

NNAMDI KANU, BIAFRAN SELF- DETERMINATION AND AFRICA'S SOCIOECONOMIC AND GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITIVENESS: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

This study offers a critical assessment of **Nnamdi Kanu's detention, the Biafran self-determination quest socioeconomic progress and geopolitical competitiveness**. *Primarily this study aims at analysing how contested nationhood and state tensions within Nigeria shape regional stability and Africa's strategic positioning in an evolving global order. The specific objectives are to:* (i) trace the historical and structural drivers of Biafran self-determination; (ii) interrogate the political and legal dynamics surrounding Kanu's detention; (iii) evaluate the regional and continental implications of Nigeria's internal instability (iv) propose governance reforms that strengthen national cohesion and Africa's global competitiveness. The study is mainly anchored on **Relative Deprivation Theory**, which explains how perceived marginalisation, weak state-building, and global interconnectedness shape contemporary self-determination conflicts. Methodologically, the research employs a **qualitative and**

descriptive design, relying on **documentary analysis** of legal texts, human rights reports, policy papers, academic literature, and regional governance frameworks. Data were analysed through **thematic content analysis**. Findings indicate that the persistence of the Biafran question derives from unresolved historical grievances, governance deficits, structural exclusion, and the securitisation of political dissent. The study further reveals that Nigeria's instability, expanded by the Kanu–Biafra detention, weakens investor confidence, disrupts regional economic integration, and limits Africa's influence in global political negotiations. The study concludes that durable resolution requires **inclusive governance, constitutional reforms, rule-of-law compliance, demilitarisation of dissent, and structured political dialogue**. It recommends dialogue-driven conflict management, protection of civil liberties, sub-national economic empowerment, and regionally coordinated peace-building strategies to enhance Africa's socioeconomic and geopolitical competitiveness.

Keywords: Nnamdi Kanu, Biafra, self-determination, Africa's socioeconomic development, geopolitical competitiveness, Nigeria.

Introduction

The question of Biafran self-determination and the prolonged detention of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), represent one of the most contentious nationhood debates in contemporary Nigeria. Self-determination movements across Africa are often rooted in historical injustice, structural inequality,

and unaddressed grievances embedded in colonial state formation (Ake, 1996; Young, 2012). The Nigerian case reflects these broader postcolonial dilemmas, where contested legitimacy, perceived marginalisation of the Igbo ethnic group, and repeated failures of inclusive governance have sustained the Biafran question since 1967 (Suberu, 2021). As Africa seeks to strengthen its socioeconomic transformation and geopolitical competitiveness, internal instability in major states like Nigeria significantly shapes the continent's collective bargaining power in the global system (Adebawale, 2020). Nigeria's recurring separatist agitations, amplified by the arrest, rendition, and detention of Kanu in 2021, have contributed to heightened tensions, militarised responses, human rights controversies, and declining investor confidence (Amnesty International, 2022; Ibeanu & Luckham, 2006). Understanding the implications of this conflict is crucial as African states navigate multipolar global competition, digital geopolitics, and the rising value of regional stability for economic integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (UNECA, 2020).

The problem this study seeks to tackle revolves around the reason for the continued quest for Biafra self-determination despite Nigeria's constitutional commitment to unity and federalism. The continued Biafran agitation reveals deep structural weaknesses in governance, national integration, and equitable development. The securitisation of political grievances, characterised by arrests, proscription, surveillance, and military operations—has intensified rather than resolved the conflict (Onuoha,

2020). The unresolved detention of Nnamdi Kanu continues to fuel perceptions of political exclusion, judicial inconsistency, and selective enforcement of the rule of law (Nwankwo, 2022).

Nigeria's internal instability poses wider risks for Africa. As the continent's largest economy and a key diplomatic actor, Nigeria's domestic crises undermine regional security cooperation, continental economic coordination, and Africa's overall influence in global institutions (Adebajo, 2021). The Kanu–Biafra impasse thus represents both a national crisis and a continental strategic concern.

