by members. It is also not uncommon for members of the same ethnic group to share a common religion. This is reflected in their mode of dressing, how they greet, gender roles, and even food. Because of religion, certain animals are held as sacred in some communities and sometimes any negative speech against the leadership can be seen as blasphemous. Example: “Trouble did not

start until the day the House was adjourned excepting for Mr. Awolowo's unhappy and deeply resented reference to Shehu Dan Fodio, a reference which was to a high proportion of Northern members little short of blasphemy." (Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples - 2

**Traditional Myths/ Stories** – Myths and stories about the shared experience, past exploit or tragedies of the group can constitute shared reservoir. Such stories are passed on from generation to generation. It can affect the way groups members perceive themselves and members of other groups. Example 1: "One people, one North, irrespective of rank and religion" – Slogan. (*Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood : An African Analysis of the Biafran Conflict*, 1974) Example 2: "My initiation into the complicated world of Ndi Igbo... a number of wonderful stories from our ancient Igbo tradition."(Achebe, 2012)Number of examples – 2.

**Ethnic Identity** – Group identity can include dressing, ceremonies, and rituals which differentiate the group from others. It can be cultural or religious in nature, but it is usually unique to the group. Such rituals and ceremonies are embedded in the lives of individual members of the group as expressed in marriage, naming or even burial ceremonies. These ceremonies are seen as sacred to members of the group. Example 1: "Ethnic identity was reinforced by endogamous marriage, observance of common traditional ceremonies, rituals and holidays, peculiar to each group."(Nkemdirim, 1975) Example 2: "In Igbo cosmology there are many gods. A person could be in good stead with one god and not the other – *ogwugwu* could kill a person."(Achebe, 2012) Number of examples - 2

**Ethnic Cultural Organization/ Political parties** – Many ethnic groups form and promote cultural or political organization, whose membership are limited to members of the group. In most cases, the primary motive of such organization is to promote narrow ethnic agenda to the detriment of other groups. Members of the group are loyal to such organization and its leadership and it is seen as a symbol of unity and solidarity for the protection of the group. Example 1: “In 1948, two cultural groups, the Bauchi General Improvement Union and the Youth Social Circle of Sokoto both composed of young men and interested in politics, amalgamated. Jamiyyar Mutanen Arewa (Northern People’s Congress) was the result of this merger. (*Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood : An African Analysis of the Biafran Conflict*, 1974) Example 2: “The Northern People’s Congress of the Sardaunians was supposed to be a national party, yet it refused to change its name from Northern to Nigerian People’s Congress, even for the sake of appearance. (Achebe, 2012) Number of examples - 3

**Supreme Traditional Title** – Just like religious leader, traditional title holders are also held in high esteem by ethnic groups. They represent and symbolized the authority of the land and they are highly revered. It is also common to find prefixes like chief, alhaji, sir and so on before people’s name. Such high-sounding prefixes evokes the perception of high office within the community and brings respect to the individual. Some culturally sanctioned traditional office is reserved for people from a particular lineage within the group and only occupants can bear the title reserved for the office. Such titles are used to galvanize the group for cultural and political activities. Example: “From the start the late Sardauna of Sokoto was the President of the group... The

Sarduana was in fact a kinsman of the Sultan... They were both directly descended from the great Sultan Bello, Usman Dan Fodio son and heir.” (Niven, 1971) Number of examples - 2

**Slogan** – Like symbol, groups also use slogan as a Suitable Target of Externalization (STE). Such slogan can be in the group’s language or in the language, such as English, adopted by the group. They are used in meetings and other activities of the groups to mobilize members for action. Example 1: One people, one North, irrespective of rank and religion.”(*Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood : An African Analysis of the Biafran Conflict*, 1974) Example 2: “Fellow countryman, brave and proud Biafrans...” (Kirk-Greene, 1971) Example of slogan - 2

### **Projection**

Arising from the concept of Suitable Target of Externalization (STE), groups try to describe other groups in negative terms, while using positive description for its own image. In other words, ethnic groups project negative image of other groups while projecting positive images of itself. Rival or minorities groups become Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) and are usually scapegoated while the group emphasizes its leadership superiority for example. (Korostelina, 2007) Other/rival groups are presented as cunning, deceitful, aggressive and having negative intentions. These subthemes were found based on the data:

**Demonstration of Superiority** – One of the ways in which a group projects its positive images is by demonstrating its superiority over other groups through battles (conquering) or verbal exchange. Powerful kings, rulers or political elites are used as

Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) to project group's positive image and demonstrating its superiority over other groups. Example: "Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe: "It would appear that the God of Africa has created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondages of the ages... The martial prowess of the Ibo nation at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the role of the preserver." (Nkemdirim, 1975) Number of examples – 9

**Cultural Elite (Chieftaincy/Traditional Title)** – Closely related to shared reservoir, high ranking chieftaincy title holder are used to project positive image of the group. Sometimes such traditional title holders also occupy high political office. Many political office holders are bestowed with traditional titles to enhance the image of the group and project its image. It therefore not uncommon to find high sounding prefixes attached to the names of political offices holders or traditional rulers. This is done as a show of superiority to differentiate and project the group they represent. Example 1: "When Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto decide to create the Northern People Congress (NPC) in the late 1940s." (Achebe, 2012) Example 2: "Chief Awolowo and close associates reunited his ancient Yoruba people with powerful glue." (Achebe, 2012) Number of examples - 8

