

Marginalization of the Igbo People in Nigerian State: Myth or Reality?

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Abstract: Marginalization of the Igbo people in the general scheme of things in Nigeria has generated serious tension that threatens the corporate existence of the country. Undoubtedly, the issue has over the years attracted interest and attention that dominated national and international discourses in policy and academic circles. However, the way to address the problem has provoked contentious and endless debates that polarized academics, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders in the Nigeria project into antagonistic camps. Despite the novelty and richness of the arguments of the apologists of this school, the Igbo marginalisation debate has remained apparently illusive, controvertibly unresolved and speculative, due to its lack of statistical supports. This development has made the resolution of the Igbo question an uphill task as midwifing effective policy framework has become highly problematic. To bridge this gap, this study was set out to statistically unveiled the evidence of manifestations of marginalization meted against the Igbo people in Nigerian state. The statistical evidence cuts across economic, structural and political spheres. The data for the study were gathered from secondary sources while simple percentage, charts, histogram and line graph were utilized for data analysis. The theoretical framework that anchored the study was the relative deprivation theory. The study recommended for the practice of true federalism in Nigeria, introduction of power sharing among the geopolitical zones, decentralization and devolution of power to the federating units to guarantee equity and allay the fears of marginalization by the ethnic nationalities.

Key words: Marginalization • Separatist • Political Inclusiveness • Restructuring • Internal Marginalization

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the marginalization question in Nigerian state pre-dates the country's political independence. Long before Nigeria attained her independence status on October 1st 1960, the country has been bedevilled with hues and cries of marginalization occasion by mutual distrusts held against each other by various ethnic nationalities that make-up the federation. It was one of the major issues that dominated debates during the London conferences of 1957 and 1958, leading to the inauguration of Willick Commission. Since then the issue has not abated but rather became a topical issue and recurring decimal, dominating all the discourses in both academic and policy circles within and outside the country.

This problem is intrinsically linked to our historic experiences, the nature of the Nigerian state and leadership. Nigerian state so to say is a mosaic of antagonistic ethnic formations that have nothing in common except their colour. Unfortunately the over 480

ethnic nationalities were welded into one administrative umbrella by the forces of British imperialism without due consideration for their socio-cultural and political differences. It is against this backdrop that Nigerian federalism has been described by political pundits as forced marriage/union of 1914 or worse still the mistake of 1914.

Worst evil of all, our political elites over the years have not been able to live above board by shunning ethnic chauvinism and other parochial interests. This laid the foundation which unfortunately plunged the Nigerian state into a three year civil war (in 1967-1970). Although, scholars and commentators have argued that the civil war was sparked-off by a combinations of a number of many causal factors viz.; the Kano riot of 1953; the census crisis of 1962/1963; the federal election crisis of 1964; the military coup d'état of January 15, 1966 and the counter coup of July 29, 1966, the regional election crisis in Western Nigeria in 1965; the Tiv riots of 1964; the killing of the Igbo people living in Northern Nigeria between

May to September 1966 etc. The truth remains that the feeling of marginalization caused by parochial and self seeking leadership was the underlying factor that gave impetus to the outbreak of the civil war.

Ever since the end of Nigeria civil war, all the efforts made by the Nigerian state to reconcile, reintegrate and fully accommodate the Igbo people into the general scheme of things in the post-civil war Nigeria through the introduction of the 3Rs (Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation) by General Yakubu Gowon did not produce the desired results [1, 2]. It is interesting to recall that in an attempt to cushion the effects of the war on the victims (Igbos) and also allay the fear of possible marginalization and neglect, the federal government launched some integrative mechanisms, through policies and programmes like the National Youth Service Corps, unity schools, federal character, National sport festival, catchment area etc. These have spurred up little or no effect on national inclusiveness, unity and integration [1, 3, 2]. Despite all these measures, the balancing of Nigeria's political structure has continually remained questionable, leading to agitations that necessitated the organisation of different discourses targeted towards political restructuring and moves for confabulation, reforms and even regional secession. The increasing rates of insecurity evidenced by ethno-religious violence, kidnapping, high rate of armed robbery, economic sabotage through pipeline vandalism, militancy, terrorism and most recently the growing wave of incidence of hate speeches and issuance of quit notice to each other by some ethnic nationalities have combined to threaten the corporate existence of Nigerian state. Unarguably, all these ugly phenomena have their roots in the fear of marginalization and mutual distrust that characterise the relations among the ethnic nationalities.

Despite all these odds, the federal government of Nigeria over the years has maintained that the country's unity is not negotiable. The non-negotiability of Nigeria unity was again stressed by former president, Goodluck Jonathan during his opening speech at the 2014 confabulation as a 'no go area' [2]. Similarly, President Mohamedu Buhari via his actions and inactions also stressed the non-negotiability of Nigeria's unity. Nevertheless, the agitations for secession by some ethnic nationalities such as MASSOB, IPOB and Niger Delta Avengers have been on the increase since after the 2015 general elections arising from the perceived lop-sidedness in the spread of political appointments, recruitments and the unequal spread of infrastructures or key national resources amongst the geo-political zones of the country [4].

Even though, the issue of marginalization is not peculiar to the Igbo people in Nigeria, the situation of the Igbo people in this matter has been exceptionally pathetic especially since after the Nigerian civil war. It will be recalled that at the end of the civil war, General Gowon succinctly declared that there was 'no victor, no vanquished' yet, the Igbo people has continually complained of being short-changed, marginalised and excluded from the scheme of things, even though it is the third largest ethnic group in the country. It is a truism that the Igbo people have suffered a number of reverses in the annals of Nigerian history. They lost property worth hundreds of thousands and millions of lives in the 1966 pogrom and their subsequent bid for a separate and independent state (Biafra) that culminated in a civil war and the subsequent defeat. They have also been economically emasculated after the civil war and subsequently marginalized not only in the Nigerian political arena but also in the public services, the armed forces and the police [5].

Despite the novelty of the theoretical conjectures in the extant literature on the marginalization of the Igbo people in Nigeria, there is no available comprehensive statistical support to substantiate these arguments. As a result the Igbo marginalization debate in Nigerian state has remained apparently illusive and controvertibly unresolved among scholars, government officials and political pundits. It is this backdrop that this study is set out to probe the Igbo marginalisation debate in Nigeria and to statistically furnish the readers whether it is a myth or reality.

Statement of the Problems: The marginalization of the Igbo people in Nigerian state is one of the issues which unarguably have over the years attracted interest and attention of scholars, politicians and policy makers. It is an issue that has featured prominently since the recent time; dominated debates in academic and policy circles both in national and international discourses. Commenting on the obvious reality of this phenomenon, Uduma [6] aptly submitted that it is an issue that is presently threatening the security and corporate existence of the Nigerian state. He added that Marginalization is undoubtedly a recurring phenomenon prevalent in the socio-political life of the Igbo people in Nigeria. Corroborating this view Uwalaka [7], argued that the Igbo men, have particularly been made to feel vanquished, even though the physical formal effects of the civil war have ended, yet there appear to have been more insidious, more perfidious, more destructive and dangerous 'war' against the Igbo people.