The primary aim of this study is to critically assess Nnamdi Kanu's detention, the Biafran self-determination quest, and their implications for Africa's socioeconomic development and geopolitical competitiveness. The specific objectives of this study is to, examine the historical and structural drivers of the Biafran self-determination movement, analyse the political, legal, and governance dynamics surrounding Nnamdi Kanu's detention, evaluate how Nigeria's internal instability affects Africa's socioeconomic prospects and geopolitical positioning, and Recommend policy options that strengthen national cohesion and enhance Africa's global competitiveness. This study is guided by the following questions, what historical and structural factors have sustained the Biafran self-determination movement? How have legal and governance dynamics shaped Nnamdi Kanu's detention and the state's response? What are the implications of Nigeria's instability for Africa's economic

and geopolitical standing? What reforms can promote conflict resolution and enhance Africa's competitiveness?

The study draws mainly from Gurr (1970) relative deprivation theory, and supported by the post-colonial state theory and the Keohane and Nye (2011) complex interdependence theory. Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretivist research design, relying primarily on documentary analysis. The study is significant basically because it contributes to academic scholarship on nationalism, conflict management, and African geopolitics. It provides policymakers with insights into how internal conflicts in strategic African states can undermine regional integration and continental competitiveness. It also offers recommendations that can guide peaceful resolution of self-determination disputes.

Scope-wise, the study focuses on Nigerian- Biafran question from 2014–2025, examining the political, legal, governance, and socioeconomic dimensions. Limitations include reliance on secondary data and the sensitivity of political information in conflict-prone contexts. Structurally, the study consists of (1) the introduction (2) Review of related literature (3) methodology (4) Data presentation, analysis, and interpretation (5) Summary, conclusion and recommendations.

Literature Review

This section reviews relevant literature on self-determination, the Biafran question, Nigeria's political

governance, and Africa's socioeconomic and geopolitical positioning. It synthesises theoretical, historical, and contemporary debates, with emphasis on how Nnamdi Kanu's detention and the renewed Biafran self-determination movement intersect with national stability and continental competitiveness.

Conceptualizing Self-Determination and Secessionist Movements

The principle of self-determination is central to international law and political philosophy. It refers to the right of a people to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development (Cassese, 1995; United Nations, 2007). Contemporary scholarship distinguishes between internal self-determination (autonomy, decentralisation, good governance) and external self-determination (secession) (Norman, 2020).

African cases such as South Sudan, Eritrea, and Somaliland demonstrate the varied contours of secessionist struggles driven by identity, marginalisation, and postcolonial state failure (Clapham, 2017). The Biafran movement, both the 1967–70 conflict and contemporary resurgence, fits within this global pattern of contested nationhood, historical injustice, and unresolved grievances (Omeje, 2021).

Historical Context of the Biafran Question

The Biafra conflict is rooted in colonial amalgamation, ethnic tensions, political mistrust, and coups that destabilised the post-independence Nigerian state

(Madiebo, 1980; Achebe, 2012). Post-war rhetoric of “No victor, no vanquished” did not translate into structural reconciliation; instead, marginalisation grievances persisted in the South-East (Ekanem & Okon, 2018).

The resurgence of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) under Nnamdi Kanu reflects dissatisfaction with Nigeria’s federal structure, inequitable resource distribution, and perceived political exclusion (Nwankwo, 2022).

State Response, Repression, and Governance Dynamics

Scholars agree that state reactions to separatist agitation in Nigeria have been predominantly coercive rather than dialogic (Akinyemi, 2020). Military operations, arbitrary arrests, and disproportionate force constitute dominant strategies, exacerbating rather than resolving conflict.

Ezeikpe (2018) argues that extrajudicial killings and unregulated security practices have become entrenched tools of political control in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic, reflecting weak institutions and a culture of impunity. Such practices increase radicalisation, fuel inter-ethnic resentment, and delegitimise state authority.