**Ethnic Appeal** – Rather than discuss issues based on logic and sound reasoning, it is common for leaders to appeal to ethnic sentiment in order to mobilize support and address critical national issues. Based on this, political parties are formed along ethnic lines and most political parties draw their supporters from the founder's ethnic group with little or no effort at winning support across ethnic lines. Ethnic appeal is used for



projecting the image of the group either positively or negatively with political parties as a Suitable Target of Externalization (STE). Example: “Chief Obafemi Awolowo and close associates reunited his ancient Yoruba people with powerful glue – resuscitated ethnic pride – and created a political party, the Action Group in 1951, from the amalgamation of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, the Nigerian Traders’ Association.” (Achebe, 2012) Example 2: “The Yoruba specific answers to the threat of the Ibo represented by the NCNC and the Ibo State Union (a quasi-cultural political organization) were the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (1948), an equivalent of the Ibo State Union, and the Action Group (1951).” (*Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood: An African Analysis of the Biafran Conflict*, 1974) Number of examples - 2

**Blaming Others** – Playing the blame game is a strong tactic for projection by ethnic groups. Blaming acts is a strategy for negatively projecting rival ethnic groups on issues and help galvanize the group to support a cause. Example 1: “Ojukwu sought the failure of the ad hoc conference on the constitution, first by using his agents to terrorize the delegate by bomb explosion, and then by boycotting the conference totally.”(Kirk-Greene, 1971) Example 2: “In the face of the blatant refusal to implement the Aburi Agreements, and of many acts of atrocities against our people, we were forced to pass the ‘Survival Edicts’.” (Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples - 10

**Hostile Action/ Threats** – Groups manifest hostile action or threat against other groups to project power or superiority. Threats from rival ethnic group can also be reversed to project the rival group as hostile, cunning, and dangerous to the group’s interest. This also include painting the other group as the aggressor. Example: “It turned

out that a section of the country, the North, has been nursing hate against the East and were eagerly looking for an opportunity to give a violent expression to this hate.”(Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples - 2

**Victim Mentality** – Closely related to hostile action/ threat is the fact that ethnic groups tend to portray themselves as victims of aggression by other group in order to win sympathy and galvanize support from members of the group. Example: “The people of Eastern Nigeria have been an unjust victim of an organized pogrom.” (Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples – 6.

**Domination** – As ethnic groups compete for positions, they also seek to dominate one another through their rhetoric and actions. Domination as a form of projection is closely linked with aggressive behavior and victim mentality. A group either comes out as the aggressor or the victim. Example: “The East will never be intimidated nor will she acquiesce to any form of dictation. It is not the intention of the East to play the aggressor. Nonetheless, it is not our intention to be slaughtered in our bed.”(Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples - 9

**Rejection** – Ethnic groups project rejection to portray other group as aggressive, hostile or domineering. It could also be used to project blame on rival ethnic groups. Rejection as a form of projection helps in galvanizing the group for political and other causes by their leaders. Example: “It is crystal clear from all available evidence, judging from what is disseminated regularly from the Nigeria mass media of information, that the Ibo is not wanted anywhere in Nigeria.” (Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples - 1

### **Boundary Politicization/ Differentiation**

Cultural and political leaders emphasize “us vs them” by stressing the differences and similarities between groups. Tilly (2005) described boundary as “any contiguous zone of contrasting identity, rapid transition or separation between internally connected clusters of population and/or activity for which human participants shared representation.” (Korostelina, 2007) Political and cultural elites engage in actions that appeal to in-group, while emphasizing differences from out-group. Sub-themes captured under boundary formation are explained below:

**Formation of Ethnic Political Parties** – Political parties are formed mainly along ethnic lines usually these parties arise out of socio-cultural groups that are ethnic based. The manifestoes of such parties are written to appeal to a particular ethnic group, while drawing clear distinction with other groups. Example: “The Ibo State Union allied with the National Council of Nigeria and Citizens (NCNC), the *Egbe Omo Odududwa*, a Yoruba cultural organization allied with the Action Group (AG), the Jamiyyar Mutanen Arewa, a Hausa-Fulani organization allied with the Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) and the Tiv Progressive Union with the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC).

(Nkemdirim, 1975) Number of examples - 3

**Formation of Ethnic Socio-Cultural Groups** – It common for ethnic groups to have town unions and cultural groups, which are formed to showcase group’s culture and protect their interest politically. Their intentions are clearly reflected in the membership, as this is restricted by place of origin to differentiate the group from others. Socio-

Cultural groups sometime ally themselves with political parties or metamorphosed to a political party. Example: “Chief Awolowo and close associates reunited his ancient Yoruba people with powerful glue – resuscitated ethnic pride – and created a political party, the Action Group in 1951, from the amalgamation of the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* and The Nigerian Traders’ Association.” (Achebe, 2012) Number of examples – 1.

