

## **DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, SEPARATIST TENDENCIES AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA, 2015-2019**

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### **Abstract**

Democracy has been adjudged as the best form of the organization of human society for development and progress. The concept of democracy entails the process of bringing more people into the authoritative decision making process of a society. Democracy is intended to engender development while, on the other hand development is expected to sustain and enhance democracy. In a democratic space, it is expected that the interest of majority of the people will be taken into cognizance in authoritative decision making and implementation which is expected to engender development. Thus, democracy is envisaged as a tool to unify and mobilize the people for national development. However, President Buhari's leadership style has cast doubt on his administrations democratic credentials thereby enhancing centrifugal tendencies, and thus affecting the developmental process in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper interrogates the nexus between the sectional administrative style of the President Muhammadu Buhari's led administration and the intensification of separatist tendencies in Nigeria and its implication for national development. The paper is historical and descriptive thereby relying on secondary sources while the theory of social production and reproduction guided our discourse. Findings amongst others revealed that, if sectionalism in leadership and governance as being practice by the Buhari's administration continues in Nigeria, separatist tendencies will continue to rear its ugly head in Nigeria's political space, engendering democratic deficit, while enhancing the development of underdevelopment in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Governance, Separatist Tendencies, Development, Social Production and Reproduction

### **1. Introduction**

The agitation for a separate state for the people of Igbo extract in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon. Its foundation was laid on the perceived injustices and marginalization against the Igbo's after the first military coup and counter coup of 15<sup>th</sup> January and 29<sup>th</sup> July 1966 respectively, which culminated in a thirty-month civil war tagged the Nigerian/Biafra war. Since Nigeria gained political independence from its erstwhile colonial master; the

British, the political landscape had known no peace. The mistrust, mutual suspicion and hatred that started during the colonial days as orchestrated by the British and the consequent competition among the political class of the various regions that make up Nigeria, to establish their predominance in terms of wealth and power has led to democracy deficit and development of underdevelopment in Nigeria. Most of the post colonial governments in Nigeria churn out policies and programmes without taking recourse to its integrative/disintegrative implications for the country and its repercussion on democracy which most time is a corollary to national development. In an attempt to conceptualized development, Rodney (1972:1) had averred that:

From earliest times, man found it convenient and necessary to come together in groups to hunt and for the sake of survival. The relations which develop within any given social group, are crucial to an understanding of the society as a whole. Freedom, responsibility, skill etc. have real meaning only in terms of the relations between men in the society.

The essence of group's realization to come together for the purpose of preserving their livelihood and survival can only be rooted in democratic principle without which no meaningful development can be achieved in the face of strife, anger and disharmony. In this context, Okoye (2000) had asserted that democracy is intended to engender development while, on the other hand, development is expected to sustain and enhance democracy. Hence, development is in essence qualitative, and it enhances the wellbeing of the people in general and not a section of the people. Obasanjo and Mabogunje (1991:5) opines that development entails:

- a. knowledge and understanding;
- b. information; statistical and non-statistical;
- c. technological creativity; and
- d. the right kind of organization and skill.

On the basis of the above factors, they posit that development is "a process concerned with people's capacity in a defined area to manage and induce positive change; that is, to predict, plan, understand and monitor change and reduce or eliminate unwanted or unwarranted change". There have been many conceptualizations of development as cited in Okoye (2000) which place democracy as its bedrock. In this regard, development has also been described as "a process which enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence, and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment" (Report of the South Commission, 1992:10). Furthermore, Oyovbaire and Olagunju (nd: 41) remarked that:

Basic to any development process is man's desire for a better life and better environment. The Fourth National Development plan states that development does not start with goods and things, it starts with people: and that when a society is properly oriented, organized and disciplined, it can be prosperous on the scantiest of natural wealth.

Similarly, Nnoli (1981) had asserted that "development is first and foremost a phenomenon associated with changes in man's humanity and creative energies, not in things". It is in this connection that democracy and development appear lucid, coherent and thought through. Okoye (2000) had surmised that "the basic reason for establishing a system in which the entire citizenry are expected to directly, or through their duly elected representatives, be part of the governing of their affairs is to ensure that the wellbeing of all is equally enhanced".

Therefore, if the people belong to or are classified into different races, nations, religions, language groups, occupations, creeds, etc, democracy, if it is true to its name 'peoples rule' must include all these kinds of people. Democracy or people's rule that discriminates against people on account of religion, ethnic group, beliefs, occupation, class, etc. is incomplete (Ogban, 2005) and does not augur well with development and the realization of the full potentials of a polity for enhanced human progress. Consequently, Ogban (2005) had suggested that:

Religious, ethnic, class and racial conflicts and violence, even the threat of secession (Authors insertion) are not necessarily anti-democratic. They, in fact, can expand and fertilize the territory for eventual growth of democracy if the violence is used to and succeeds in abolishing or minimizing discrimination against any of these categories of people. How else can any identity that is systematically or subtly discriminated against be involved in peoples rule and the consequent development except struggle for it sometimes violently when peaceful means are ineffective.