Contributing to the marginalization debate, Nwankwo [8] submitted that marginalization has become an Igbo bed mate which has snowballed into a state of alienation and exclusion. Pinching his tent with the above assertion, Nwabueze [9] averred that this phenomenon has brewed an inherent alienation of the Igbo people in Nigeria, resulting in resentment and fear. He further remarked that the marginalization of Ndigbo in Nigerian state is so intense that no Igbo man, amidst his pedigree and credentials can today expect to command nationwide acceptance as a leader in the government and politics of Nigeria. Yet, the Igbo people were in the front burner of those who fought for the struggle and attainment of Nigeria's independence; and now others enjoy the fruits of their labour expecting Igbo people to be happy with such asymmetric marginalization and unnatural state of affairs. He further submitted that Nigerians of other ethnic nationalities do everything in their powers to marginalize Igbo people and apparently, believe that they would take it lying supine on their backs. Alluding to the above position, Osuji [10] affirmed that many years after the end of the Nigerian civil war, Igbo people are still alarmingly discriminated against, marginalised and treated as orphans from all fronts of their national lives.

From the foregoing, scholars, commentators and opinion leaders have averred that Igbo people are marginalized in the general scheme of things in Nigerian state. Despite the novelty and obviously convincing arguments put forward by the apologists of this school on the reality of this unholy phenomenon, the Igbo marginalisation debate in Nigerian has remained apparently illusive and controvertibly unresolved. This is due largely to lack of a comprehensive statistical evidence to support the arguments. This development has made the resolution of the Igbo question an uphill task as midwifing acceptable policy framework has become highly problematic. The essence of this study is to statistically unveil all forms of manifestations of marginalization against the Igbo people in Nigeria, whether in economic, structural or political spheres and to factor them to the solutions of Igbo questions in Nigerian state. To address the problem the study raises the following questions.

- Are the Igbo people really marginalised in Nigerian state?
- What are the evidences to prove the marginalization of Igbo people in Nigerian state? 3. What are the solutions to Igbos marginalisation in Nigerian state?

Historicizing Marginalization of Igbo People in Nigerian State:

Chronicling Igbo people marginalization in Nigerian state is a very big challenge as it is extremely impossible

to effectively catalogue all the many issues that constitute marginalization against the Igbo people in Nigeria [11]. However, to effective historicize the Igbo marginalization in Nigeria we shall graduate them into the following phases:

Marginalization of Igbo People in Nigeria Between 1967 and 1968: It took the intervening period of 1960-1970, for the forces of ethnic particularism which had been artificially repressed during the colonial regime, to burst forth, gather momentum and culminate into the crises of 1967-1970. In reaction to this ugly development, Achebe [12] observes that the marginalization against the Igbo may have started in 1968, when Nigeria changed her currency. This made Ndigbo to lose over 50, 000, 000 million pounds in foreign exchange. On this account, Achebe [12] states that:

A banking policy was evolved which nullifies any bank account, which had been operated during the civil-war, this had the immediate result of pauperizing the Igbo middle class and earning a profit of 4.5 million pounds for the government treasury.

Furthermore, the marginalization of the Igbo could be seen from the creation of more States in Nigeria in 1967. From the perspective of today, Gowon's action could be seen as wonderful to the East. But, at the time, it was a political master-stroke to scatter the solidarity of the eastern region. It was this that prompted Okadigbo to remark that through the State creation, they were trying to sever the Efik, Ibibio and the rivers people from the Igbos and hence destabilize their common resolve, to face the danger confronting them [13].

Marginalization of Igbo People in Nigeria from 1970 till

Date: Even though, the marginalization of Igbo people in Nigerian state predates t1970, it is gratifying to remark that the marginalization of Igbo people in Nigerian state became more pronounced and intense after the civil war. As aptly observed by Okaneme [11:45]:

The reality and full-scale marginalization of Ndigbos in Nigeria state became more pronounced, immediately after the end of the civil war in the country in 1970. One of the worst and brazen cases of such marginalization of Ndigbo occurred in 1970, immediately the Nigerian civil war ended. Ndigbo where the Igbos were merely and ridiculously given twenty pounds irrespective of how much of Biafran pounds they brought for exchange. This deliberate,

wicked, heartless, obnoxious and outrageous policy was master-minded by late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the then Finance Minister purposely to cripple Ndigbo economically. That the Igbo people survived that outrageous economic onslaught against them was due to their sheer courage, willpower and dexterity as well as ingenuity and dogged determination to survive despite man-made odds placed on their way.

It may not amount to an overstatement to state that no other tribe in Nigeria whether major or minor would have survived that kind of economic onslaught and blockade against them. By the end of the civil war in January, 1970, the control of power and distribution of economic resources at the center had fallen absolutely into the hands of the war victors. The discrimination in the sitting of major federal government projects in Igbo land coupled with the abandoning of many of them, also attests to this syndrome of marginalization. Again, Achebe [12] affirms that:

Many have tried, but nobody has quite succeeded in explaining away the sitting of five steel mills worth N4.5 million on final completion, with estimated employment capacity of 100, 000 by 1990; only in the North and West of Nigeria [12:49].

A further, confirmation of the post civil- war Igbo marginalization, was seen in the sitting of projects like major industries, huge irrigation schemes and agricultural projects to other parts of Nigeria, deliberately excluding the Igbo heart land. It was therefore, evident that the cumulative consequences of these wide ranging marginalizations were quite pronounced in the economic sector, which has sentenced Ndigbo to economic penury and strangulation. In laying credence to this ugly trend, Nwakanma [14] got it right when he states that:

...economic and political policies of the federal government which limited access to political power of Easterners, especially the Igbo, has led not only to economic hemorrhaging, but also to an economic wasteland.

Osudibia in Okaneme [11:117] laments that: Another bizarre and glaring case of marginalization against the Igbo people is the infamous and inhuman '*Abandoned Property*' saga that was perpetrated against the Igbo people in Rivers state immediately the civil war ended in 1970. The Igbo people had a very rosy relationship with

the people of Rivers state prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1967.

In sum up of Igbos marginalization in Nigeria Uduma [6:94], remarks:

....right from the Yakubu Gowon's administration through to the Murtala/Obasanjo era of 1975-1979, to the Shagari presidency of 1979-1983 and to the dictatorship of Buhari/Idiagbon of 1983-1985, up to the Babangida and Abacha regimes of 1985-1998, culminating into the Abdulsalami Abubakar, Olusegun Obasanjo and Umaru Yar'Adua's administration of 1998-1999, 1999-2007 and 2007-2010 respectively, Ndigbo have suffered an unbelievable discrimination in every sphere of Nigeria's socio-political and economic life. The only exception to this ugly trend is the Jonathan administration of 2010 to 2015.

The marginalization Igbo people in Nigeria is self evidence in every spheres of socio-economic life in Nigeria. Uduma [6] aptly captured all the indicators and instrument of marginalization of Igbo people in Nigerian state under the following headings: political emasculation; the politics of State creation; discrimination in federal appointments; military neutralization; selective Development; and educational Policy. In the light of the above, Ojukwu in an interview asserted that the person who has political power decides the way country goes [15]. He argued that the purpose of this strategy is simply to dispossess, pauperize and indeed marginalize the Igbo and reduce their relevance in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework: The theoretical framework that anchors the analysis of this study is the Relative Deprivation theory. The theory was first developed by an American sociologist Robert K. Merton as a concept of the explanation and understanding of deviance behaviours, using the concept of anomie by a French sociologist Emile Durkheim as point of departure. Since then the theory has been expanded and applied for the explanations of other social behaviours by scholars such as: Karl Polanyi; Walter Runciman; Ted Robert Gurr; Jerry D. Rose, among others.

