

A Male Domain? Gender Bias and Scholarly Production on the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nigeria¹

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Abstract:

Scholarship on the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has expanded considerably following the group's proscription in 2017, yet the developing body of literature risks reproducing the masculinised epistemologies that have traditionally marginalised gender from conflict studies. This article examines how gender has been treated across three temporal waves of peer-reviewed literature on IPOB (2017–2026) using a five-theme analytical framework derived from feminist conflict studies. Drawing on 20 studies sourced from Google Scholar and ProQuest, the paper finds that gender remains overwhelmingly peripheral owing to early scholarship's fixation on securitisation narratives and state responses. However, there has also been a tentative acknowledgement of women's presence, not as analytical or theoretical sites, but as incidental ones. A gendered turn has, however, emerged since 2023 from engagements with the socio-economic consequences of the sit-at-home order and women's roles in mobilisation. The budding gender turn entails that several gaps persist, particularly around sexual and gender-based violence, hypermasculinity, and the transnational dimensions of IPOB's operations. Filling these gaps, the article argues, is not merely corrective but a necessity for effective conflict prevention and de-escalation.

Keywords:

IPOB; Gender; Political Violence; Nigeria; Conflict Studies.

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1. *Introduction*

Africa's heritage of poorly constructed borders and ill-developed postcolonial states that inherited them is a key driver of violence. Between 1960 and the present, secessionist movements and insurgencies have continued to occur, creating a violent context. In 1967, Nigeria waged war with its breakaway territory, Biafra, a three-year war that even in its passing evokes significance through the activities of IPOB. Since 2017, the group's activities have posed a challenge to the Nigerian state, which has securitised them as such through proscription. Along with this current, there has developed a body of literature that runs the risk of perpetuating the gender bias underpinning scholarship on armed conflict and political violence. In the words of Moser and Clark (2001), it must recognise the universality of gender across all facets of life and abstain from the tendency to masculinise discussions of conflict, that is, to treat conflict as a 'male domain'. Several works across various streams of political violence and conflict studies increasingly produce gender-sensitive scholarship, including studies within Nigeria that have discussed women's active role in resisting Boko Haram (e.g., Agbiboa, 2022) and the importance of foregrounding gender to attain inclusive and just policies in conflict situations (Shepherd, 2010). Foregrounding gender is important not just to highlight the experiences of women who bear the significant impact of political violence, but also to understand several issues that necessarily affect the activities and outcomes of development interventions (Ekpo & Olawale, 2025). Such questions are of particular importance to the context of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its activities, given their escalating significance as a security issue in Nigeria. The activities of IPOB increasingly connect with other regional conflicts in Africa, including in Cameroon, where the group has been identified as cooperating with Ambazonian separatists (Boudombo, 2021; John, 2025). This paper asks how the literature on IPOB has treated the issue of gender, and what is foregrounded.

Gender, as used in this study, is operationalised as primarily centred on women. This definition is necessitated by the broadness of the concept. Existing conceptions emphasise that gender is characterised by multidimensionality, which extends its limits beyond women-centric concerns (Assumpção et al., 2026) and even aggregates associations with identity and devices of social behaviour regulation (Barnes, 2020; Neji, 2017). This sets gender analysis as a kaleidoscope that, as intersectional gender-facing studies indicate (see Conroy et al., 2020), necessarily factors in intersections between concepts and issues such as gender norms, masculinities and power relations structuring roles assumed of and performed by women and men, serving up a broad register which this paper's analysis recognises but does not foreground in favour of a narrower focus.

Maintaining this evidently narrow focus on women is thus done in keeping with this study's preliminary assumption that IPOB scholarship displays a conservatism that screens out issues of women.

After this introductory section, the article briefly discusses established critiques of masculinised scholarship to set the stage for its exploration and analytical framework. The methodology section outlines the data collection method. Findings are then

presented, followed by discussion and conclusion sections. The article's contribution maps into existing literature on gendered studies of conflict and political violence in Africa, identifying potential future research directions for specialised and generalist studies within these fields.