Amnesty International (2022) similarly reports enforced disappearances, secret detentions, and systematic human rights violations in the South-East. The extraordinary rendition and prolonged detention of Nnamdi Kanu highlight the weakness of judicial oversight and growing executive overreach (Nwankwo, 2022). These dynamics

reinforce persistent perceptions of structural injustice and ethnic targeting

Nigeria's Internal Instability and Africa's Socioeconomic Prospects

Nigeria's instability has direct consequences for Africa. As Africa's most populous nation and one of its largest economies, Nigeria's domestic weakness threatens continental integration efforts under the AfCFTA, ECOWAS protocols, and AU Agenda 2063 (UNECA, 2020).

Ezeikpe (2018) demonstrates that extrajudicial killings and systemic insecurity erode investor confidence, deepen grievances, and obstruct development, intensifying broader national instability. Such instability spills over into neighboring states, affects regional markets, and reduces Africa's leverage in global economic competition.

Adebajo (2021) argues that without internal stability, Nigeria cannot fulfil its historic continental leadership role. This aligns with Ezeikpe's (2022) argument in *Repositioning Africa for Global Competitiveness* that Africa must strengthen governance, human capital, and regional stability to enhance its participation in global politics and markets.

Self-Determination, Human Rights, and International Law

International law recognises self-determination but places limits on secession, favouring territorial integrity unless

severe oppression or denial of meaningful internal self-determination exists (Buchanan, 2003).

Reports by Human Rights Watch (2021) and Amnesty International (2022) suggest that Nigeria's response to IPOB often violates civil liberties, raising legal debates about whether the state's actions undermine internal self-determination and thus feed arguments for external self-determination.

Biafra, Regional Stability, and Africa's Geopolitical Positioning

Nigeria's internal crises weaken ECOWAS security architecture, contribute to small-arms proliferation, and complicate Africa's diplomatic posture (Clapham, 2017; Adebajo, 2021). Studies stress that internal fragmentation lowers the continent's bargaining power in global trade, climate negotiations, and multipolar alignments.

Ezeikpe's (2022) analysis of Repositioning Africa for Global Competitiveness underscores that stable governance, regional cohesion, and security reforms are prerequisites for Africa to compete effectively in an era of China-US rivalry, technological disruption, and shifting global supply chains.

Thus, Nigeria's resolution of the Biafran question is not merely a domestic issue, it is a continental priority. This is basically because the quest for self-determination is a generational right, endorsed by United Nations charter on human rights. Simply put, Self-determination is a legitimate global norm. It is likely that the Biafran

question remains unresolved due to historical grievances and governance failures. Nigeria's coercive response aggravates conflict, as illustrated by the prevalence of extrajudicial killings (Ezeikpe, 2018). Unfortunately, Nigeria's instability undermines regional integration and Africa's global competitiveness (Ezeikpe, 2022). Apparently, a rights-based, dialogue-driven approach is essential for sustainable peace and continental development

Notwithstanding the growing body of scholarship on the Biafran self-determination movement, Nigeria's governance crisis, and Africa's geopolitical marginalization, **important analytical gaps remains**. First, existing studies on Biafra tend to focus either on historical grievances (Madueke, 2020), ethnic identity politics (Nwankwo, 2022), or state-movement conflict dynamics (Akinyemi, 2020). However, **few studies systematically link the Nnamdi Kanu-IPOB phenomenon to Africa's broader socioeconomic and geopolitical competitiveness**, especially within the context of emerging global power realignments.

Second, works on governance failures and insecurity in Nigeria, including analyses of extrajudicial killings and state repression (Ezeikpe, 2018), provide important insights into human rights abuses, but they rarely assess how **internal governance breakdown affects Africa's collective global bargaining power, regional integration, and strategic positioning**. This creates a significant knowledge gap on how domestic instability in

Africa's largest democracy reverberates across the continent.

Third, the literature on self-determination in Africa often adopts legalistic or normative approaches (Ake, 2016; Okeke, 2021), while underexploring the **geopolitical and economic implications** of unresolved separatist crises. Similarly, scholarship on Africa's global competitiveness (Ezeikpe, 2023) rarely incorporates the role of **internal political fragmentation and contested nationhood** in shaping development outcomes.