The theory is used to describe feelings or measures of economic, political, or social exclusion or deprivation that are relative rather than absolute (that is pertaining to a group and its needs). Proponents of the theory argue that 'relative deprivation' is a potential cause of agitations, social movements and deviance, which most times lead to extreme situations of violence such as

rioting, terrorism, civil wars, dissolution and other instances of social deviance such as crime [16, 17, 18]. The central thesis of this theory is that grievances of people who feel deprived of what they perceive as values to which they are entitled and capable of getting is the source of deviant behaviours in society. To practically demonstrate how deprivation can lead to deviant behaviours, Runciman [19] noted that there are four basic assumptions and/or preconditions of relative deprivation (of object X by person A): Person A does not have X, Person A knows of other persons that have X, Person A wants to have X Person A believes obtaining X is realistic. In nutshell, scholars of theory assert that deprivation of people of values and entitlements they strongly believe they have the capacity to achieving is the major cause of deviance behaviours in the society. The theory argues that people or individuals deprived of values they deserve become aggrieved when they compare their strength and chances of getting such values to others people who easily achieved such values. The theory is apt for this study because it not only explains the feelings of the Igbos concerning their marginalisation in Nigeria but further exposes the basis of the agitations for restructuring and quest for self-determination by some Igbos in Nigerian.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted qualitative method in carrying out its investigation. The data employed for the study were gathered from secondary sources. As such, the researchers visited and collected data from public libraries as well as private libraries of a number of colleagues and associates within and outside the country. Besides, the researchers made use of the internet wherein relevant articles were down loaded and carefully retrieved. As such the information employed for analysis in the study were carefully extracted from logical chains of evidence presented in journal papers, conference papers, periodic papers, edited books, documentary materials among others. It is pertinent to note that both content analysis and descriptive statistical techniques were utilized for the analysis of data while the presentation and interpretation of data were carried out with the use of simple percentage, charts, histogram and line graph.

Data Presentation and Interpretations: In this section the researchers presented logical chains of evidence showcasing the heinous marginalization and alienation of Igbos in the Nigeria state. The evidence cuts across economic, structural and political spheres. It is pertinent

to note that this data is collected from reliable sources including the National Bureau of Statistics among others.

Graphic Summaries of Manifestations of Marginalization of Igbos in the general scheme of things in Nigerian State:

Figure 1 shows the lop-sidedness nature and/or marginalization of South-east Nigeria in the spread of office of the president Nigeria from 1960 to date. It reveals that, out of 14 heads of state (i.e. both the civilian and military) that have ruled Nigeria since independence, only one of them is of the Igbo extraction in the person of General J.T.U Aguiyi Ironsi. Note; Dr Nnamdi Benjamin Azikiwe who served as President General under the Abubakar Tafawa Belewa's regime was merely a ceremonial president, that did not exercise real governmental powers on matters of national policy/concerns.

Figure 2 above shows the percentage distribution and spread of federal cabinet ministers according to geopolitical zones in Nigeria from Tafawa Balewa's regime to the present government under President Muhammad Buhari. The figure reveals that under the Balewa's Cabinet, only 25.4% members are from the then Eastern Region, presently comprising the southeast, south-south geopolitical zones including Edo and Delta states. Under the Ironsi's regime the numbers of Eastern Region in cabinet even dropped to only 16.7%. Worse still, under Gowon's regime the southeast (Igbos) had no representation in his cabinet for the thirty months that the Nigerian Civil war lasted, even when some Igbos identified with the federal side during the Biafra war. Even after civil war the Igbos had only 16.8% of the Gowon's cabinet, a war that was said to have ended on platform of no victor no vanquished. In Murtala/Obasanjo's Cabinet, only 20% were of the Igbo extraction. In Shagari's Cabinet only 20% were from Eastern Region; under Buhari's military regime only 20% of SMC were Igbos. In Babangida's regime only 13.3% were Igbos which was later in 1991 reduced to 9.1%. Towards tail of Babangida's regime in 1992, the percentage of Igbos in his cabinet was dropped to only 5.6%. The Shonekon's Interim National Government (ING) had 20.9% of Igbos in his cabinet. Abacha's Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) had only 9% of Igbo extraction as members of his cabinet ministers. Similarly, Abubakar (PRC) also maintained the 9% of Igbos in his cabinet. Obasanjo's Cabinet had 19.5% of South-easterners while the Yar'Adua and Jonathan's administrations had 47.5% Igbos as members of their cabinets. The current Buhari's Cabinet is made up of just 5% of Igbos.

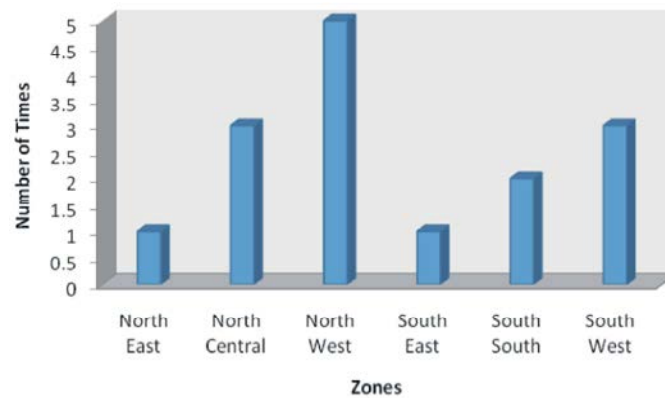


Fig. 1: Distribution of Heads of state in Nigeria per Geopolitical since 1960
Source: Compiled by the authors, 2017

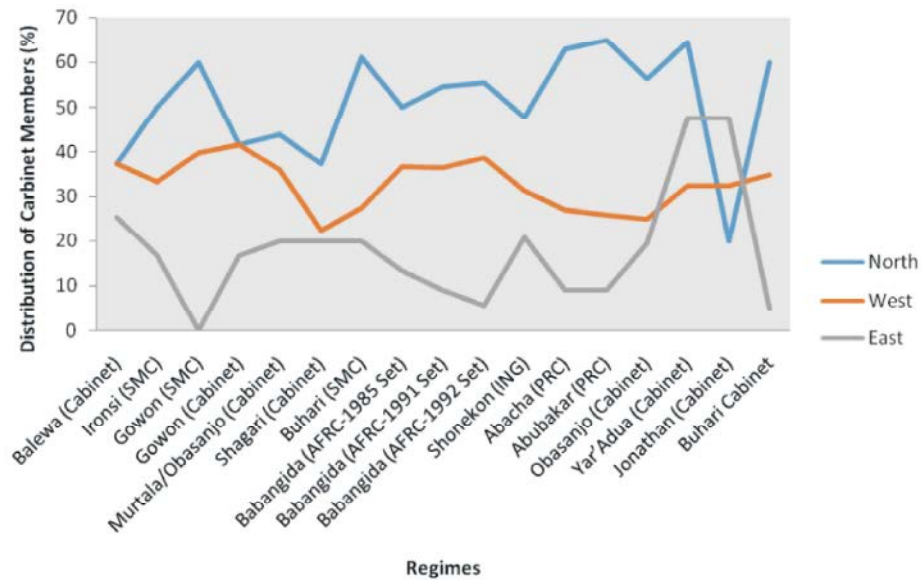


Fig. 2: Nigeria's Past and Present Leaders and Their Cabinet Members (figures in Percentage %)
Source: Culled from Nnamani [20] updated and modified with a line graph by the authors