Deriving from the above extrapolations, it appears that since the end of the civil war in Nigeria and the declaration of the "Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation" (the three Rs) by the Yakubu Gowon's led federal military government and the consequent "No Victor, No Vanquished" assertion as an effort by the federal government to reconcile, reintegrate and fully accommodate the Igbo people into the general scheme of things in the post-civil war Nigeria, the government at the apex has to a large extent not been able to carry the Southeast, which is the homeland of the Igbo's, along in the scheme of things in both the political, economic and all other social fabric of the Nigerian Society. Consequently, in view of the fact of the declaration of the 3R's and the consequent assertion of "No Victor, No Vanquished" by the federal military government after the war, the attention of scholars, politicians and policy makers has been attracted to the treatment of the Igbo's after the civil war.

In fact, some scholars have captured the place of the Igbo's after the civil war as 'marginalized people'. Commenting on the reality of the marginalization of the Igbo's in Nigeria, Uduma (2015) had rightly submitted that it is an issue that is presently threatening the security and the corporate existence of the Nigerian State. He furthered opined that; marginalization is undoubtedly a reoccurring phenomenon prevalent in the socio-political life of the Igbo people in Nigeria. Related to this position is Uwalaka (2003) who deposited that Igbo men, have particularly been made to feel vanquished even though the physical formal effect of the civil war have ended, yet there appears to have been more insidious, more perfidious, more destructive and dangerous 'war' against the Igbo people. Nsoedo (2019) had opined that a plain glance at the economic and political development in Nigeria may be considered normal in terms of where the Igbo people stand politically, especially economically, when compared to other ethnic nationalities. Indeed a cursory look at the poverty level among the ethnic groups would make the Igbo race appear exceptionally successful. However, he noted that the Igbo people in reality experienced an overwhelming level of disadvantages based on public policies that seemed crafted to undermine their ability to maximize political and economic potentials.

Re-echoing the same sentiment, a former Head of State in Nigeria, and the man that declared the '3Rs' and the 'No Victor, No Vanquished' after the Nigerian civil war Gen. Yakubu Gowon (ret'd), had declared in a recent event that the people of the South East extraction had been marginalized in Nigeria's political system. He suggested that Nigeria

should put together a constitutional debate on restructuring to undertake a holistic correction of the observable imbalance that had kept Nigeria down over the years with a view to making progress and promoting national unity and cohesion. The former Nigerian leader stated these while delivering an address titled: “Federal Character, Restructuring, and Rotation of Presidential Power in Nigeria,” at a public event organized by Igbo Leadership Development Foundation. He said: “I believe that a lot of injustice has been done to the Igbo’s and a constitutional debate on restructuring must address all imbalances and restore hope and confidence” (Gowon, 2020). In the same vein Nwankwo (2000) had professed that marginalization has become an Igbo bedmate which has snowballed into a state of alienation and exclusion. Corroborating the above, Nwabuze (2001) cited in Itumo, etal (2018: 397) posited that:

This phenomenon has brewed an inherent alienation of the Igbo people in Nigeria, resulting in resentment and fear. 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.

Nwabuze (2001) further stated 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. Acceding to the above, Osuji (2010) asserted that many years after the Nigerian civil war, Igbo people are still alarmingly discriminated against, marginalized and treated as orphans from fronts of their national lives.

Consequently, these expressions of sentiment have manifested itself in the formation of movements and social groupings agitating and intensifying the agitation for a separate state for Igbo people since 1999. These separate groups included the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) respectively among others. With all these assertions, positions and manifestation of the reality of the Igbo marginalization, one would have expected that on ascension to office in 2015 that President Muhammadu Buhari would have done more, through our democratic institutions and governance to ameliorate the plight of the Igbo’s and many other marginalized peoples in Nigeria by integrating them more into the mainstream of the Nigerian economic and political life and therefore, progressively enhancing democratic ethics and principle in the political, economic and social life of the people. This would have gone a long way in dousing secessionist and separatist tensions that seemingly has become entrenched in Nigerian socio-economic formation. However, the governance style of President Muhammadu Buhari has put to question, the place of governance in promoting national integration through democratic principles and thus the consequent desired development in Nigeria. The objective of the paper is to examine whether President Buhari’s governance style has enhanced a deeper integration of all geopolitical regions of Nigeria, specifically the Southeast; the Igbo heartland, in the scheme of things in Nigeria’s economic and political life in order to douse these centrifugal forces that has been at the core of anti-democratic forces in Nigeria and the consequent inability of the Nigerian state to mobilize its populace for development. Thus, the paper interrogated the sectional leadership style of President Muhammadu Buhari and the intensification of forces of centrifugalism involving the Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) since the inception of the administration in 2015. The