Fourth, no major academic work has yet offered a **combined theoretical approach** using Postcolonial State Theory, Relative Deprivation Theory, and Complex Interdependence Theory to explain how historical marginalization, state fragility, and global interconnectedness jointly shape the Biafran question and its continental implications.

This study fills these gaps by providing:

- A **multi-level analysis** that connects Kanu's detention and Biafran agitation to Africa's economic, political, and geopolitical standing.
- A **governance–security–competitiveness** framework that integrates domestic political repression, sub-national grievances, and Africa's declining global influence.
- A **continent-focused assessment** that explains how Nigeria's internal instability reshapes regional

security, economic integration, and Africa's international competitiveness.

- A **holistic theoretical synthesis** offering a new conceptual pathway for understanding separatist conflicts within Africa's global repositioning agenda.

By addressing these underexplored dimensions, the study makes a **significant scholarly contribution** to debates on governance, self-determination, insecurity, and Africa's role in the global system.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored mainly on the Gurr (1970) relative deprivation theory. This is supported by the Mamdani (1996) and Ake (1996) post-colonial state theory, corroborated by the Keohane and Nye (2011) complex interdependence theory.

The theory of relative deprivation posits that political violence arises from perceived inequality between expected and actual socioeconomic conditions. In the Biafran context, perceived marginalisation provides emotional and psychological motivation for sustained agitation (Nnoli, 2008).

In the post-colonial state theory, Mamdani (1996) and Ake (1996) argue that African states inherited fragile institutions and exclusionary power structures. Nigeria's difficulty in managing ethnic diversity, ensuring equitable development, and sustaining legitimacy reflects this colonial legacy.

Corroborating the argument, Keohane and Nye (2011) in complex interdependence theory, highlight how domestic conflicts can influence regional and global outcomes. Nigeria's instability demonstrates how internal crises undermine continental cohesion and Africa's global competitiveness.

Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology adopted to investigate **Nnamdi Kanu, Biafran self-determination, and Africa's socioeconomic and geopolitical competitiveness**. It describes the research design, data sources, sampling strategy, methods of data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. The methodology is designed to ensure **rigor, validity, and reliability**, consistent with qualitative social science research standards

Research Design

The study adopts a **qualitative, descriptive, and interpretivist research design**. This approach is suitable for exploring complex social, political, and historical phenomena where **contextual understanding and interpretive analysis** are central (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Given the sensitive nature of separatist movements and state responses, qualitative inquiry allows for **in-depth analysis of documentary evidence, historical records, and secondary data**.

Population and Sampling

The study does not rely on primary survey respondents due to security and access limitations. Instead, the **population of interest** includes:

- Legal documents (court cases, extradition records related to Nnamdi Kanu).
- Human rights and NGO reports (e.g., Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch).
- Academic and policy literature on Biafra, Nigerian governance, and Africa's geopolitical position.
- Media and government communications relevant to IPOB, Kanu, and Nigeria's security policies.

A **purposive sampling technique** is employed to select sources that are **credible, relevant, and rich in information** (Patton, 2015). Only sources offering **substantive insights into governance, insecurity, self-determination, or continental competitiveness** are included.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through **documentary analysis**, which involves systematic review of:

- Legal and policy documents.
- Academic journals, books, and conference proceedings.
- Human rights and development reports.
- Credible news outlets and media archives.

All sources were evaluated for **authenticity, relevance, and reliability**, ensuring triangulation across multiple types of data to strengthen validity (Bowen, 2009).

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using **thematic content analysis**. This involved:

- 1) **Coding** key themes related to governance, security, self-determination, and geopolitical competitiveness.
- 2) **Identifying patterns** and relationships between Nnamdi Kanu's detention, Biafran agitation, and Africa's global positioning.
- 3) **Synthesising findings** in alignment with the theoretical framework:
 - Relative Deprivation Theory: Explains ethnic and political grievances driving IPOB.
 - Postcolonial State Theory: Explains institutional weaknesses and governance failure.
 - Complex Interdependence Theory: Connects domestic instability with Africa's global influence.

Thematic analysis allows **context-sensitive interpretation** of the socio-political and economic implications of Biafra-related conflicts for Africa's competitiveness.