**Ethnic Appeal** – Speech is a very strong tool for creating and demarcating ethnic boundary. It is also used for securing ethnic loyalty by cultural and political leaders. The “Us vs them” messages are passed to the groups through powerful speech which can sometimes induce violence against rival ethnic groups, especially in time of conflict. Example: “Mallam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa: “Many Nigerians deceiving themselves by thinking Nigeria is one... particularly some of the press people... This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial, and it ends outside this chamber. The Southern tribes who are now pouring into the North in ever increasing numbers, and are more less domiciled here, do not mix with the Northern people... and we in the North look upon them as invaders.” (Nkemdirim, 1975) Number of examples – 4.

**“Us vs Them”** – Boundary formation among groups is strategically framed by ethnic leaders to differentiate the group from other groups and portray them as hostile, cunning or domineering. This is done through speech to project differentiation or the use of negative Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) to create a perception of “Us vs Them” with out-group members. Example: “I have evidence that the Governments in Lagos and Kaduna are encouraging acts of subversions and sabotage within this region.

These Northern controlled governments are prepared... to dominate and rule the Southern Regions.” (Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples – 9.

**Regionalism (North, South, East, West)** - At independence in 1960, Nigeria was a federation with regional government as the component units. However, the regions were created along ethnic line as each one was majorly populated by one of the three dominant ethnic groups - Eastern Region (Ibo), Western Region (Yoruba), and the Northern Region (Hausa-Fulani). The three regions and the major ethnic groups contends with one another and with the minority groups amongst them by creating boundaries using the physical regional boundary as symbol of the division. Example: “The demand for new states came predominantly, though not exclusively, from the nation’s ethnic minority who sought political autonomy from regional hegemonic ethnic majority groups.” (Suberu, 2001) Number of examples - 2

**Otherness Stories:** This subtheme stresses the distinctions between groups. Political and cultural leaders usually frame narratives in the “Us vs Them” mode to create boundaries among groups. This may also involve the use of STEs or speech to differentiate the group and create boundary. Example: “We have become accustomed now to many unflattering descriptions. We are feudal; we are desperately poor; and we are backward. We note these descriptions, but we are introducing far-reaching reforms in Northern Nigeria.”(Kirk-Greene, 1971) Number of examples - 3

**Minority/ Majority** – This sub-theme is important in understanding the dynamics of boundary construction in Nigeria. Because there are three major ethnic groups – Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa-Fulani, other groups are regarded as minority. These groups are

scattered among the three regions of the country with different cultures and identities. However, they are no less important in the political calculation of who gets what in the country. Boundaries are, therefore, formed on the basis of majority and minority groups. Example: “The Yoruba-led Action Group aligned at various times with such ethnic minority movements as the United Middle Belt Congress, the Borno Youth Movement, *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* in the North and the Efik-led United National Independent Party in the East.” (Suberu, 2001)

To arrive at this point, sub-themes were derived from the data gathered based on their relevance to the themes and how they fit together. The themes selected were both theory and data driven, while I started with preset codes based on the Theory of Group Identity by Korostelina (2007) and Volkan’s (1997) Psychodynamic Approach to Group Identity, most of the data selected were based on actual speech and reactions of major actors during the period under study. These actors were mainly influential politicians and ethnic/cultural elites like Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Yoruba), Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Ibo) and Sir Ahmadu Bello (Hausa-Fulani), whose actions (directly or indirectly) determined the course of events during this period.

One noticeable pattern in the themes and sub-themes is that they are connected or linked together in their usage. For example, politicization of boundary includes “us vs them” as a sub-theme. This includes the use of speech or Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) to paint other groups as cunning, aggressive or dominating in order to differentiate the in-group and create boundaries with out-group. It is closely related to projection and sub-themes like blaming others, hostile action, demonstration of

superiority. Cultural elites utilize Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) to project their group and create boundary or differentiate their group from other groups.

For instance, Col. Emeka Ojukwu, the Ibo military leader, who led the group into secession from Nigeria in a speech titled “On Aburi We Stand” said, “I have evidence that the Governments in Lagos and Kaduna are encouraging acts of subversion and sabotage within this Region. These Northern controlled Governments are prepared to sink their tribal and political differences... to dominate and rule the Southern Regions.”(Kirk-Greene, 1971) Ojukwu made this statement shortly after the peace meeting arranged by the Ghanaian Head of Government Gen. Ankrah before the civil war broke out. “The Governments in Lagos and Kaduna” refers to the federal government and government of the Northern region, with headquarters in Lagos and Kaduna respectively. After the coup that toppled the government of Gen. Agunyi Ironsi (an Ibo), It was believed that the federal government was under the firm control of northerners with Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon (a northerner) as the military head of state. Ojukwu’s reference to the Governments in Lagos and Kaduna was, therefore, to create boundary between the Southern region and the Northern region and project Northerners as the oppressors, who are determined to dominate the South. Indeed, the meeting in Aburi was the first and last time both men will sit together to talk before and after the war. After this speech, on May 30, 1967, Col. Ojukwu declared the Republic of Biafra.