paper is divided into five sections namely; introduction, theoretical framework, marginalization of Igbo people pre-Buhari era 1966 and 2014, Buhari's government leadership style and Igbo marginalization in Nigeria 2015 till date, and conclusions.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The discourse in this paper is anchored on some of the assumptions emanating from the dynamics of social production and reproduction of material values which was developed in the classical works of Karl Marx and his friend Friedrich Engels and was popularized by scholars such as Ake (1981); Nnoli (1981); Nikita (1983); Ogban-Iyam (2005) among others. The social production and reproduction system perspective employed here according to Ogban-Iyam (2005) posits among others that:

- The fundamental concern of human beings, and perhaps of other living things, is survival and security.
- And that for the human being to survive and have security he/ she must produce and reproduce human needs, including the production and reproduction of the human kind. It is also accepted as self-evident that meaningful production and reproduction of human needs is essentially social (interpersonal), not individual (or sectional, that is, it requires the mobilization of all the sections of human and material resources of a polity. {*The authors' insertion*}).
- Every social relation (interpersonal relation) tends to be a full or partial social production and reproduction relation in full and/or in part of tangibles and intangibles such as food, shelter, medicine, weapon, new human being, pain, pleasure, sorrow, joy, security, insecurity, violence, offence, defence, etc.
- These tangible and intangible values and interests revolve around life processes such as respiration, nutrition, excretion, locomotion, sensitivity to stimuli, reproduction, growth, repair and decay. These vary in their perceived importance to various people at various points in time.
- Complete social production and reproduction of any value often entails political, economic, sociological, religious, psychological, physical and technical factors and dimensions almost at the same time or sequentially. For example, people may pray, be polite/rude, friendly/hostile to one another, educate or confuse/deceive others, find efficient ways and means, employ physical strength, marry, divorce, have some entertainment and relaxation, etc in order to produce and reproduce their needs. This means that a social production and reproduction system involves virtually every aspect of life. It is only for purposes of emphasis and brevity that an analyst tries to enumerate only the main factors of production.
- The family is the first basic and fairly complete unit of social production and reproduction including that of the human being, values, beliefs, culture and remains the last bastion and safety net for survival and security. Historically, interacting families have expanded into kindred families, clans, tribes, and cores of nations and ethnic groups. These extensions of family, like the family are to varying degrees simultaneously political, economic, sociological, religious, language and geographical entities.
- Ethnic and religious considerations are important in so far as they enhance or inhibit or are perceived to enhance or inhibit people's position in the social production system.
- In every social production and reproduction system there must be someone or people to make binding decision on what is produced, distributed, exchanged, and /or consumed by who and for who.
- Those who decide/choose what to produce when, how, where, by who and for who, also control the social production process and in their favour. They generally have the most of

what is produced and they are often more satisfied than others within the production system and tend to protect it.

- Those who do not decide/choose what to produce (goods, services and other values) are generally at the receiving end of the social production system. They generally have the least of what is produced and they are often not satisfied or less satisfied than those who make the decision and they, therefore tend to want to change the system in their own favour.
- It is those who choose what to produce and for who, who controls the production process and who also rule or determine who rules. It is perhaps for this reason that each human being tends to want to determine/decide/choose what himself or herself wants to produce. He or she wants and tends to work for/labour for what serves his or her needs and his/her needs which are likely to be best known to him/her and often to be produced when he/she decides and controls what to produce. This is the impetus for self-rule; peoples rule (democracy) and the resistance against other people's rule/foreign rule, particularly, domination and dictatorship.
- A social production and reproduction system in which all accept their positions in it is unlikely to be violent and vice versa. People are likely to accept their position in the scheme of things if they feel secure. They feel more secure when they control the social production system. This is why people's sense of security is a function of their place in the production system.
- When, therefore, all the masses or at least a majority of the people in a polity control the production process, the polity or unit becomes a democracy, when the aged control the production process a gerontocracy emerges, when the wealthy dominate the production system plutocracy emerges as the form of governance etc. Therefore, no form of rule can be wished or decreed into existence or sustained if it is not in consonance with or does not evolve from the social production that determines who has the means to govern.