Reliability and Validity

- **Reliability** is ensured by cross-verifying multiple sources and consistently applying coding criteria across documents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
- **Validity** is enhanced through **triangulation**, integrating legal, policy, scholarly, and media sources.

Content validity is ensured by focusing on documents that directly address the core research objectives

Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols include:

- Respecting **intellectual property** through proper citations (APA 7th edition).
- Ensuring **non-maleficence**, particularly given the sensitive political and security issues.
- Using publicly accessible and credible sources to avoid endangering any individuals or groups.
- Maintaining **objectivity** and avoiding partisan interpretation of contested events.

Scope and Limitations of the Methodology

- **Scope:** Focused on secondary qualitative data, covering 2014–2025, including governance, security, and geopolitical dimensions.
- **Limitations:** The study does not include primary interviews due to security concerns. Data are reliant on **accuracy and completeness of**

secondary sources, though triangulation mitigates bias.

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

This section presents and analyses data on **Nnamdi Kanu, the Biafran self-determination movement, and Africa's socioeconomic and geopolitical competitiveness**. The section is organised around the study's objectives and research questions. Data collected through **documentary analysis**, including legal records, human rights reports, scholarly works, and media sources, are coded and thematically analysed. Interpretation is guided mainly by **Relative Deprivation Theory, and corroborated by both Postcolonial State Theory, and Complex Interdependence Theory**.

Historical and Structural Drivers of the Biafran Movement: Findings:

The historical and Structural drivers of the Biafran struggle spans longstanding political marginalisation of the Igbo in federal appointments and governance structures (Suberu, 2021), Uneven economic development in South-East Nigeria, particularly infrastructure and industrial investment gaps (Ezeikpe, 2023), and memories of the 1967–1970 civil war continue to shape collective Igbo identity and mobilise support for self-determination (Uzoigwe, 2014).

By **interpretation**, Relative Deprivation Theory explains that perceived inequality between expectations and actual

access to resources and political power fuels Biafran agitation (Gurr, 1970); the persistence of these grievances indicates **structural failures in postcolonial state design** (Ake, 1996; Mamdani, 1996), unfortunately, Nigeria has always responded to the quest for biafran quest for freedom with repression, exemplified in constant **Military and paramilitary deployments** in the South-East have escalated tensions (Onuoha, 2020), **arrest and rendition of Nnamdi Kanu** exemplifying selective law enforcement and coercive governance (Nwankwo, 2022), and series of **extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses** (Ezeikpe, 2018; Amnesty International, 2022):

Table 4.1: Empirical Evidence of State Repression in Nigeria (2014–2025)

Category	Empirical Evidence / Case Examples	Source / Year	Interpretation
Coercive Policing	Deployment of military and police forces to suppress IPOB rallies in South-East states, including Aba,	Onuoha,2020 ; Suberu, 2021 Amnesty International, 2022	Excessive use of force reflects reliance on militarisation to manage political dissent rather than dialogue; reinforces state–citizen

	Enugu, and Onitsha.		mistrust.
	Frequent roadblocks, raids, and dispersal of gatherings with live ammunitio n and tear gas.		Coercive policing escalates tensions and radicalises segments of the population
Extrajudicia l Killings	Reported deaths of at least 150 civilians during operations against IPOB in 2016–2019, including mass shootings in Aba and Umuahia.	Ezeikpe, 2018; Amnesty International, 2022 Human Rights Watch, 2021	Illustrates systemic use of lethal force as political control; undermines rule of law and public trust. Confirms extrajudicial measures are pervasive and unregulated.
	Execution- style killings of suspected IPOB		

Judicial Inconsistencie s	members without trial in Enugu and Abia states.		
	Delayed or prolonged pre-trial detention of Nnamdi Kanu (2015–2021), with multiple postponement s of court hearings.	Nwankwo, 2022	Highlights lack of procedural consistency and transparency in judicial processes.
	Conflicting court orders regarding Kanu’s bail and extradition; executive interference perceived in trial management.	Nwankwo, 2022; Suberu, 2021	Demonstrates compromised judicial independence, reinforcing grievances among the aggrieved group.
	Limited access to legal representation and reports of arbitrary remand extensions for IPOB	Amnesty International, 2022	Suggests systemic judicial bias, contributing to perceptions of injustice and marginalisation.

members.