According to Tilly (2005), “social identities “center on boundaries separating us from them.” (Korostelina, 20) Col. Ojukwu was able to create boundaries and project

Northerners as oppressors with his speech, thus reinforcing the political factors that made secession of the Ibos from Nigeria inevitable.

The link between themes and sub-themes is not limited to politicization of boundary and projection. In fact, most of the themes are combined in their usage by the actors and rarely is a theme used in isolation. For example, “Every inch of Biafran soil desecrated by the filthy invaders from Nigeria must act as a gallon of fuel to the spirit and determination of every Biafran citizen. The enemy has dealt fatal injuries in the last one year.”(Kirk-Greene, 1971) This was a Biafra radio announcement made shortly after the breakout of the war in July 1967. It shows the following elements: Chosen trauma (Oppression by the majority) – “Every inch of Biafran soil desecrated by the filthy invaders from Nigeria”; projection (us vs them) – “Filthy invaders from Nigeria”; chosen trauma (terror) – The enemy has dealt fatal injuries in the last one year”; Shared reservoir – “Every inch of Biafran soil.” The sub-themes in this statement were channeled to achieve the purpose of mobilizing the people of Biafra to prepare and defend their land. Hence, the statement combined elements of chosen trauma with oppression by the majority and terror as sub-themes. Elements of projection (us vs them) and shared reservoir were also present in the statement.

Volkan (1997) explained that group identity is like a large “canvas tent” that shields individual member, the stability of such tent is the responsibility of the leaders, while any threat to the tent becomes a collective responsibility of the group. Relating this idea to the Biafra radio announcement, as it becomes clear that the large Biafra tent that shields all Ibos is being threatened by the “filthy invaders,” members of the ethnic group



are called to defend it. According to David Brown (2007), “the term “nation” is sometimes used simply to substantiate the claim made by an ethnic community that it has the right to autonomous control over its own affairs.” (Peacock et al., 2007) In this case, the threat to Biafra (the Ibo nation) must be resisted by all Ibos and narratives are framed by Ibo leaders to move members of the group in defense of the nation.

Themes and sub-themes are not just linked they also overlap. For example, these sub-themes – formation of ethnic political parties, formation of ethnic socio-cultural group, ethnic appeal (speech) are grouped under politicization of boundaries. Closely related to these are sub-themes like – ethnic identities (marriage rituals, traditional marriages), ethnic cultural organization/political parties, supreme traditional title, which are grouped under the theme shared reservoir. Similarly, sub-themes like cultural elite (chieftaincy/traditional title), ethnic appeal (formation of ethnic political parties) are grouped under projection. Although this may seem like a repetition of themes and sub-themes, the context in which they are used determines the grouping. A common element of these themes is the use of Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) to create an “us vs them” scenarios, this can be in form of symbols, objects or speech. STEs can either be positive or negative, while positive STEs are associated with the ingroup, negative STEs are associated with outgroups (Korostelina, 2007). This common element result in overlapping of themes and reinforces such themes and sub-themes as actors seek to construct identity and create boundaries with their narratives.

For example, these three statements described Igbo cultures with closely related sub-themes (Cultural rite, traditional myth, religious symbols) but with different thematic classification based on the context:

*“My initiation into the complicated world of Ndi Igbo... a number of complicated stories of our ancient Igbo tradition.”* Theme: Chosen Glory; Sub-themes: Cultural rite – “initiation,” Traditional myth – “our ancient Igbo tradition.

*In Igbo cosmology there are many gods, a person could be in the good stead with one god and not the other – ogwugwu could kill a person.”* Theme: Shared reservoir, Sub-theme: traditional myth – “ogwugwu could kill a person.”

*“I was introduced to mbari and the sophistication of Igbo phenomenological thought.”* Theme: Shared reservoir/ Chosen glory; Sub-theme – religious symbol, traditional myths.

A common element of these statements by Chinua Achebe, a prominent Ibo writer and political elite, was the cultural/religious myths used as a Suitable Target of Externalization (STE). This element makes the sub-themes look similar but a closer look at the context will reveal the difference in classification. The first part of statement was thematically grouped as chosen glory because it expresses pride in the mythical culture of the Ndi Igbo – *“My initiation into the complicated world of the Ndi Igbo.”* The phrase “initiation into the complicated world” connotes a mythological cultural/religious rite performed by the author. The second part of the statement – *“a number of wonderful stories from our ancient Igbo tradition”* -- was also categorized as chosen glory because it expresses pride in the Ibo culture - “wonderful stories of our ancient Igbo tradition.”

The totality of this statement can therefore be categorized as chosen glory with the sub-themes – cultural rite and traditional myth. As mentioned earlier, chosen glory can be described as “important usually mythologized and idealized achievements that took place in the past.” (Volkan, 1997)

The second statement, however, was categorized as shared reservoir, although it has traditional myth as the sub-theme. The difference is in the last part of the statement – “*ogwugwu could kill a person.*” It is inferred that “*Ogwugwu,*” a mythological god of the Igbo is so powerful that it could kill (traditional myth). The difference in the use of the sub-theme – traditional myth - with the first example can be seen in the context of the first part of the statement – “*In Igbo cosmology there are many gods.*” “*Igbo cosmology* “is a symbolic representation of shared Igbo culture that breeds pride in the group. Hence, this statement was categorized as shared reservoir with traditional myth as the sub-theme.