Deriving from the above, it should be noted that the subsequent struggle after the civil war in Nigeria that lasted for thirty months for a separate state for the Igbo people is rooted in the perceived injustices and marginalization of the people by the federal government in the political and economic sphere of social life. The failure of subsequent governments in Nigeria to properly integrate the Southeast, the Igbo heartland, in the scheme of things has been the bedrock of the agitations for a separate state for the Igbo people. Those at the core of this agitation feel that the Igbo's has been marginalized in the social production and reproduction system of the Nigerian society. The sectional government style of President Mohammadu Buhari since 2015, whereby he mainly appoint only members of his immediate family and other Northern brothers as well as some of his Yoruba collaborators has helped to fuel and intensify the agitation for a separate state for the Igbo's since the inception of the administration by especially the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu.

The agitation for a separate state for Igbo's could be squarely located within the struggle for the control or deeper incorporation into the decision making process within the social production and reproduction system in Nigeria. The Igbo's are demanding mainly but not exclusively a better deal from the Nigerian government, to have untrammelled access to the decision making process within the social production and reproduction system. They feel peripheralized in the scheme of the social production and reproduction system in Nigeria since after the civil war which they were defeated.

Of essence here, is that the continuous marginalization of any group in Nigeria in the social production and reproduction system will keep having a deleterious effect on Nigeria's development and national/territorial integrity. More importantly is the fact that development

is not something that is imposed. For any development to be meaningful and impact on the lives of the people, such a development must be internally oriented and must take cognizance of the peculiar needs of the people at the material point in time. Rodney (1972:2) had posited that:

Development is used in an exclusive economic sense, the justification being that the type of economy is itself an index of other social features. A society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment. This capacity for dealing with the environment is dependent on the extent to which they understand the laws of nature (science), on the extent to which they put that understanding into practice by devising tools (technology), and on the manner in which work is organized.

Therefore, any political system whose manner of organization of work and reward system within the social production and reproduction system does not try to address the interests of most segments of the society and incorporation of all the social cleavages in the society, is likely to result to serious conflictual relationship. This manifests itself in the intensification of separatist tendencies and thus rubs off on democracy the consequent needed and desired development.

### **3. Marginalization of Igbo People Pre-Buhari Era 1966 and 2014**

The resurgence of ethnic nationalism in Nigeria after independence and the military coups that followed led to a civil war that lasted for almost three years (1967-1970). The war was declared by Major General Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu largely due to the pogrom that was meted out to the Southerners, mainly the Igbo's, after a counter coup that took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 1966 orchestrated by Northern military and political elites. With the defeat of the Igbo's (Biafra) in the war that bring about a national reconciliation, the then military head of state in Nigeria General Yakubu Gowon declared "No Victor, No Vanquished and also set up the Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation Programme (3R's). However, the programme was not properly implemented as Nigeria's government ran the country in a manner that showed that there were winners and losers of the war, thus sparking a renewed agitation for Biafra and other separatist demands. The injustice in the system has made it impossible for Nigeria to grow and develop (Vanguard News, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2020). Corroborating the above position Nsoedo (2019:430) had this to say:

General Gowon promised to rehabilitate and reintegrate the defunct Eastern region which its infrastructure was devastated during the civil war back to the country on equal footing, hence, the slogan: "No victor, no vanquished". In that spirit of oneness, General Gowon's military government decreed the policy of Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation (3Rs) for the defeated Eastern region. The policies were merely cosmetic since they were never actually carried out, while, such policy as the "abandoned property policy" was pursued vigorously. The consequence was not only economical, but a deliberate strategy designed to weaken the relationship between the Igbo people, and other minority ethnic groups of the Eastern region.

In furtherance of the government's deliberate policy to frustrate the Igbo's Nsoedo (2019) equally noted that several policies decreed into law became albatross of the Igbo nation's progress. One of such policy was the £20 flat rate refund to any currency holding by the people of Biafra after the war. Saro-Wiwa (2012) wrote that even though the Igbo's were

reintegrated into society, they continued to face economic discrimination. The £20 flat rate policy for any amount any Biafran who wishes to exchange his old currency was a deliberate policy to keep them from recovering from the economic devastation. Aduba (2017) argued that Nigeria government deliberately imposed the £20 flat rate policy without any circumspection. In Addition Achebe (1983) cited in Itumo, et al (2018) had remarked that the marginalization against the Igbo's may have started in 1968, when Nigerian changed her currency. This made the Igbo's to lose over 50 million pounds in foreign exchange. In his words:

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.