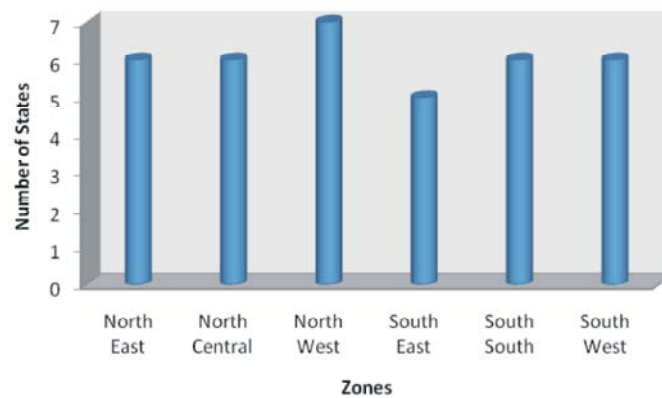


Fig. 3: Distribution of the 36 States in Nigeria per Geo-Political Zones
Source: Compiled by Authors (2017)

Figure 3 shows that the south has only five of the thirty six state that make the Nigerian federation while other geopolitical zones have six and above. It is evident that structural imbalance exist in the spreads of number of states across the geopolitical zones. It therefore confirms the marginalization of Igbos in the creation and compositions of states in Nigeria as they are only 5 states in the southeast, the home of the Igbos compared to other zones with six states and above.

Figure 4 above show total number of local governments in and their distributional spread across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The figure reveals that out of the 774 local government areas in Nigeria only 95 local government areas are in the southeast, the home land of the Igbos while the northeast has 113 local governments, the north central has 112, the northwest has 186 local governments, south-south and southwest have 125 and 137 respectively. The figure reveals that the southeast has the least number of local governments compared to other geopolitical zones across the country.

Figure 5 above, reflects the amounts budgeted for execution of developmental projects in the 2016 fiscal year by President Buhari led administration. The figure reveals that out of the total of 286.76 billion earmarked for developmental projects in the various Geo-political zones; North-East has 46.69 billion (16.3%); North-Central has 53.87 billion (18.8%); North-West has 73.7 billion (25.7%); South- South 35.31 billion (12.3%); South-West 48.97 billion (17.1%); while, South-East got just 28.22 billion (9.8%), an infinitesimal sum, when compared to what her peers got from the national budget/coffers.

Figure 6, shows that a total of 1561 of police stations in 2006, out of which North-East had 269 (16.83%); North-Central had 378 (23.65%); North-West had 188 (11.76%); South-South had 258 (16.15 %); South-West had 307 (19.21%); while South-East had 161 (10.08%). Still in table 6, out of the total 2555 of police posts in 2006, North-East had 498 (18.93%); North-Central had 752 (28.57%); North-West had 671 (25.5%); South-South had 202 (7.68%); South-West had 298 (11.33%); while South-East had 134 (5.09%). Similarly, table 6 shows that the police divisions in 2006 had the total of 1026, out of which North-East had 154 (14.8%); North-Central had 200 (19.23%); North-West had 216 (20.76%); South-South had 167 (16.06%); South-West had 162 (15.58%); whereas, South-East had 127 (12.21%)

Figure 7 the figure above shows that out of the 19 Inspector General of Police (IGP) since 1964 to present, only one IGP is from the South-eastern while with Northwest serving for 5 times, Northeast for 5 times, North central 1 time, South-south 5 times and South west

5 times. The table apparently reveals that the Igbos are grossly marginalized even in the security formation in the country. It further reveals that the south east has the least numbers of police. This underscores the root of deprivations always suffered by Igbo youths in recruitment into police force Nigeria.

Figure 8 shows the length of federal roads in each Geo-political zones as of 2006 and 2008. Out of a total 34, 340.96 of the entire lengths of federal roads in Nigeria, North-East had 7, 803.40 (22.7%); North-Central had 8067.81 (23.5%); North-West had 6, 668.90 (19.4%); South-South had 4, 150.89 (12.1%); South-West had 4, 528.26 (13.2%); while South-East had 3, 121.70 (9.1%). In the same vein, the figure above also shows that out of the total of 37, 402.5 lengths of roads in 2008, North-East had 7, 850.40 (21.0%); North-Central had 8118.8 (21.7%); North-West had 6, 876. (18.4%); South-South had 6, 066.60 (16.2%); South-West had 4, 848.50 (13.0%); while South-East had 3, 642.0 (9.7%).

Figure 9 above shows the number of prisons structure and capacity in the entire Geo-political zones in 2002 and 2007. The total of 36379, North-Central had 4943 (13.59%); North-East had 7888 (21.68%); North-West had 7967 (21.9%); South-South had 5915 (16.26%); South-West had 5641 (15.51%); while South-East had only 4025 (11.06%). In the same vein, in 2007, out of the total of 46689, North-Central had 6743 (14.41%); North-East had 10938 (23.38%); North-West had 10922 (23.34%); South-South had 7340 (15.69%); South-West had 5932 (12.68%); while South-East had 4814 (10.29%).

Figure 10 shows that out of the total of 14607 health care facilities in 2004, South-East Geo-political zone had only 912 health care facilities while other geopolitical zone have between 1000 and 4000 federal health facilities within their zones. The figure further reveals that south east depends largely on health facilities provided by private sector organisations for their health needs.

Figure 11 above shows that only 2 out of 25 Nigerians who have served as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) are of the Igbo extraction while other ethnic nationalities in other geo-political zones such as the north-west, south-west and south-south have served severally in this position.

Figure 12 above, shows that only 2 out of 20 Nigerians have served as Chief of Naval Staff Nigeria are from the south east the home land of the Igbos.

Figure 13 above, shows that out of the 20 erstwhile and present Chief of Air Force Staff, only 1 came from the South-eastern (ie, of Igbo extraction) while other geopolitical zones have held the office for more once.