Survey and tabulated by the Author

Interpretation Summary:

This table provides **empirical grounding** for the argument that Nigeria’s security and judicial approaches to IPOB/Kanu are **counter productive**, with consequences that extend to **regional stability and Africa’s geopolitical competitiveness**. Whereas **Coercive policing** escalates tensions rather than mitigating separatist demands, **extrajudicial killings** reflect structural impunity within security agencies and exacerbate political grievances, while **Judicial inconsistencies** weaken rule of law, reinforcing feelings of marginalisation and justifying the perception of systemic injustice.

Table 4.2: Quantitative Estimates of Security Incidents and Judicial Delays (2014–2025)

Indicator	Estimate / Data	Source / Year	Interpretation
Civilians killed in security operations against IPOB	~150–200	Ezeikpe, 2018; Amnesty International, 2022	Indicates high human cost of coercive approach.
Arrests of IPOB members	500+ between 2015–2022	Amnesty International, 2022	Demonstrates state’s reliance on mass detention.
Kanu court hearing postponements	12+ hearings delayed	Nwankwo, 2022	Shows judicial inefficiency and procedural irregularities.
Duration of pre-	6+ years	Nwankwo,	Highlights

trial detention for Kanu		2022	violations of timely access to justice.
Instances of executive interference reported	3 confirmed cases	Suberu, 2021; Nwankwo, 2022	Weakens rule of law and public confidence in judiciary.

Author's survey and tabulation

Table 4.3 Thematic Analysis – Linking Findings to Theoretical Framework

Theme	Findings	Theory Applied	Interpretation / implication
Grievances and Marginalisation	Historical marginalisation of Igbo; uneven economic development	Relative Deprivation Theory	Perceived inequality drives separatist mobilization and support for Kanu/IPOB.
Governance and Coercion	Military deployments; coercive policing; extrajudicial killings	Postcolonial State Theory	Weak institutions and reliance on force perpetuate insecurity; erode legitimacy.
Judicial Inconsistencies	Prolonged detention, bail contradictions, executive interference	Postcolonial State Theory	Judicial weakness reinforces grievances; reduces faith in democratic institutions.

Continental and Global Impact	Nigeria's instability affects FDI, ECOWAS integration, Africa's bargaining power	Complex Interdependenc e Theory	Domestic instability spills over regionally; diminishes Africa's global competitiveness .
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Author's survey and computation

Table 4.4 Summary of Empirical Findings Linked to Study Objectives

Study Objective	Empirical Evidence	Interpretation / Link to Africa's Competitiveness
Examine historical drivers of Biafra	Marginalisation, post-war trauma, unequal development	Drives support for self-determination; undermines national cohesion
Analyse governance & state repression	Coercive policing, extrajudicial killings, judicial inconsistencies	Weakens trust in institutions; escalates conflicts
Assess socioeconomic and geopolitical impact	Reduced FDI, disrupted regional integration, weakened ECOWAS influence	Domestic instability reduces Africa's global influence and competitiveness
Recommend interventions	Need for dialogue, institutional reform, respect for human rights	Improves governance, mitigates conflict, enhances continental standing

Author's survey and computation

The data indicate a strong link between the Biafran question, governance failures, and Africa's continental competitiveness. Kanu's detention and Nigeria's reliance on coercion exacerbate structural grievances, perpetuate insecurity, and weaken Africa's regional influence and global strategic positioning. The findings underscore the need for policy interventions that integrate governance reform, human rights protection, and continental economic strategy.

Kanu court hearing postponements, Judicial Inconsistencies, as well as the style of court proceedings applied against Nnamdi Kanu reveal **opacities in due process**, including arbitrary detentions and extended pre-trial detention and rendition. These bundles of maladies represent failure on the part of the government to uphold fundamental rights which unfortunately strengthens the narrative for **external self-determination** among aggrieved groups.

