

Title of Article: Social Inequity, Democratic Transition and the Igbo nationalism resurgence in Nigeria

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Abstract: Between 1960 and 2008 Nigeria has been characterized by social inequities in the distribution of power and resources. These inequities, which are rooted in the foundation of the Nigerian state led to a civil war in 1967 in which the Igbo, one of the major ethnic groups sought to secede from Nigeria. But, the attempt was not successful. The war was followed by a number of systematic and calculated policies, which the victors used to keep the Igbo people down, and to hegemonies their grip of political domination of Nigeria for a long time in both Nigerian military and civilian rules. The widened democratic space in 1999 gave rise to renewed expression of resentment by Igbo youths whose rejection of their post-war socio – political and economic repressions have sparked off the emergence of youth based movements. Thus, nationalism resurgence is manifested in the renewed demand for Biafra by these organizations. They elicited responses from the democratic government, which seemed to have relapsed to the old order of military style of violent repression of dissension that end up as counter productive. Through the processing of primary data, this paper examines the reinvention of Igbo nationalism in eastern Nigeria. The paper looks at its linkage with the 1999 democratic transition in Nigeria, the implications of this development and the management of the issue by the government. The paper concludes that the resurgence of nationalism is caused by the people’s perception of social inequities and injustice in the distribution of power and resources. Hence a deliberate effort to correct these social problems assuages ethnic tensions and presumption of political violence.