Another area the Igbo's has been marginalized has been in the area of the creation of states and local governments. The creation of states and local government areas were deliberately made to favor Northern Nigeria. The Southeast zone is the only political zone among the six political zones that has only five states, while, the rest of the other zones have six states each (Aribisala, 2015). Aribisala concluded that this has consequently led to Southeast being the only zone with the least amount of revenue allocation in the Federation. Former Governor of Anambra state, Dr Ezeife, and Olu Falae, a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, has argued that the creation of more states and local governments in favor of the Northern states was an injustice against their zones, Southeast and Southwest, respectively (Kalu, 2017; Eya, 2017). Both writers observed that the injustice argued by Ezeife and Falae is based on the lopsided size of revenue allocations from the federal government that goes to the Northern states. Olu Falae pointed out that Lagos state which is densely populated, used to have a uniform number of local governments (precisely 20 LGAs) with Kano state (Eya, 2017). Falae argues that while Lagos has been made to retain the same number of local government areas, Kano has grown to 77 LGAs. The Kano state in 1991 was divided into two states, with Jigawa as the new state out of the old Kano state (Adisa, 2011). It is not only the lopsided revenue allocations being channeled to the Northern region that is perceived as injustices, but the political inequities acutely manifest in addressing the national issues. 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 Igbo's and hence destabilize their common resolve, to face the danger confronting them (Okadigbo, 2000).

Meanwhile, Itumo, et al., (2018) had posited that 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 heartland. He furthered that, the cumulative consequences of these wide ranging marginalization's were quite pronounced in the economic sector, which has sentenced Ndigbo to economic penury and stagnation. To buttress this point, Nwakanma (2000) cited in Itumo (2018:398), had rightly observed 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."

On Igbo Marginalization Uduma (2015) cited in Itumo et al., (2018:398) had summarized it thus:

right from the Yakubu Gowon's administration, through to the Murtala/Obasanjo era 1975-1979 to the Shagari presidency of 1979-1983 and to the dictatorship of Buhari/Idiagbo of 1983-



1985 to Babangida and Abacha regimes of 1985-1998 culminating into the Abudulsalami 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's administration of 2010 to 2015.

With all these campaigns and agitations against the marginalization of the Igbo's in Nigeria, one would have expected that after the civil war which engulfed the nation for three years, claiming humongous amount of both human and material resources from Nigeria, that subsequent governments would have done more to assuage the yearnings and aspirations of the Igbo's through a more democratic inclusive government. To add salt to injury, the Buhari's administration which commenced on the 29th of May 2015, and which many had believed would bring national healing to the land, has only succeeded in making the situation worse, hence leading to an intensification of separatist tendencies in Nigeria, with southeast leading the way.

Now let's take a look at the sectional leadership style of President Buhari that has brought and tended to encapsulate and led to an increasing and vehement demand and agitation for a separate state for the Igbo's by the Indigenous People of Biafra and felt by almost all the Igbo's since the inception of the administration.

#### **4. Buhari's Government Leadership Style and Igbo Marginalization in Nigeria 2015 till Date**

During the inauguration of President Muhammadu Buhari on the 29th of May 2015, he declared that "I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody". However, events after his inauguration have proven contrary to this avowal. After his assumption of office and his final appointment during his official visit to the United States of America in an address at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) on July 22nd, 2015, he made it known to the world that he will be sectional in his administration of the country. President Buhari made this known when he was quizzed about how to run an inclusive government in Nigeria. His response was "I hope you have a copy of the election results. The constituents, for example, that gave me 97% (of the vote) cannot in all honesty be treated on some issues with constituencies that gave me 5%." "I think these are political reality," the President added.

Vitiating all democratic norms and the federal character principle as enshrined in Nigeria's constitution, President Buhari went ahead to rapaciously appoint his kith and kin into various political and economic positions of the country. This he did to the neglect of some parts of the country, mainly the Southeastern part of the country. In spite of all the centrifugal forces trying to tear the nation apart emanating from ethnic sentiments and ethnicism and the need to stem this tide through an inclusive government that involves all the regions of the country in the authoritative decision making process of the state, the President Buhari's administration went ahead to take actions that vitiates national integration and harmony. A look at the appointments made by the president since his assumption of office is a pointer to his lack of interest in the Nigerian project of democracy and development. Today most of the regions of the country is being threatened by one form of security challenge or the other; Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East, Niger-Delta Militancy in the South-South, herdsmen attack in the North-Central and Southern parts of the country and then the Indigenous People of Biafra separatist agitation in the South-East. These security challenges could have required the president through an inclusive democratic politics to mobilize all sections of the country to tackle these security challenges. However, the president went ahead

to make lopsided appointments into the heads of the various security agencies in the country to the exclusion of the South-East. This can be gleaned from the table below.