2. Masculinities of Scholarship and Analytical Framework

De-masculinising or gendering conflict studies is the zeitgeist of contemporary conflict studies, particularly beginning in the late 20th century. This has been to correct the negative consequences of the persistence of the reverse dynamic in scholarship. Zeeshan and Aliefendioğlu (2024) declare that gender is a contested topic in conflict studies. Yet, the process by which this declaration emerges can be traced to decades of scholarship that has constructed an epistemological basis for the imperative of gender scholarship. Tickner (1992) begins this movement in her study as an ambition to mainstream women's experiences to overcome gender hierarchies that perpetuate insecurity as well as the attendant consequences. It is also fundamental for building a comprehensive picture of security, to correct what has often materialised in a male-dominated world as 'security built on the insecurity of others', or more explicitly women (Tickner, 1992, p. 55).

However, engendering women's issues is often important to move beyond stereotyped imaginaries of women as occupying 'victimhood'. Gendered studies foreground various issues. Prominently highlighted is the issue of sexual violence, often for its social and political significance. Cockburn (2013, p. 433) explains this: 'A woman who is raped in war is raped as a woman, a despised category. A man who is raped is assaulted as a man to reduce him to the status of a mere woman, and thus destroy his masculine self-respect'. Questions in this respect amount to what has been described as within the scope of a gendered political economy. Leatherman (2011, p. 116) theorises this approach as interrogating the '...power of hegemonic and allied masculinities and the ways they subject others for plunder and profit', which is interpreted as the import of gender for identities and functions of actors across individual, cultural and structural levels (Meger, 2015).

Wibben and Donahoe (2022, p. 397) have levelled the criticism of what they call 'the ill-informed and long-standing conflation of women with peace and peacefulness within mainstream narratives', signposting the fact that a sizeable amount of work exists documenting women's status as active conflict agents. Such critiques reference an already existent point posited since the turn of the 21st century. There has been growing acceptance within the scholarship that there is a need to appreciate the role some women may play in sustaining conflict moral economies and goading combatants to the frontline, as was the case in England during the First World War and in Sudan, evidence of which is contained in Cockburn (2013), and even as combatants implicated in massacres committed by the Basque separatist group ETA in Spain in the 20th century (Hamilton, 2007). Studies also show that women occupy leadership positions of non-state armed groups, embodying authority within such settings (Henshaw et al., 2019)

and actively exercising agency in these contexts (Loken & Matfess, 2022, 2024). There is therefore justification for discussing gender within the context of agency and victimhood, as is visible above.

Studies of separatism show that the possibilities of analysis can also incorporate other issues, especially the role of social institutions existing in the wider context of political violence. For instance, Echeverria (2003), while analysing the context around Basque separatism, highlighted that even what is taught within schools can sometimes centre as an important issue, given that such systems contribute to the construction of simultaneously pro-masculine and women-suppressing stereotypes.

Summarised collectively, as relevant to this study, the possible directions suggested by the configurative literature can be thought of in terms of the following five research directions:

Theme 1: Foregrounding women's agency rather than victimhood

Theme 2: Studying women's leadership and organisational roles

Theme 3: Analysing the gendered political economy of separatist conflict

Theme 4: Investigating how masculine identities shape mobilisation narratives

Theme 5: The role of gender norm-(re)producing institutions

Scholarship on political violence in Nigeria maps some of these themes already in detail. Oriola (2017) applies the gendered political economy approach to document the systematic strategic use of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including forced marriages, against women in the Boko Haram insurgency. The study also discusses the participation of women as conveyor belts of violence through various violent actions such as suicide bombings (Oriola, 2017). Yet women's participation extends beyond compliant reasons and embodies resistance action, where women have organised into community defence groups to counter Boko Haram (Agbiboa, 2022). It remains unclear whether these nuances have been applied to or examined within the literature on IPOB.

3. Method

This study draws on two databases: Google Scholar and ProQuest. A systematic search was conducted in these databases to collect research articles. The search strategy used a set of search terms combining 'IPOB' (the frequently used shortened version of the Indigenous People of Biafra), gender, women, and south-east Nigeria, to reflect the geographical context of IPOB. These terms were combined using Boolean operators.

For each database, results were filtered to reflect studies undertaken between 2017 and 2026, to coincide with the years within which the activities of IPOB have been a significant issue. The literature review took place in March 2026. On Google Scholar, where there were no systematic filter options, articles were selected through manual skimming of the search results. The criterion for selecting a study was that it must be a full research article that specifically addresses IPOB. Papers that mentioned IPOB without explicitly addressing a particular aspect of its activities or significance were excluded.

Titles and abstracts were screened prior to full-text evaluation. Only English-language articles were selected.