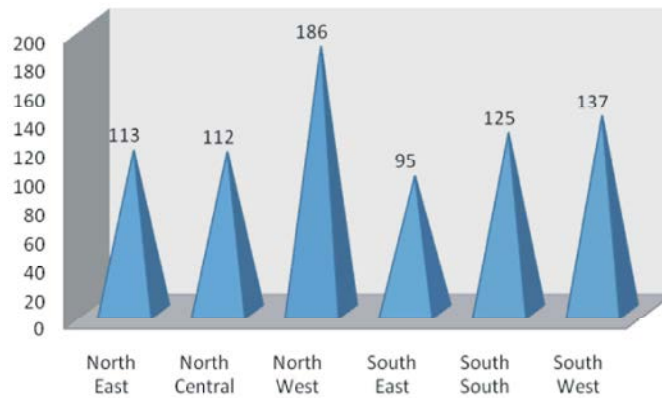


Fig. 4: Distribution of 774 Local Government Areas in Nigeria per Geopolitical Zones
Source: Compiled by Author, 2017

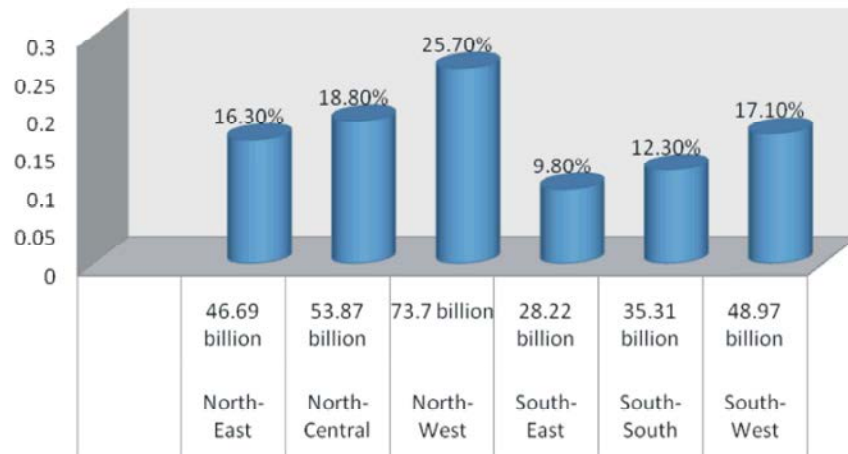


Fig. 5: Distribution of Federal Government Developmental Projects in the 2016 Budgets (Buhari's Administration)
Source: Culled from Yessufu [21]; arranged and modified in graph by Author

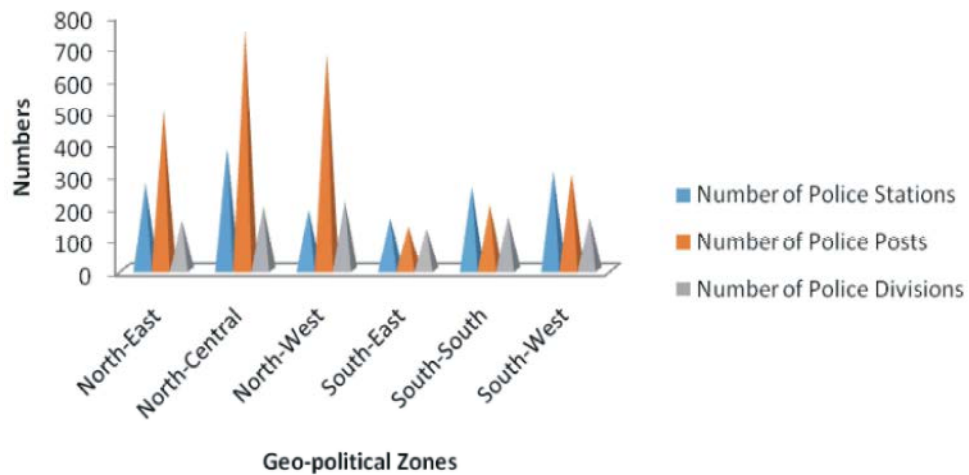


Fig. 6: Number of police stations, police post and divisions per Geopolitical zones as 2006
Source: Source: Source: Wikipedia [22]. [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/inspector_General_of_Police_\(Nigeria\)](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/inspector_General_of_Police_(Nigeria)); modified in graph by the author

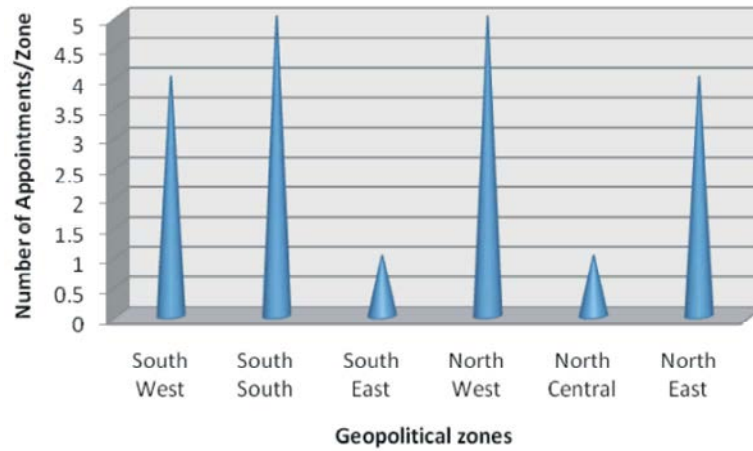


Fig. 7: Distribution of Nigeria's past & present Inspectors General of Police per Geopolitical zones
Source: Source: wikipedia [22]. [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inspector_General_of_Police_\(Nigeria\)](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inspector_General_of_Police_(Nigeria)); modified in graph by the author.

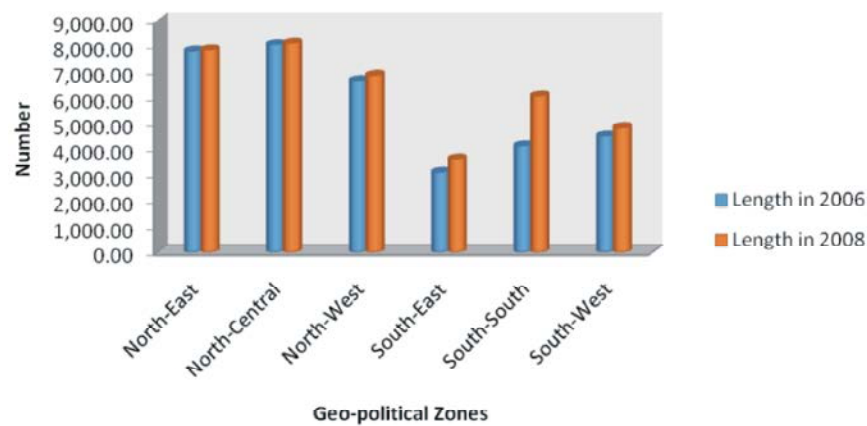


Fig. 8: Number and Length Federal Roads in Nigeria by Geopolitical zones
Source: National Bureau of Statistics [23]

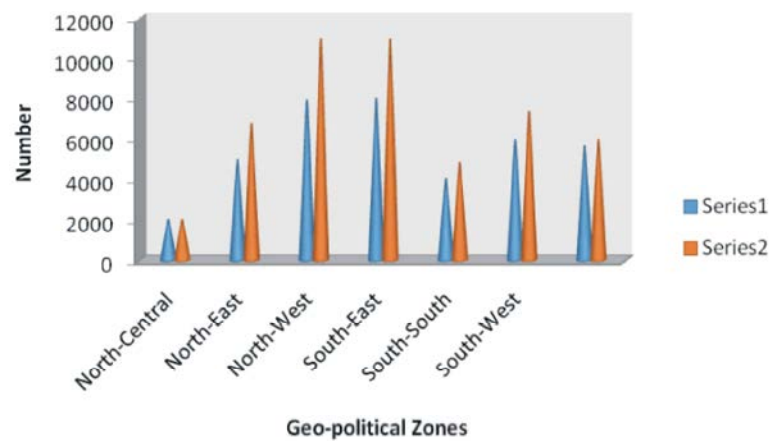


Fig. 9: Number of Prisons by Geo-Political Zones 2002 & 2007.
Source: National Bureau of Statistics [23]