**Table 1: List of the Heads of Security Agencies in Nigeria and their State and Regions of Origin**

S/N	POSITION	STATE	REGION
1	Air Force	Bauchi	North East
2	Inspector General of Police	Niger	North Central
3	Director General of Department of Security Services	Katsina	North West
4	Chief of Army Staff	Borno	North East
5	National Security Adviser	Borno	North East
6	Immigration	Jigawa	North West
7	Civil Defence	Niger	North Central
8	Defence Minister	Zamfara	North West
8	Comptroller of Prisons	n/a	North
9	Custom	Kaduna	North West
10	Chief of Naval Staff	Cross River	South South
11	Chief of Defence Staff	Ekiti	South West

Source: <http://www.nigerianeye.com/2016/06/Nigeria-security-chiefs-and-their-state.html?m=0>

From the table above it is evidently clear that the security architecture in Nigeria is dominated by a section of the country, specifically the Northern part of the country. Thus, in a discussion of security issues concerning Nigeria, the rest of the other parts of country will be grossly under represented, therefore bringing a sense of fear and insecurity to their mind. It is no wonder that the incessant killing of farmers and the sacking of villages by the Fulani herdsmen with boldness and audacious impunity has been attributed to the conspiracy between the President and the heads of the various security agencies in the country for an Islamization agenda in Nigeria. This scenario has tended to bring mutual suspicion among the different regional and religious groups in the country which does not augur well with development.

Taking a cue from hindsight, it should be noted that the Southeast has always stood marginalized from the security arrangements in Nigeria. For instance, out of the 20 Inspector General of Police (IGP) in Nigeria since 1964 to the present, only one IGP is from the Southeast while with Northwest serving for 5 times, Northeast for 5 times, North central 1 time, South-south 4 times and southwest 4 times. The table below represents the distribution of IGPs in Nigeria from 1964 till date.

**Table 2: Distribution of Nigeria's Past and Present Inspector General of Police per Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria 1964 till Date**

S/N	Geopolitical Zone	Number of IGP Produced
1	North Central	1
2	North East	5
3	North West	5
4	South East	1
5	South-South	4
6	South West	4
	Total	20

Source: Wikipedia. [http://en.m.wikipwdia.org/wiki/inspector\\_General\\_of\\_Police\\_](http://en.m.wikipwdia.org/wiki/inspector_General_of_Police_) (Nigeria); table drawn by author

Furthermore, out of the 25 people who have served as Chief of Army Staff (COAS) only 2 are of Igbo extraction while other geopolitical zones with their corresponding ethnic

nationalities such as the Northwest, Southwest, and South-South have served variously in this position. Therefore, the table above reveals that the Igbo's are grossly marginalized even in the security formations in the country as this has been the case with the headship of other security agencies in Nigeria.

The renewal and intensification of the agitation for a separate state for the Igbo's due to the perceived marginalization and politics of exclusion within the Buhari's administration was also boosted by the nature of first appointments made by the president in his first term of office. These first appointments were made to the exclusion of the Southeast as can be gleaned from the table below:

**Table 3: List of Buhari's Appointments in His First Tenure**

S/N	Name	Position	State/Geo-political Zone
1	Lt. Col Abubakar Lawal	Aide de Camp to president	Kano State, North-West
2	Femi Adesina	Special Adviser, Media and Publicity to the president	Osun State, South-West
3	Garba Shehu	Senior Special Assistant, Media and Publicity	Kano State, North-West
4	Lawal Abdullahi Kazaure	State Chief of Protocol/Special Assistant (Presidential Matters)	Jigawa State, North-West
5	Ahmed Idris	Accountant General of the Federation	Kano State, North-West
6	Lawal Daura	Director General, State Security Services, SSS	Katsina State, North-West
7	Amina Zakari	Acting Chairperson, Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC	Jigawa State, North-West
8	Habibu Abdulahi	Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority, NPA	Kano State, North-West
9	Paul Boroh	Special Adviser, Niger Delta Amnesty Office	Bayelsa State, South-South
10	Baba Haruna Jauro	Acting Director General, Nigerian Maritime Administration, Safety and Security Agency, NIMASA	Yobe State, North-East
11	Umaru Dambatta	Executive Vice Chairman/ Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Communications Commission	Kano State, North-West
12	Babatunde Fowler	Executive Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Service, FIRS	Lagos State, South-West
13	Aliyu Gusau	Director General, Budget Office of the Federation	Zamfara State, North-West
14	Emmanuel Kachikwu	Group Managing Director, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC	Delta State, South-South
15	Babachir David Lawal	Secretary to Government of the Federation	Adamawa, North East
16	Abba Kyari	Chief of Staff to the President	Borno, North-East
17	Hameed Ibrahim Ali	Comptroller-General, Nigerian Customs Service	Kaduna State, North-Central
18	Kure Martin Abeshi	Comptroller-General, Nigerian Immigration Service:	Nasarawa State, North-Central
19	Ita Enang	Senior Special Assistant on National Assembly Matters (Senate)	Akwa Ibom State, South-South
20	Suleiman Kawu	Senior Special Assistant on National Assembly Matters (House of Representatives)	Kano State, North-West
21	Modesai Baba Ladan	Director, Department Of Petroleum Resources, DPR	Kano, North West
22	Mohammed Kari	Commissioner for Insurance and Chief Executive of the National Insurance Commission	North-West