In the third example, the statement - “*I was introduced to mbari and the sophistication of Igbo phenomenological thought*” was categorized as shared reservoir and chosen glory with the sub-themes – religious symbol and traditional myth. In this instance Achebe (2012) was speaking about his introduction to the mythological and religious *mbari* cultures, which is symbolic (shared reservoir) to the Igbos. He further described this as “*the sophistication of Igbo phenomenological thoughts,*” (chosen glory) thereby expressing his pride in this mythological and religious Ibo culture.

In general, these statements utilized positive STE, based strongly on religious/cultural myths, to project the Igbo culture as sophisticated, ancient, powerful (ogwugwu could kill), and complicated (requiring a high level of intelligence) to appeal

to ingroup members and distinguish the Igbos from other groups in Nigeria. It should be noted that Professor Chinua Achebe was an Igbo elite and a renowned author, who promoted the Igbo cultures in all his writing. Another noticeable pattern is the sub-themes, which fall under different themes depending on the context and idea the speaker is trying to project. Therefore, traditional myth as a sub-theme was categorized under chosen glory and shared reservoir depending on the context.

A statement can combine two themes, as seen in the third example which combined shared reservoir and chosen glory. These themes reinforce one another to achieve a dramatic and more forceful effect as seen in the examples.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Final Analysis

#### Cultural and Political Elites

The chart above illustrates how cultural and political elites create identity and erect ethnic boundaries. Right at the center are cultural and political leaders, who play major roles in boundary construction among ethnic groups in Nigeria. In reality, there is a thin line between a cultural and a political leader/elite because an individual can occupy the two positions at the same time. For instance, the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello was the founder and leader of the main political party in the North (the Northern People's Congress) before and after independence. As the Sarduana of Sokoto, he was the spiritual head of the predominantly Muslim, Hausa-Fulani, Northern ethnic group. He was a direct descendant of Othman Dan Fodio, the Fulani Jihadist, who conquered and imposed Islamic rule on that part of the country. Consequently, he occupied a culturally symbolic and politically strategic position in the North, combining political and cultural offices. Therefore, the Sarduana was seen as an icon and wielded enormous power, thus becoming a Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) for the in-group and out-group in creating boundaries.

Extract: *“When Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, decide to create the Northern People's Congress in the late 1940s, he knew that the educationally*

*disadvantage North did not have a rich source of Western educated politicians to choose from.*” (Achebe, 2012) In this example, Ahmadu Bello was projected as protecting the interest of the people of the North by forming an ethnically based Northern party. The role of the Sardauna was further elaborated in this example, *“The Northern People’s Congress of the Sardaunians was supposed to be a national party, yet it refused to change its name from Northern to Nigerian People’s Congress.”* (Achebe, 2012) Here the title Sardauna was depicted as equivalent to the Northern People’s Congress to create an image of purely ethnic political party and draw boundary with other groups. This was further reinforced when the author pointed to the fact that the party refused to change its name to give a national outlook rather than a regional/ethnic outlook. In the two examples, subthemes like – cultural elite, ethnic political parties, regionalism were utilized.

In another instance, a political and cultural elite/leader can evolve by holding bureaucratic position in government or having high educational status. The struggle for independence was fought by few educated elites, who were trained as lawyers, doctors, and other professionals mostly in the United Kingdom. They returned home to occupy positions, hitherto, held by the “white men” and formed socio-cultural organizations and political parties, which challenged colonial rules leading to independence in 1960. Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Yoruba leader) and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Ibo leader) belong to this category. Unlike the Sarduana, these two held no spiritual, traditional or cultural positions but rose to become ethnic leaders due to their level of education and the ability

to mobilize their groups under a common “ethnic tent”. They both formed and led ethnic political organizations with loyal and massive followers.

Like the Sardauna, they were both revered and became an almost iconic representation of their ethnic group and a Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) by both ingroup and outgroup as seen in this example: *“Chief Obafemi Awolowo and close associates reunited his ancient Yoruba people with powerful glue – resuscitated ethnic pride – and created a political party, the Action Group in 1951, from an amalgamation of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, the Nigerian Trader’s Association.”* (Achebe, 2012) A breakdown of this statement shows elements of ethnic pride (ancient Yoruba people); ethnic based political party (Action Group); socio-cultural group (Egbe Omo Oduduwa); cultural elites (Chief Obafemi Awolowo and close associates) as subthemes. To further buttress this point, here is an example for Dr. Azikiwe: *“The NCNC started as a national party... However, between 1946 and 1948, the tribal tension which had been initiated by the Ikoli-Akinsanya dispute of 1941, coupled with the dissatisfaction of the Yoruba elite, who felt the NCNC was dominated by Azikiwe and the Ibos, culminated in the tribal cold wars of 1948.”* (Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood: An African Analysis of the Biafran Conflict, 1974) This statement has subthemes of ethnic appeal (Azikiwe and the Ibos); domination (dissatisfaction of Yoruba elite); cultural/political elite (Azikiwe/Yoruba elite); and ethnic based political party (“NCNC started as a national party... was dominated by Azikiwe and the Ibos.”).