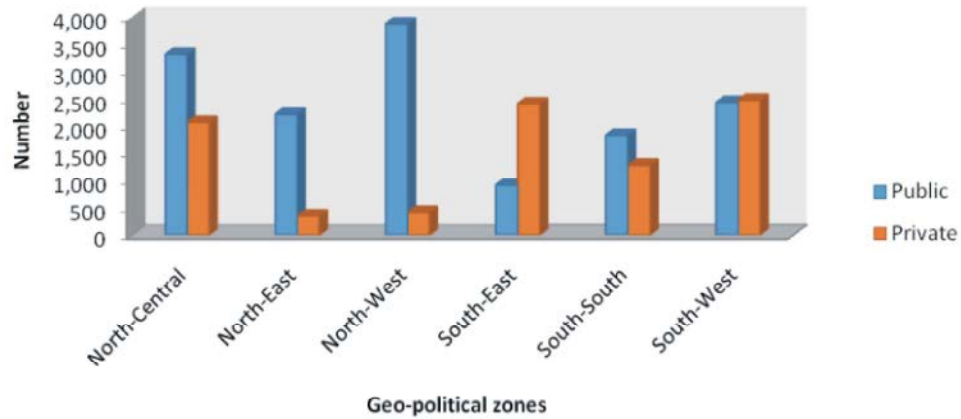


Fig. 10: Distribution of Health Care Facilities by Geo-Political Zone, 2004
Source: National Bureau of Statistics [23].

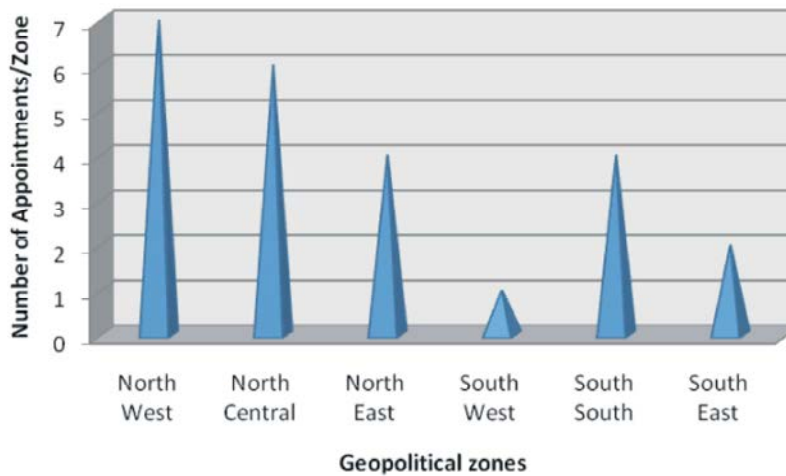


Fig. 11: Distributritions of Chief of Army Staff in Nigeria per Geo-Political Zone Since 1963
Source: Wikipedia [22]; arranged and tabulated by the Author

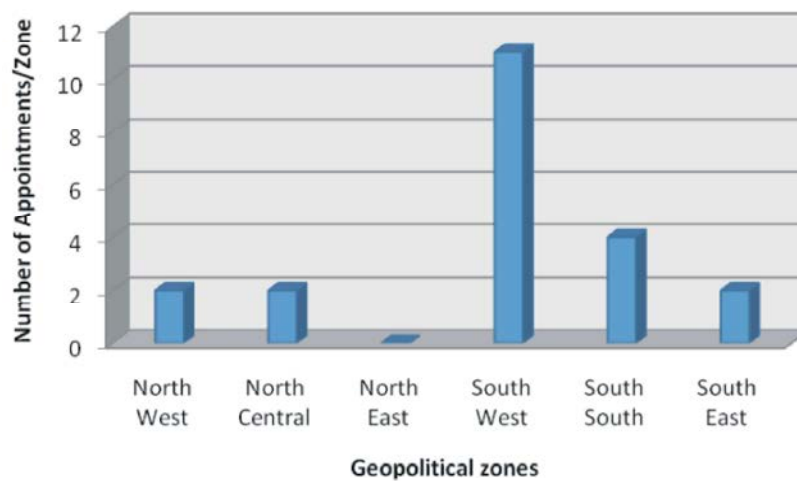


Fig. 12: Distribution of Chief of Naval Staff per Geopolitical Zones
Wikipedia, [22]; arranged and tabulated by the Author

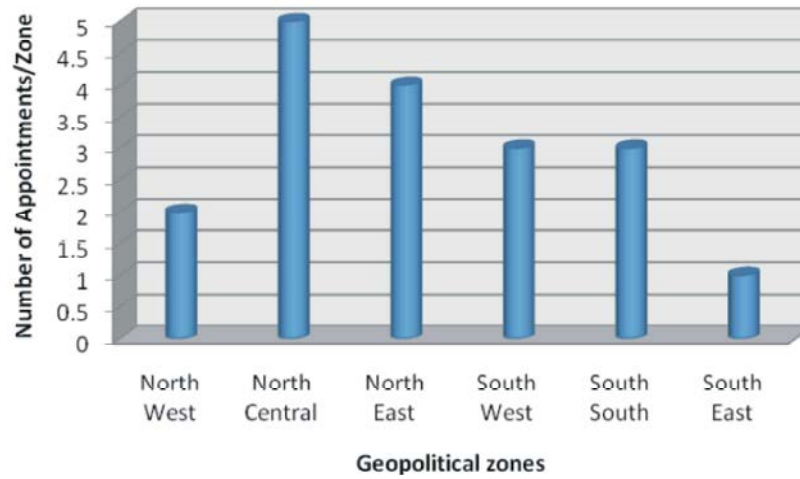


Fig. 13: Composition of Chief of Air Staff per geopolitical zones
Source: Wikipedia [22]. Arranged and tabulated by the Author

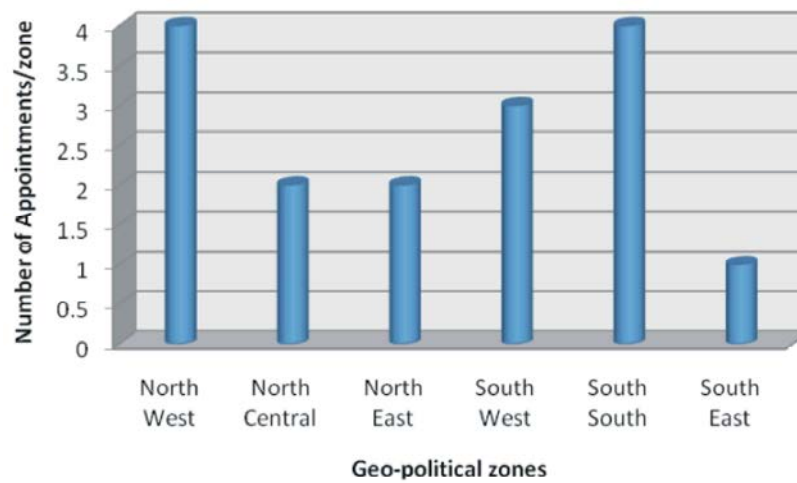


Fig. 14: Distribution of Chief of Defence Staff per geopolitical zones since the Second Republic, (1979-2017)
Source: Culled from Wikipedia [22]; and modified by the Author in graph.