Source : *Premium Times, Tuesday, January 13, 2015. Cited in Alumona, etal (n.d).*

To buttress the point further, Alumona etal (n.d) had pointed out that, though renewed Biafra separatist agitations in the Southeast dates back to 1999, when constitutional rule was restored. However, their activities have been intensified since 2015, despite periodic crack

down on their members by security agencies. While a number of narratives have emerged to explain this, the politics of exclusion, evident in the initial appointments by President Buhari in which the Igbo were completely excluded, has remained the most appealing.

Further evidence of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration's lopsided development and marginalization agenda of the Igbo's and other sections of the country could also be picked up from appointments in the NNPC and its other subsidiaries / departments as presented in the table below:

**Table 4: Key Management Positions Held by Northerners in NNPC**

S/N	NAME	POSITION
1	President Muhammadu Buhari	Minister of Petroleum
2	Mele Kolo Kyari	Group Managing Director, GMO
3	Umar Isa Ajiya	Chief Finance officer, Finance & Account
4	Yusuf Usman	Chief Operating Officer, Gas & Power
5	Farouk Garba Sa'id	Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services
6	Mustapha Y. Yakubu	Chief Operating Officer, Refining & Petrochemicals
7	Hadiza Y. Coomasie	Corporate Secretary/Legal Adviser to the Corporation
8	Omar Farouk Ibrahim	GGM, International Energy Relations, IER
9	Kallamu Abdullahi	GGM, Renewable Energy
10	Ibrahim Birma	GGM, Governance Risk and Compliance
11	Bala Wunti	GGM, NAPIMS
12	Inuwa Waya	MD, NNPC Shipping
13	Musa Lawan	MD, Pipeline & Product Marketing, PPMC
14	Mansur Sambo	MD, Nigeria Petroleum Development Company, NPDC
15	Lawal Sade	MD, Duke Oil/NNPC Trading Company
16	Malami Shehu	MD, Port Harcourt Refining Company
17	Muhammed Abah	MD, Warri Refining & Petrochemical Company
18	Abdulkadir Ahmed	MD, Nigeria Gas Marketing Company
19	Salihu Jamari	MD, NNPC Nigeria Gas & Power Investment Company
20	Mohammed Zango	MD, NNPC Medical Services
21	Saraki Auwaly	Director, Department of Petroleum Resources, DPR

Source: *Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) open letter to President Buhari (Business Post. 18th May, 2020)*

Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) had pointed out in their open letter to President Buhari that in the March 2020 promotion and reorganization of the NNPC, that the entire Southern of which the Igbo's is a part in Nigeria was allotted only three top management positions out of twenty three (23) top managerial positions, while the North occupies twenty with the President still as the Minister of Petroleum. This, despite the region being the cash cow of the Federal government in oil production as evidenced below in the table below:

**Table 5: Oil Production in Nigeria by States/Regions**

S/N	State	Region	Oil Production bpd	% bpd
1	Akwa Ibom	South-South	504,000	31.4
2	Delta	South-South	346,000	21.56
3	Rivers	South-South	344,000	21.43
4	Bayelsa	South-South	290,000	18.07
5	Edo	South-South	33,000	2.06
6	Ondo	South West	60,000	3.74
7	Imo	South East	17,000	1.06
8	Abia	South East	11,000	0.68
9		North Zone	00	00

Source: *Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) open letter to President Buhari (Business Post. 18th May, 2020)*

Also of interest in the sectional leadership style of the President and the marginalization of the Igbo's is the composition of the NNPC BOARD that was constituted in 2016. Here, out of the 9 members of the Board only one person was from the South-South in the person of Dr. Thomas M. A. John from Cross River State, apart from the Minister of State, Petroleum, and one person from the Southwest. The rest were all from the Northern zones of the country; with three persons from the Northeast zone, including the then Group Managing Director, Maikanti Baru from Bauchi state and of course, Mr. President's late Chief of Staff, who was a member of the Board until his demise, three persons from the Northwest zone, and one person from the North central zone. The Southeast zone, an oil producing zone, had no representation in the NNPC Board (Business Post, 18th May, 2020). Moreover, it had been observed that of all the other appointments made by the president that 75% are from the Northern part of Nigeria while a paltry 25% are of the Southern part of Nigeria (Abdulmali, 2015). The current Buhari's Cabinet is made up of just 5% of Igbo's.