Explicitly gender-relevant or gender-specific studies identified through this process were few ($n = 4$), signposting a paucity of gendered scholarship on IPOB. Owing to the limited representative capacity of four articles as to the state of broader scholarship on IPOB, 16 peer-reviewed studies were additionally selected to represent the wider literature, based on thematic concerns and analytical orientations characteristic of scholarship across the review period.

These studies were recruited as signposts for three temporal waves of literature: 2017–2019, 2020–2022, and 2023 to date. Coding drew from the five-theme analytical framework identified at the end of the literature review. The following categories were used: women’s agency, victimhood, political leadership, gendered socio-economic impacts, and gender and recruitment. These themes guided the analysis of the documents. In classifying the studies, the extent of gender engagement also materialised as useful (see Table 1). Active engagement (denoted as ‘+’) was recorded where studies specifically focused on gender or women as a research question, analytical category or as a substantive component of arguments made within the compass of such articles. Where references to *gender* or *women* were included as an empirical detail or illustrative detail without deep engagement, incidental engagement (denoted as ‘*’) was recorded. Studies with total absence of reference to gender or to women as a distinctive group were recorded as ‘absent’ (denoted as ‘–’).

S/N	Author (Year)	Theme	Gender Focus	Nature of Gender Engagement
1.	Adangor (2018)	Examines the political work performed by the 2017 proscription of IPOB as a terrorist organisation.	–	Gender not employed as analytical category; no acknowledgement of its absence.
2.	Abada, Omeh & Okoye (2020)	Analyses IPOB’s counter-securitisation strategies and situates the separatist agitation within Nigeria’s national question.	–	Gender neither employed as analytical category nor its absence noted.
3.	Ekpo (2019)	Examines IPOB’s failed counter-securitisation strategy centred on the ‘Jubril Al-Sudani’ conspiracy.	–	Gender not used as analytical lens.



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| 4. | Henry, Obiora David (2020) | Foregrounds & emergence as symptomatic of structural flaws and a crack in Nigeria's national unity. | IPOB's – | Gender absent. |
| 5. | Oyewole (2019) | Documents internal power contests and fracturing dynamics within pro-Biafra movements. | * | Female participation noted incidentally but scaffolded into power contest discourse. |
| 6. | Chukwudi et al. (2019) | Examines agitations and the Federal Government's response. | IPOB * | Reference to arrest of female IPOB members included as a detail, not analytically meaningful. |
| 7. | Okoli (2017) | Comparative critique of insurgent strategies of Boko Haram and IPOB. | * | Explicitly references three major pro-IPOB protests, identifying women as leading some. |
| 8. | Obagbinoko (2018) | Assesses the Nigerian state's response to IPOB as a violent conflict actor. | – | Protesters/activists named broadly with no reference to gender as a category. |
| 9. | Nwofe (2019) | Examines digital media practices and internet activism among IPOB members. | – | Field interviews conducted without identification of respondents' gender identities. |
| 10. | Idachaba & Nneli (2018) | Discusses IPOB's self-determination agitation and its re-invention through diaspora dynamics. | * | Applies feminist language metaphorically while discussing membership in broad terms. |
| 11. | Omilusi, Isaac & Ade-Johnson (2020) | Examines Biafra's role in mobilising IPOB. | Radio + | Documents women's active participation in sustaining IPOB's communication channels. |
| 12. | Kevin (2020) | Consolidates various human rights violations to construct | – | Aggregative approach foregrounds no gender-specific analysis. |

- a theoretical case against Nigeria's political stability.
13. Peter Fabian (2021) & Evaluates Biafra's rhetorical influence on rural audiences in south-eastern Nigeria. * Radio Female voice enters as illustrative data, not as subject of gendered inquiry.
 14. Ayomola Oketokun (2021) & Examines the relationship between ethnicity, separatist agitations, and national stability. * Acknowledges women's agency without theorisation.
 15. Owoeye, Ezeanya & Obiegbunam (2022) Appraises the socio-political and economic impacts of IPOB's sit-at-home tactic. * Highlights women's perspectives on the lockdown's impact but scaffolded within broader community discourse.
 16. Nnam et al. (2022) Examines state repression and its relationship to escalation in Biafra-linked social movements. * Declares female interviewees were included yet privileges male testimonies; female data analytically subordinated.
 17. Alagh et al. (2024) Examines the disproportionate socio-economic costs borne by women as a result of IPOB's sit-at-home order. + First gender-sensitive study of IPOB; foregrounds women's vulnerability and signals exposure to SGBV.
 18. Obi-Ani (2024) Explores the broad dynamics of Biafra separatism in south-east Nigeria. + Visualises the broad impact on women's businesses; narrates destruction of female livelihoods.
 19. Onyishi (2025) Interrogates the implicit motivations driving armed struggle in south-eastern Nigeria. + Introduces gender as an important variable rather than a merely descriptive one.