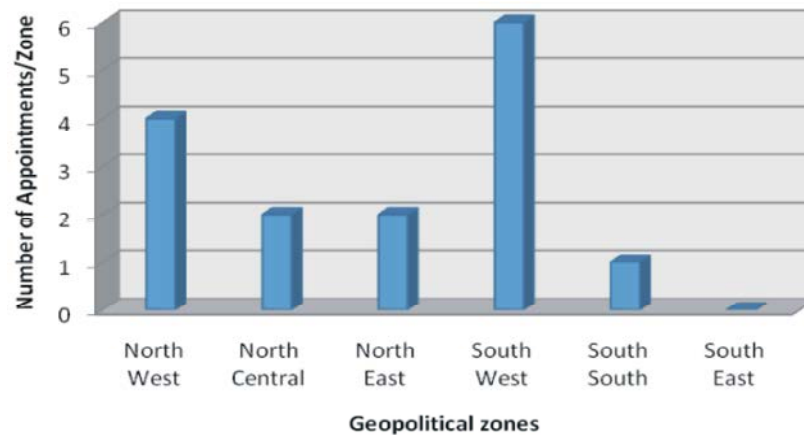


Fig. 15: Number of appointments of National Security/Defence Council per Geopolitical zones.
Source: Compiled by the Author, (2017)

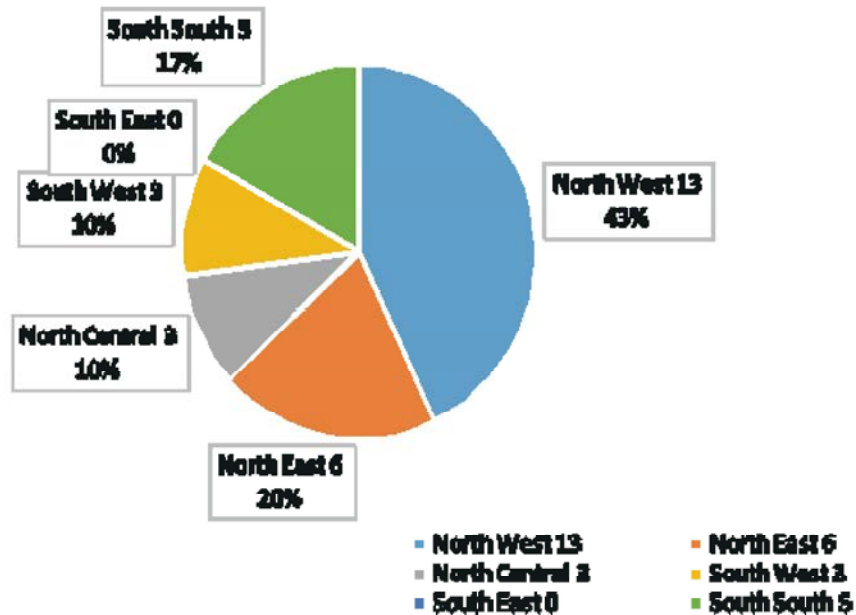


Fig. 16: Distribution of Key Government Officials made by President Muhammedu Buhari

Source: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/189117-outrage-grows-across-nigeria-as-buharis-lopsided-appointments-continue.html> ; (modified by author).

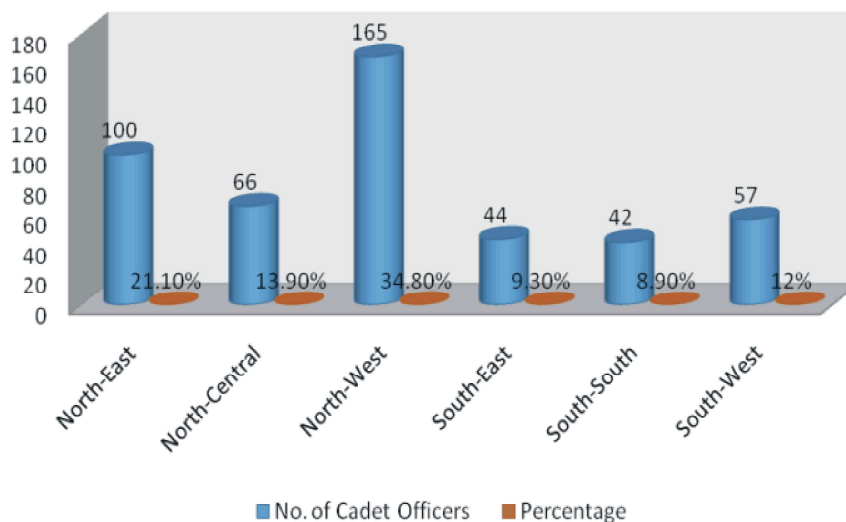


Fig. 17: Showing Lopsidedness in the 2017 Recruitment of Cadet Officers in Department of State Security Service (DSS) (Under President Buhari's Administration)

Source: ThisDay Newspaper [24]; Arranged and modified with chart by the Author.

Figure 14 above, shows that only 1 out of 16 Nigerians have served as Chief of Defence Staff since 1980 to date is of the Igbo extraction

Figure 15 above, shows that there is no South-easterner in the National/Defence Council, nor is an Igbo man a head of any security agency or outfit currently in Nigeria.

Figure 16 shows the distribution of key government officials appointed by President Muhammedu Buhari. The figure reveals that the appointments are skewed against the Igbos. The figure further reveals that the remarginalization, exclusion and deprivation of the Igbo people from the common wealth of the Nigerian body-politic is still trending even in the present administration.

Figure 17, above, shows that only 09.3% were recruited as cadet officers, out of the entire 100% in the recent recruitment made by the Department of State Security (DSS). Again this shows a yawning gap in the recruitment and appointment of South-easterners into public offices.

Discussions and Analysis: The marginalization of Igbo people in Nigerian state is an issue which unarguably has continued to glaringly and dramatically manifest in different fashions and dimensions in socio-economic and political lives. It is sometime hidden, most often open but latent in the socio-economic and political landscape of Nigeria. The ugly phenomenon started before the civil war but became more intensified immediately after the Nigerian-Biafra war of 1967-1970.

For some other scholars the marginalization of the Igbos in Nigeria state began after the Nigerian-Biafra war in 1970. As Okaneme [11:45] aptly remarked:

The reality and full-scale marginalization of Igbo people in Nigerian state became more pronounced, immediately after the end of the civil war in the country in 1970. One of the worst and brazen cases of such marginalization of Igbo people occurred in 1970, immediately the Nigerian civil war ended. The Igbo people where the Igbos were merely and ridiculously given twenty pounds irrespective of how much of Biafra pounds they brought for exchange. This deliberate, wicked, heartless, obnoxious and outrageous policy was master-minded purposely to cripple the Igbo people economically. That the Igbo people survived that outrageous economic onslaught against them was due to their sheer courage, willpower and dexterity as well as ingenuity and dogged determination to survive despite man-made odds placed on their way.