These elite construct identities and create boundaries using five major themes: projection, chosen glory, chosen trauma, shared reservoir, and politicization of boundary.

Let's take a look at how these themes were used in constructing identities and creating boundaries.

**Projection:** This accounts for half of the data gathered with subthemes such as: demonstration of superiority, cultural elite, ethnic appeal, blaming others, hostile actions, victim mentality, domination, rejection and historical reference. The subthemes like demonstration of superiority, cultural elite, blaming others, victim mentality, and domination were mostly utilized by political/ cultural elites. According to Volkan (1997), "groups try to project negative images onto other groups" while projecting positive images of itself using Suitable Target of Externalization as the following examples show: *"For instance, in 1951, there was only one university graduate among Northerners, whereas there were hundreds of Yorubas, Igbos, and other Southerners with graduate and post-graduate degree."* (Suberu, 2001) This statement projects Southerners as superior to Northerners because they have a larger population of Western educated elite. Another example: *"It seemed clear to me that (Azikiwe) policy was to corrode the self-respect of the Yoruba people as a group to build up the Ibo as a master race."* (Nkemdirim, 1975) This statement was made by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba leader, about Dr. Azikiwe, an Ibo leader. The statement project Ibo as seeking to dominate the Yoruba ("corrode the self-respect of the Yoruba") and establish their superiority over the group ("build up the Ibo as a master race"). It combines domination and superiority as subthemes under projection in a single statement with the motive of creating boundary between the Yorubas and the Ibos.



**Shared Reservoir:** Group's symbols, icon, flags or other non-physical ideas are Suitable Target of Externalization (STE), it serves in unifying the group. This theme has the following subthemes – Religion/religious symbols, traditional myths/ stories, ethnic identities, ethnic cultural organization/ parties, slogan, and supreme title. Volkan (1997) compared group identity to a “large canvas tent”, where people gather for a common identity. The tent provides cohesiveness in time of peace with group members rallying around the pole when the shared tent is threatened by outsiders. Examples of shared reservoir: “*The Yoruba specific answers to the threat of the Ibo represented by the NCNC and the Ibo State Union (a quasi-cultural political organization) were the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (1948), an equivalent of the Ibo State Union and the Action Group.*” (Nigeria: *Dilemma of Nationhood: An African Analysis of the Biafran Conflict*, 1974) The subthemes in this statement are: Cultural Organization (Ibo State Union, *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*); ethnic identity, (Yoruba, Ibo) traditional myth (*Oduduwa*, the father of the Yoruba). These subthemes were combined to build ethnic tents for the two groups and create boundaries that eventually split the party. The NCNC started as a nationalist party to fight a common enemy – the colonial government but the actions of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (an Ibo elite) and members of the Ibo State Union threatened the Yorubas, who formed their own cultural organization (build their own tent) - *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* meaning the *Oduduwa* descendants' group. *Oduduwa* is revered father of the Yoruba race. This group later transformed to the Action Group; a Yoruba dominated party.

**Chosen Glory:** Groups achievements, historical victories in battle (mythical or real) can rally members of a group under the “large canvass tent.” The subthemes are:

Cultural rite, traditional myth, ethnic pride, and positive historical experience. In term of usage, chosen glory (historical reference and ethnic pride) is one the most used themes by political/ cultural elites in constructing boundaries among group. It is used to build pride in the ingroup in peace time and confidence in the time of crisis. Chosen glory (or trauma) “are chosen because of current state of relations with other groups... These ideas of glories and traumas are linked to real or symbolic objects: Suitable Target of Externalization (STE).” (Korostelina, 2007) Let us examine this in practical terms by looking at an example from the data. Extract: *“It would appear that the God of Africa has created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the ages... The martial prowess of the Ibo nation at all the stages of human history has enable them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the roles of the preserver.”* (Nkemdirim, 1975)

A simple analysis of this statement shows elements of chosen glory with the following subthemes: Traditional myth/ethnic pride (“The God of Africa has created the Ibo nation”); ethnic pride (“the martial prowess of the Ibo nation”); positive historical reference (“at all the stages of human history”); ethnic pride/traditional myth (“role of the preserver”). It is clear that this statement, by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, was a deliberate attempt to bring the Ibos (his ethnic group) together under a common “ethnic tent” while ostracizing other groups by framing them as inferior to the Ibos. He successfully combined the subthemes of chosen glory to project the Ibos as a superior group.