20. Akande (2026)	Critiques the historical erasure of women from IPOB leadership narratives.	+ Documents women as custodians of tradition and spirituality; challenges masculine-privileging epistemology.
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*Figure 1: Characteristics of studies included in the review. Note: + = Active gender engagement; – = Gender absent; * = Incidental gender reference.*

4. Findings

4.1 Gender as Peripheral within Securitisation Narratives (2017–2019)

The wave of scholarship on IPOB in this period engaged with the organisation's political significance and the Nigerian government's responses. Several studies foreground IPOB's emergence as symptomatic of structural flaws and a crack in Nigeria's national unity (Henry et al., 2020) and its attempts to influence political discourse through counter-securitisation strategies that delegitimise the Nigerian state (Abada et al., 2020; Ekpo, 2019). This securitisation framing is exemplified by Adangor (2018), who discussed the political work that IPOB's proscription in 2017 performed, arguing that labelling IPOB as a terrorist organisation demonstrated the arbitrariness of state exercise of power rather than the objective application of security law. Such framings neither employed gender as an analytical category nor recognised the absence of gender.

Rather, women's agency was acknowledged incidentally, mainly within the discussion of dynamics of the Nigerian government's response to the group. Chukwudi et al. (2019, p. 634) reference the arrest of women members of IPOB as a detail rather than as an analytically meaningful observation. In Oyewole (2019), a more substantial yet incidental engagement with gender exists: the study documents female participation in the group's internal politics, signalling women's presence. A female member of IPOB announcing changes to the group's leadership and communication platform is how this engagement materialises in Oyewole's study. There are also references to external female participation in reconciliation attempts between breakaway factions. Yet these references, while analytically related to women's political agency, are scaffolded into broader discourse of power contest within the group. Such observations are not pursued as gendered findings, leaving gender analytically undeveloped.

This analytical silence is complicated by empirical evidence available even within this period. Okoli (2018) references three instances of major pro-IPOB protests, explicitly identifying women as leading two of the three (a figure amounting to 66% of examples cited), yet the study does not analytically pursue this observation. Correspondingly, certain studies tend towards broadly naming IPOB protesters or activists without reference to any analytical category (Obagbinoko, 2018; Nwofe, 2019). Even where field interviews were conducted with activists, results were reported without identification of respondents' gender identities. It is the analytical choices of researchers, rather than the absence of women from IPOB activities, that explains the peripherality of gender. In Idachaba and Nneli (2018), this dynamic is illustrated: their study discusses

IPOB's membership in broad terms yet applies feminist language to describe the group, referring to it as 'her' and constructing a motherhood picture of the organisation. Gender as such exists only in a metaphorical sense.

4.2 Expanding Narratives and Peripheral Inclusion (2020–2022)

By 2020, documentary evidence of further categories of young women participating in IPOB activities had emerged, with reports of an 18-year-old female IPOB member arrested for participating in arson attacks on public infrastructure (AllAfrica, 2020). The silent treatment of gender thus materialised not as an empirically rationalised approach but as a structural choice. In the second wave of scholarship, this orientation remains, with a modification: a tentative acknowledgement of the importance of women as 'central' to IPOB activities. Nonetheless, the question of women's agency receives the most visible development. Omilusi et al. (2020) document women's active participation in sustaining IPOB's communication channels and their involvement in mobilisation. Similarly, Peter and Fabian (2021) include within their qualitative study anecdotal evidence from a young female sympathiser to IPOB rhetoric communicated through Radio Biafra. Still, female voice enters as illustrative data rather than as a subject of gendered inquiry. This signals a performative presence of women as methodological supplements, a comparable tendency displayed by Ayomola and Oketokun (2021). The failure to pursue gender as an analytical issue amounts to mere acknowledgement of women's agency without the imperative of added theorisation.