Commenting on the origin and nature of the marginalization that the Igbo people in Nigeria state, Achebe aptly noted:

The marginalization against the Igbo may have started in 1968, when Nigeria changed her currency. This made Igbo people to lose over 50, 000, 000 million pounds in foreign exchange. On this account, Achebe noted that: A banking policy was evolved which nullifies any bank account, which had been operated during the civil-war, this had the immediate result of pauperizing the Igbo middle class and earning a profit of 4.5 million pounds for the government treasury.

From the above statements it is axiomatic to say that the Igbo people have for long remained the objects of marginalization and criminal neglect in the Nigerian state. This has become evident in distribution of political offices and other socio-economic benefits in the Nigerian state. It is pertinent to note that since Nigeria attained her independent status in 1960 it is only one Igbo man that has smelt the office of the head of state. Available statistics has shown that though some other ethnic groups are also marginalized, the case of the Igbo people has very alarming and pathetic. For instance, out of 14 heads of state (i.e. both the civilian and military) that have ruled Nigeria since independence, only one of them is of the Igbo extraction in the person of General J.T.U Aguiyi Ironsi. Note; Dr Nnamdi Benjamin Azikiwe who served as Governor General under the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's regime was merely a ceremonial president, that did not exercise real governmental powers on matters of national policy/concerns (Figure 1, above).

The same situation applies in the appointments of federal cabinet ministers in Nigerian state, as prominent sons and daughters of Igbo extraction are always denied the opportunity to serve in federal executive council. Available statistics reveals that appointments of federal ministers are skewed against the Igbo people and in favour of other ethnic nationalities. As shown in figure 2 above, from the Tafawa Balewa's regime to the present government under President Muhad Buhari, the number of Igbos that have served as federal ministers have remained abysmally lowest relative to other ethnic nationalities.

A further critical analysis of the said figure reveals that under the Balewa's regime, only 25.4% members are from the then Eastern Region which presently comprise the southeast, south-south geopolitical zones including Edo and Delta states. Under the Ironsi's regime the numbers of Eastern Region in cabinet even dropped to only 16.7%. Worse still, under Gowon's regime the southeast (Igbos) had no representation in his cabinet for the thirty months that the Nigerian Civil war lasted, even when some Igbos sons and daughters identified with the federal side during the Biafra war.

Worse still, after the civil war the percentage of the number of Igbo people in Gowon's cabinet, dropped to only 16.8%. This is unfair considering the fact the war was said to have ended on platform of no victor no vanquished. Commenting on this alarming state of affairs Uwalaka [7], observed that the Igbos were particularly been made to feel vanquished and even when the war was

formally said to have ended physically, the socioeconomic lives of the Igbos appear more insidious, more perfidious, more destructive and dangerous.

During the Nigeria-Biafra war the situation was worse, as the Igbos were totally denied appointments into the federal executive council, even when some prominent Igbo sons and daughters identified with Nigeria side in war. It evident that after the civil war the ugly development continued trending as the Murtala/Obasanjo regime that took over from Gowon had only 20% of the Igbo extraction in the federal cabinet.

In Shagari's Cabinet only 20% were Igbo people; under Buhari's military regime only 20% of SMC were Igbo people. Worse still, in Babangida's regime only 13.3% were Igbo people which was later in 1991 was reduced to 9.1%. Towards tail of Babangida's regime in 1992, the percentage of Igbos in his cabinet was dropped to only 5.6%. The Shonekon's Interim National Government (ING) had 20.9% of igbos in his cabinet. Abacha's Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) had only 9% of Igbo extraction as members of his cabinet ministers. Similarly, Abubakar (PRC) also maintained the 9% of Igbos in his cabinet. Obasanjo's Cabinet had 19.5% of South-easterners while the Yar'Adua and Jonathan's administrations had 47.5% Igbos as members of their cabinets. The current Buhari's Cabinet is made up of just 5% of Igbos.

Commenting on this ugly scenario, Nwankwo [8] averred that marginalization has become an Igbo bed mate. He further remarked that, it is now a state of alienation and exclusion. Undoubtedly the situation has brewed an inherent alienation of the Igbo in Nigeria, resulting in resentment and fear. As Nwabueze [9] aptly submitted the marginalization of Ndigbo is so intense that no Igbo man, however good his credentials can today expect to command nationwide acceptance as a leader in the government and politics of Nigeria. He further lamented that the development is a deliberate policy of casting over board the price-less colonial heritage of meritocracy in an insidious bid to stem the tide of competition and largely succeed in emasculating the enterprising, competitive and geographically mobile Igbo is now in vogue. He was highly worried that the progressive principles of merit and competition are now supplemented by such nebulous and retrogressive policies as 'federal character', 'quota system, ' and State of origin'. It is therefore, the intension of this article to bring into focus the specific policies, programmes and projects which have been devised and adopted by

successive administrations in Nigeria (democratic and military) to punish the Igbo nation for going to war in 1967.

In the creation of states and Local government areas the south east, the home land of the Igbos has the least of numbers compared to other geopolitical zones. As presented in Figures 3 and 4 above the south only five states out of the thirty six states and 95 local government areas out of the 774 local governments in Nigerian. It is evident that structural imbalance exist in the spreads of number of states and local governments across the geopolitical zones. It therefore confirms the marginalization of Igbos in the creation and compositions of states and local governments in Nigeria.

The situation is even more prevalent in the distributions of the federal budget for development projects across the country as it always planned to disfavour the Igbos. This is evident in the 2016 fiscal budget as shown in figure 4 above it is revealed that out of the total of 286.76 billion earmarked for developmental projects in the various geo-political zones South-East got just 28.22 billion representing only (09.8%), an infinitesimal sum, when compared to what her peers got from the national budget/coffers. This explains why there is infrastructural challenge in Nigeria in every corner of the south east. Even the federal roads were criminally neglected and abandoned successive regimes in Nigeria. The dilapidated nature of the federal roads has caused undue hardship commuters and business men plighting the roots. This agrees with Uduma [6] who identified six instrument used for marginalization of Igbo in Nigeria to include: Political emasculation, State creation policy, discrimination in federal appointments, Military neutralization, Selective Development, Educational Policy. This indicates that there is deliberate comprehensive strategy to perpetuate the marginalization of Igbo people in the general scheme things in Nigerian state.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The marginalization of the Igbo people in Nigeria is a reality as the evidence abounds across every socio-economic and political lives of the country. Granted that the situation is not peculiar to the Igbo people, but the case of Igbo people appears more pathetic. This phenomenon has eroded the sense of common identity among the Igbo people, both as individuals and as a nation which also necessitate the constant quest and/or agitation for restructuring and

self-determination. The study concludes that the situation has not been adequately addressed by the previous and present administrations in Nigeria. The study recommended for the introduction of true federalism in Nigeria and power sharing among the geopolitical zones, decentralization and devolution of power to the federating units to guarantee equity and allay the fears of marginalization by the ethnic nationalities.

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