**Chosen Trauma:** Trauma or mourning like victory and achievement can also help rally a group together under the “large canvas tent.” The subthemes are: Hostile

actions, flight from home, claim of genocide, terror and killing, rape, and oppression by majority. This theme is widely used by the leaders in constructing identity and creating boundaries. Chosen trauma is always linked with Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) “or reservoir of bad representation.” (Korostelina, 2007) Because it is linked to bad representation or memories, it is used to project the image of the outgroup rather than the ingroup. It therefore helps in uniting the group against threats by other groups. Here is a typical example from the data: *“I ran to the house of a Yoruba lecturer and took shelter... I also later witnessed an attack on Mr. Philips in the latter house and I later saw Mr. Arukwe dragged out dead from the house.”* (Kirk-Greene, 1971) This was a statement from an Ibo man narrating his experience after the violence that broke out in the North before the civil war. The attacks on Ibos in the North and similar narratives crystalized in the call on the Ibos by Col. Ojukwu to return to the East (home) and subsequently formed the basis for secession.

An analysis of the statement reveals subthemes of terror and killing (“I ran to the house of a Yoruba lecturer and took shelter”/ “I saw Mr. Arukwe dragged out dead”). During this period, the Northerners also utilized chosen trauma to negatively project the Ibos and unite the region against the East as seen in this example: *“In Owerri too, where Northerners had lived for long and inter-married with the Ibos, they were attacked and killed in cold blood.”* (Kirk-Greene, 1971) The subtheme in this statement is mainly “killing” (“they were attacked and killed in cold blood”). This statement and similar ones helped fueled the violence against the Ibos in the North and mobilized the masses in readiness for the war.

**Politicization of Boundary/ Differentiation:** This emphasize “us vs them” and is the second most used theme after projection by cultural and political leaders. The following subthemes were discovered from the data: Formation of ethnic parties, formation of ethnic socio-cultural group, ethnic appeal, “us vs them,” regionalism, emphasis on difference, minority and majority, otherness. According to Korostelina (2007), “cultural and political elites play an important role in the process of boundary enlargement or contraction, stressing resemblances and disparities that define the group and its boundaries.” In practical terms, cultural and political elites made use of the subthemes listed to differentiate and create boundaries among ethnic groups in Nigeria during the period under study as these examples show: *“Since the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Provinces in 1914, Nigeria has existed only paper.”* (Kirk-Greene, 1971) This statement was made by Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in 1947, he later became Nigeria first prime minister at Independence in 1960. The statement placed distinct “emphasis on difference” (subtheme) between the people of Nigeria. He made clear the differences between the people of the country, inferring the existence of an “us vs them” regional dichotomy – Southern Vs Northern region. In another statement, Alhaji Balewa made this differences and boundary even clearer: *“Many Nigerians deceiving themselves by thinking Nigeria is one... particularly some of the press people... This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial and it ends outside this chamber... The Southern tribes who are now pouring into the North in ever increasing numbers, and are more or less domiciled here, do not mix with the Northern people... and we in the North look upon them as invaders.”*(Nkemdirim, 1975) Without any

pretense, Alhaji Balewa stressed the boundaries between the Northern and Southern region of Nigeria with this “us vs them” rhetoric. He combined almost every subtheme under politicization of boundary – ethnic appeal, “us vs them,” regionalism, emphasis on difference, and otherness into a single statement to stress the differences among the ethnic groups in Nigeria, and even set the tone for violence when he referred to Southerners in the North as “invaders.”

### **Change in Themes and Subthemes over Time**

The use of divisive rhetoric was not restricted to Alhaji Tafawa Balewa as other cultural and political elites were fond of making similar statement before and after independence in 1960. In view of this, let us examine the change in themes and the frequency in the use of themes and subthemes at different point in time (before/ after independence) during the period under study - the period of the civil war - 1967-1970.

Although cultural and political elites utilized all themes/subthemes throughout the period, a change in frequency and tone could be discerned. As event and circumstances evolved, political and cultural elites also change their rhetoric to draw more group members to the “ethnic tent” and create boundaries.

In the period before independence, cultural and political elites mobilized support among their ethnic groups to create political parties and formed regional government mainly by utilizing chosen glory, projection, shared reservoir, and politicization of boundary. According to Nkemdirim (1975), “when it became obvious that their most secure base for support would be the people of their group, the political leaders employed ethnic loyalties as a conscious instrument in politics.” (42) Here are extracts:

**Chosen glory (Ethnic pride)** - *“The headmaster of St. Philip’s Central School was a colorful, extraordinary Igboman... He was one of a handful of Nigerians who had attained the distinction of a headmaster.”* (Achebe, 2012)

**Chosen glory (Historical reference)** – *“The father of African independence was Nnamdi Azikiwe. There is no doubt at all about that.”* (Achebe, 2012)

**Chosen glory (Ethnic Pride)** - Boundary (Ethnic based political party/ Ethnic socio-cultural group); Projection (Cultural elite) – *“Chief Awolowo and close associates reunited the ancient Yoruba people with powerful glue - resuscitated ethnic pride – and created a political party, the Action Group in 1951 from an amalgamation of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa.”* (Achebe, 2012)

The use of negative Suitable Target of Externalization (STE) and reservoirs to project rival groups and create boundaries was also very common during this period.