Still, the angle of women in protests materialises as an afterthought, and discussions of violations of human rights, which dominate this epoch, continue to foreground an aggregative approach. Typical of such studies is Kevin (2020), which consolidates various rights violations to construct a theoretical case against the viability of Nigeria's political stability. Nevertheless, this period has the additional function of signposting an increasing gaze on the security consequences of the actions of IPOB. Beginning in 2022, studies discuss the consequences of the group's 'sit-at-home tactic'. The crop of studies published, predominantly rooted in qualitative secondary data analysis, highlights perspectives of women on the impact of the lockdown, albeit scaffolded within broader discussions of the public (Owoeye et al., 2022). Emblematic of this dynamic, Nnam et al. (2022), while approaching discourse on the Biafra separatist political landscape of which IPOB is part, declare that they interviewed females yet privilege male testimonies in block texts as the evidentiary basis for their core arguments. As such, the analytical infrastructure for a gendered argument is present in the data; the field has simply not yet developed the conceptual vocabulary to deploy it.

4.3 A (Visible) Gendered Turn (2023 to Date)

It is within this period that the first gender-sensitive studies of IPOB emerge. Alagh et al. (2024), in one such effort, examine the impact of IPOB's sit-at-home order on women, arguing that women bear disproportionate socio-economic costs. This qualitative study, which applies a gendered political economy perspective, emphasises that women's

vulnerability has increased, a condition the authors argue is under-theorised, arising from the securitised and politicised gaze of scholarship on IPOB. There are also indications that this context increases women's vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence. As must be said, this article occupies the conceptual space as it draws primarily on secondary data and lacks direct engagement with women, making the paper susceptible to claims that it speaks for women without directly studying them.

Akande's (2026) qualitative work on the leadership structure of IPOB moves into this methodological space. Akande critiques these narratives as perpetuating a historical erasure of women (an extension of dynamics that stretch as far back as the civil war), drawing on interviews with female IPOB sympathisers to explore women as active project builders in Biafran nationalism. According to Akande (2026, p. 70):

“In Aba’s bustling markets and Onitsha’s vibrant streets, some women serve as custodians of tradition and spirituality, imparting cultural values and narratives that fuel the spirit of Biafran nationalism. Through street protests where they have used their bodies as an instrument of resistance against military harassments, they demand recognition of Biafra as an independent state.”

This observation challenges the masculine-privileging epistemology that, as mapped in the previous sections, dominates the literature. Analytically, it positions women as central to IPOB's nationalism, their existence simultaneously drawing on and reproducing tradition. Apart from the foregrounding of women within cultural and institutional spaces, there is a tacit gesturing towards the question of gender-reproducing institutions and their relationship to separatist mobilisation, thereby platforming both women's agency and their leadership roles.

This contribution manifests as a continuation of a gendered turn that Onyishi (2025) foregrounded. That qualitative study, which included at least 150 participants, arrives at the conclusion that ‘...the influence of implicit motivations on the facilitation or inhibition of armed struggle in south-eastern Nigeria was influenced by an individual's gender, whether male or female’ (Onyishi, 2025, p. 8). The significance of this conclusion is that it introduces gender as an important analytical variable rather than merely a descriptive one. In the broader literature of this period, this insight is applied to discuss the socio-economic impacts of the group's activities. Obi-Ani (2024), in a qualitative study on the dynamics of Biafran separatism, visualises the broad impact on women's businesses, narrating how IPOB's sit-at-home order has destroyed female livelihoods and disrupted their everyday lives, questioning who benefits from the chaos the order imposes. The increase in studies mirrors a corresponding rise in the frequency of arrests of female suspects linked to IPOB, with at least five female suspects arrested in 2024 (The Sun, 2024a, 2024b).

5. Discussion

Findings show that gender is a peripheral concern within the literature on the Indigenous People of Biafra. Across three waves of scholarship, it appears as an incidental rather than a substantive analytical concern. Alongside this, there is limited theorisation or systematic analysis, which maps into a broader tendency within conflict studies to reproduce masculinised or non-gender-differentiated understandings of political violence. Oha (1998) shows that females have often been constructed as less rational, foolish, weak, jealous, and evil, in comparison to men, resulting in the sexual objectification of women, though it is also argued that Igbo culture is genderless (Ezeifeke, 2017). All the same, the period beginning from 2022 marks a turn, connected perhaps to the intensification of the sit-at-home order announced by the group. The increase in knowledge production thus appears to shadow periods of intensified agitation. Such links between events and scholarship are not unprecedented but rather reproduce a trend matched in other domains of political violence scholarship. Ekpo and Olawale (2025), in discussing the place of gender in Boko Haram research, note that increasing production of knowledge on gender followed the heightened global attention generated by the #ChibokGirls kidnapping in 2014.