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This section synthesises the key findings of the study, draws conclusions based on the empirical evidence and theoretical framework, and presents actionable recommendations. The study investigates Nnamdi Kanu, Biafran self-determination, and Africa's socioeconomic and geopolitical competitiveness. It integrates insights from Relative Deprivation Theory, Postcolonial State Theory, and Complex Interdependence Theory.

Summary

Based on the thematic and empirical analysis in section four, the study finds out that the historical and structural drivers of Biafra consist of, Persistent marginalisation of the Igbo in political representation and resource allocation, Post-war trauma and collective memory of the 1967–1970 civil war continue to shape identity and mobilization, and Unequal economic development and infrastructure deficits in the South-East exacerbate grievances. The Nigerian governance and security system rely heavily on coercive policing, including military deployments and use of live ammunition, Extrajudicial killings and human rights violations are pervasive, reflecting systemic weaknesses in governance (Ezeikpe, 2018), and Judicial inconsistencies, including prolonged pre-trial detention of Nnamdi Kanu and executive interference, undermine the rule of law and public confidence. All of these have implications for Africa's socioeconomic and Geopolitical competitiveness, including that,

- Nigeria's internal instability negatively affects regional integration, ECOWAS operations, and foreign direct investment.
- Domestic crises in Africa's largest economy reduce the continent's bargaining power and global visibility.
- Structural governance deficits impede Africa's ability to leverage its resources, human capital, and strategic position in global politics (Ezeikpe, 2023).

Conclusions

From the findings, the study concludes that, Biafran self-determination is both a domestic and continental concern. Unresolved grievances in Nigeria's South-East have ripple effects on regional stability and Africa's global competitiveness. State coercion exacerbates conflict. Coercive policing, extrajudicial killings, and judicial inconsistencies fuel radicalisation and deepen mistrust between the state and citizens. Africa's global competitiveness is intertwined with domestic governance. Internal instability in key African states like Nigeria undermines continental development objectives, international influence, and strategic partnerships. A multi-level governance approach is essential. Sustainable peace and competitiveness require addressing structural grievances, ensuring rule of law, and fostering socio-economic development in marginalised regions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommends:

1. **Governance and Judicial Reform:**
 - Strengthen institutional checks to ensure judicial independence and due process.
 - End extrajudicial killings and promote accountability within security agencies.
 - Implement transparent legal procedures for political activists to reduce perceptions of bias.
2. **Dialogue and Conflict Resolution:**
 - Establish inclusive dialogue platforms between the Nigerian government and IPOB representatives.

- Promote regional reconciliation initiatives to address historical grievances.
 - Support civic education campaigns to foster national cohesion and tolerance.
3. Socioeconomic Development in Marginalised Regions:
- Prioritise infrastructure development, education, and investment in the South-East.
 - Implement targeted economic empowerment programs to reduce inequality and grievances.
4. Continental Strategic Planning:
- ECOWAS and AU should integrate domestic stability indicators into regional competitiveness strategies.
 - African states should collaborate to mitigate spillover effects of domestic conflicts.
 - Develop continental policies linking governance, security, and economic competitiveness.
5. Further Research:
- Conduct longitudinal studies on the long-term impact of extrajudicial measures on citizen trust and regional integration.
 - Examine the relationship between separatist movements in Africa and global geopolitical competitiveness across multiple countries.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study fills critical gaps by:

- Linking Nnamdi Kanu's detention and Biafran quest for self-determination to Africa's socioeconomic and geopolitical competitiveness.
- Providing a multi-level governance–security–competitiveness framework applicable to other African contexts.
- Integrating historical, legal, and theoretical perspectives to explain how domestic instability affects continental development and global positioning.

Importantly, resolving the Biafran question and addressing governance failures in Nigeria is not only a domestic imperative but a continental strategic necessity. Enhancing rule of law, promoting equitable development, and integrating governance reforms with regional and global competitiveness strategies are critical for Africa's emergence as a stable, influential, and economically resilient continent.

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