Extracts:

**Boundary (Emphasis on difference)** – *“Another sign of differentiated membership lay in the kind of dress worn... Ordinarily the Northerners in general wore traditional dress called Abuba (made out of white cotton cloth) while the Southerners, especially the Ibos wore European dress.”* (Nkemdirim, 1975)

**Projection (Demonstration of superiority)** – *“The Northerners have a peculiar psychology and with no political education were apt to take unduly serious any such thing as booing or reference to their ancestors.”* (Nkemdirim, 1975)

**Projection (Demonstration of Superiority)** – *“For instance, in 1951, there was only one university graduate among Northerners, whereas there were hundreds of*

*Yorubas, Igbos, and other Southerners with graduate and post graduate degrees.”*

(Suberu, 2001)

With such rhetoric by cultural and political elites, it was not difficult to see that the country was headed for a disaster. Six years after independence the country experience it first coup (January 15, 1966) and counter coup (July 28, 1966). The government of Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was toppled and a military government was installed in a coup and a counter coup seven months later. The following year, Col. Ojukwu declared the Republic of Biafra and the civil war broke out.

The themes/subtheme utilized by political and cultural elites in the period immediately before and during the civil war were more of chosen trauma, boundary differentiation, and projection using a combination of negative and positive STEs and reservoirs as shown in these extracts:

**Chosen trauma (Rape/ Killing)** – *“In Port Harcourt, a house with a large number of Northern women in hiding was attacked. The women were raped and beaten to death.”* (Kirk-Greene, 1971)

**Chosen trauma (Claim of genocide/ killing)** – *“The people of Eastern Nigeria have been an unjust victim of an organized pogroms.”* ((Kirk-Greene, 1971)

**Ethnic boundary (Emphasis on difference)** - *“I, in all sincerity, in order to avoid further friction and further killing, do submit... a Government that controls the various entities through people of their areas.”* (Kirk-Greene, 1971)

**Projection (Aggression/ Victim mentality)** – *“From the look of things, it would appear that the people of Eastern Nigeria would be forced by external violence to*

*surrender their birthright... Eastern Nigeria is fully prepared for any action... should any group make this attempt by attacking us.” (Kirk-Greene, 1971)*

**Projection (Blaming, Rejection, Hostile action)** – *“Many of us have met our friend, Lt. Col. Ojukwu... My own is that Lt. Col. Ojukwu is determined to make any kind of settlement impossible. Everyone of his action, every utterance of his seems calculated to divide us.” (Kirk-Greene, 1971)*

From the foregoing, it is clear that political and cultural elites in Nigeria erect “ethnic tent” and create boundaries using the themes and subthemes of this study to achieve their purposes. These themes/subthemes were used in constructing identity and differentiate ingroup from outgroup using STEs or reservoirs. This is not limited to a particular ethnic group, as all groups, including minorities, used these themes to achieve their end. After the toppling of the civilian administration, military leaders also employed similar strategies during the civil war. Although the study’s focus was on the period of the civil, it also examines events that led to the civil war as this is important in understanding the dynamic of the war and its rhetoric.





**Figure 1: Identity Construction Chart**

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusion**

Sixty year after Nigeria gained political independence from Great Britain, ethnic identity and boundary construction have remained a cog in the wheel of the nation's progress. In spite of the fact that the nation is endowed with enormous human and material resources, its development has not gone beyond the 'pedestrian level' when compared to other nations with similar potentials.

The Nigerian civil war ended in 1970, fifty years later the nation continues to struggle economically and politically. Although there is a democratically elected government in place, major national issues are decided on the basis of ethnicity, the 'national cake' mainly shared on the basis of tribal affiliation whoever is in power is expected to cut the largest share of the cake for himself/ herself and his/her ethnic group.

Recently, the agitation for Biafra has grown stronger and new groups, more militant with clannish tendencies, have emerged throughout the six geopolitical zones of the country. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Nnamdi Kanu and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) were formed with the main objective of creating an independent state of Biafra out of Nigeria.

Other groups like the Boko Haram in the North-East and Ansaru in the North-West are religious extremist groups, formed with the intention of creating an independent

Islamic state of out Nigeria. The country is presently engaged in a decade-long war with Boko Haram in the Borno and Yobe States, North-East Nigeria with thousands of civilians dead and displaced. The nomadic Fulani herders under the threat of desert encroachment and global warming are migrating to the Southern part of the country, where there is more rainfall putting unexpected pressure on farmlands leading to farmers/herders' clashes. The six South-Western state came together recently to form a local vigilante group named *Amotekun*, in order to forestall incessant clashes between farmers and Fulani herders in the region.

In spite of all these, ethnic and political leaders have not changed their rhetoric, they have continued to create boundaries and construct identities using the strategies and patterns examined in this study. Politicians are still prone to erecting “ethnic tents” by canvassing for votes using ethnic appeal and Suitable Target of Externalization (STE). Because the civil war is a defining moment in the nation's history, I believe this study is important in understanding the problems that have bedeviled the nation till the present moment. Using the theory of Volkan and Korostelina, I have tried to answer the basic question of this thesis – How did political elites erect ethnic boundaries? A question, I believe, will provide a proper understanding for the problems facing Nigeria.

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## **BIOGRAPHY**

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