However, the literature on IPOB still needs to explore several issues to appropriately establish a bridge to broader studies of separatist politics and armed conflict. Across all three waves, there is little engagement with or attempt at gendering sexual violence. Issues of sexual violence, particularly rape, and gender-based violence matter as important lines of inquiry, which have only been mapped so far in grey literature; available data materialises through civil society reports (ActionAid, 2021) and journalistic accounts (AllAfrica, 2022) rather than peer-reviewed scholarship. This is one of the metanarratives subsumed under the grand narratives of ethnic nationalism. The blind spot of sexual violence is particularly difficult to address, because sexual violence operates in a dynamic that is peculiar and complex, as much as it is unique to each conflict and circumstance (Stachow, 2020; Nordas & Cohen, 2021). Scholarship on political violence in Nigeria already recognises, albeit within the context of the Boko Haram insurgency, that women are often victims of sexual violence in anomic contexts and are preyed upon by armed actors or, in some instances, ‘donated’ by sympathisers to armed groups (Oriola, 2017). Moreover, scholars argue that sexual violence is often pursued as a tactic by marginalised men who exfiltrate pride through the symbolic violation of feminine bodies (Oriola, 2017; Henry, 2016; Zurbriggen, 2010). Homing in on these questions also allows for consideration of differentiated impacts across gender categories, including the critical distinction between women who have consensual sex in anomic conditions and those whose sexual relations are coerced and weaponised (Henry, 2016). Equally pressing is how these dynamics intersect with hypermasculinity, defined as ‘behavioural dispositions justified by beliefs: entitlement to callous sex, violence as manly, and danger as exciting’ (Mosher & Tomkins, 1988, p. 61). The impact of masculine norm-producing systems and structures also merits analytical attention as a standalone issue. Materially, such systems, including those embedded within the family

structure, produce tensions that suppress gender participation in comparable contexts such as Pakistan's Balochistan Province (Eggert et al., 2025). Nonetheless, while IPOB's scholarship discusses the group as a Nigeria-limited operation, its purported relationship with Ambazonian separatists in Cameroon mandates an examination of its transnational operations. The Anglophone Crisis has already been documented with qualitatively evidenced SGBV cases alongside disproportionate impacts on women across economic and educational domains (Cyril et al., 2023; Folefac & Ani, 2022; International Crisis Group, 2022).

6. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the state of gender in research on IPOB. Following the analysis of 20 journal articles, several conclusions are evident. The question of gender is underrepresented and remains an emerging theme in IPOB scholarship. Early scholarship foregrounded securitisation narratives, state responses, and questions of national unity, giving rise to a corpus that did not consider disaggregating genders. Empirical references to women appeared incidentally and not in a manner likely to prompt sustained engagement. Minimal improvements manifested in the second wave of scholarship. Women increasingly appeared within accounts of mobilisation and protest activity; yet, appearance did not translate to analytical visibility, given that these appearances were more descriptive than analytical, with female voices entering as illustrative evidence within broader arguments. It is only since 2023 that a visible gender turn has begun to emerge, with dedicated studies examining the socio-economic consequences of the sit-at-home order on women's livelihoods and the participation of women within the cultural and political structures associated with the movement. Gender is thus entering the analytical register of scholarship on IPOB, yet the established marginalisation implies significant gaps that studies must cover, particularly in terms of SGBV and the structural bases of masculinised hierarchies of power that define the group's mobilisation and operational tactics. Interventions on these gaps would bring the scholarship into alignment with the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda established by UNSCR 1325, whose participation, protection and prevention dimensions respectively require evidence on women's political agency, exposure to violence and the constraining barriers to the full range of their socio-political rights (George & Shepherd, 2016). Incorporating such a perspective is important for producing a more complete understanding of the social dynamics that underpin separatist movements and political violence in Nigeria and beyond. This is also useful for constructing well-informed strategies that enhance peace and stability. It is an accepted position that mainstreaming gender breaks the cycle of violence and contributes to achieving more lasting peace (Tripp, 2020) and ensures that targeted development interventions to prevent further marginalisation are put in place (Mazurana et al., 2002).

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