Furthermore, a quick glance at the distribution of federal government development projects in 2016 by the Buhari's administration also lends credence to the fact that the president had been set out to marginalize the Southeast in the economic development of Nigeria. This is just a year into the Presidents assumption of office. Table six below is revealing:

**Table 6: Distribution of Federal Government Developmental Projects in the 2016 Budgets (Buhari's Administration)**

S/N	Region	Amount (in billions)	%
1	Northeast	46.69	16.3
2	North-central	53.87	18.8
3	Northwest	73.7	25.7
4	South-South	35.31	12.3
5	Southwest	48.97	17.1
6	Southeast	28.22	09.8
	Total	286.76	100

Source: Itumo, etal (2018)

The table above reflects the amounts budgeted for execution of developmental projects in 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; Northeast has 46.69 billion (16.3%); North-central has 53.87 billion (18.8%); North-west has 73.7 billion (25.7%); South-south has 35.31 billion (12.3%); South-west has 48.97 billion (17.1%); while south-east got just 28.22 billion (09.8%), an infinitesimal sum, when compared to what her peers got from the national budget/coffers.

The most recent act and glaring marginalization of the Southeast in the economic distribution of resources in Nigeria is the current request of the President to the National Assembly to borrow the sum of \$22.7 billion dollars for developmental projects of which the Southeast zone was glaringly not factored in its distribution. The table below displays the zones and the projects that are to be sited there, with the Southeast ominously missing.

**Table 7: Nigeria's \$22.7 Billion Loan: Projects/Services by Political Zone**

S/N	Zone	Project	Amount
1	South West	Power transmission project	\$200,000,000.00
2	South-South	-East West road (\$ 800;Niger Delta) -Railway mordenization coastal railway project (Calabar-port Harcourt-Onne deep sea port segment (\$3.47bn; cross river and rivers	\$4,270,000.00
3	South East	Nil	Nil

4	North East	-Multi-sectoral crises recovery programme (\$200m, north-east -North east Nigeria integrated social protection, basic health, education, nutrition services and livelihood restoration project (\$100m; north east) -Lake Chad Basin Commission (\$13m, multinational)	\$300,000,000.00
5	North West	-Kano-Lagos railway modernization project (Kano-Ibadan segment double track)(\$5.53; kano-Ibadan states) -Vocational training in power sector (\$50m; FCT, lagos, ogun. Kano, plateau, Niger, Enugu, Kaduna, and Cross River. -Kaduna state economic transformation programme for results (\$35m, Kaduna) -National information and communication technology infrastructural Backbone Project (NICTIB) phase II (\$328.1m; Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, Akure, Maiduguri, Lokoja, Kaduna, Akwanga, Bauchi, Kano, Katsina) -Health System project (\$110m, Katsina) -Rural water supply and sanitation (\$150m; north-east and plateau) -Development of the mining industry (\$150m, nationwide)	\$6,372,000,000.00
6	North Central	-Staple crops processing zone support project (\$100m, kogi) -Greater Abuja water supply project (\$381m; FCT) -Abuja mass rail transit project (phase II (1.25bn; FCT) -Mambila hydro-electric power project (\$4.8bn; Taraba) -Integrated programme for development and adaption to climate change in Niger republic	\$5,853,900,000.00

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Source: Ndubuisi Ekekwe (2020). Southeast Nigeria and the \$22.7 billion loan Distribution. *Tekedia*. [www.tekedia.com/southeast-nigeria-and-the-22-7-billion-loan-distribution](http://www.tekedia.com/southeast-nigeria-and-the-22-7-billion-loan-distribution)

Thus, the renewed Biafra agitations in the Southeast and parts of South-South has been responses to the poor diversity in the management of government establishment and resource distribution in Nigeria under the President Buhari's led administration.

## 5. Conclusions

The paper explored the intricate connection between the governance style of President Muhammadu Buhari, the intensification of separatist agitation involving the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and development in Nigeria. In the course of our exploration, the paper discovered that since the inception of the Buhari's administration, there has been a deliberate marginalization of the Southeast which is the Igbo heartland, where the IPOB originated and is domicile, from the political and economic scheme of things in Nigeria. Thus, it is on the scaffold of this marginalization and other lopsided policies of the government that majorly favour a section of the country to the neglect of others that has served as a push factor in the intensification of the agitation for a separate nation state for the Igbo's in Nigeria.

Therefore, the paper is of the view that for any meaningful and true development to take place in Nigeria, that governance must be anchored on democratic principle where all the sections of the country are carried along in policy articulation and implementation as anything to the contrary will certainly keep Nigeria in development quagmire and tendency towards disintegration.

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