

THE REALITY OF IGBO MARGINALIZATION AND THE POLITICS OF NIGERIAN PRESIDENT OF IGBO EXTRACTION

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Abstract

A general consensus among the Igbo people is that they are being marginalized and they need to produce the Nigerian president. This is a refutation of that assertion; hence, it argues that the Igbo like all other nations in Nigeria have the powers to determine the Nigerian politics. It investigated the Igbo political elitism during the period of the British colonization of Nigeria and found out that the Igbo intelligentsias were a threat to the British colonialism to the extent that the British recognized that the Igbo were not a lesser power in Nigerian politics-a status that earned them president at independence. This paper further found that the Igbo have been fairly treated since the end of the Nigerian-Biafra war. It concluded that the Igbo problems have not been about marginalization but rather the greed and politics of individualism that often arise from selfish Igbo politicians that have continued to plague on Igbo political unity thereby, balkanizing and denying them the opportunity to producing Nigerian president since 1960. Data for this study were derived from secondary sources while a thematic, analytical and historical method was adopted.

Key words: Reality, Igbo, Marginalization, Politics, President

Introduction

The political marginalization which the Igbo presume to be forcing them into agitation for self-independence needs a re-evaluation of the British colonial activities in bringing two separate entities together for the purpose of administrative convenience. Nigeria as a conglomeration of multiple ethnicities was borne out of the British imperialism for appropriating oversea territory. This oversea territory was to serve the British interest hence, they amalgamated two different people with distinct socio-cultural backgrounds to give them the latitude needed to establish administrative unit in what later became Nigeria. Through this amalgamation, the British introduced the policy of 'divide and rule' that was permitted by the structure of administrative system prevalent to those ethnic groups. In this process, the North was favourably disposed to serve the British interest because of their centralized political system as against the South, particularly the Igbo whose political system is said to be republican and segmented. In this way, the British appeared to be more comfortable with the northern subservient and decided to place them at advantage over the rest of Nigerians, thus, sowing the seed of ethnic politics in Nigeria.

In this way, it becomes imperative to reassess the British political development with a view to establishing that the hatred of the Igbo in Nigerian politics is not only on the basis of enterprise as perceived by many but rather, the outcome of the British attempt to undermine the Igbo political movement in Nigeria during the period of colonialism. In its process, it could be understood that the Nigerian representatives from the Southern protectorate in the Legislative Council of the colonial government were usually appointed from Lagos and Calabar. For example, Olusanya puts it clear when he stresses that in 1914, the Northern and Southern Nigeria protectorates were amalgamated and the truncated Legislative Council for Lagos was made up of seven ex-officio members, two Africans and two Europeans. A new Council, the Nigerian Council was created for the rest of the country. This council was made up of twenty-four officials and twelve unofficial members. There were six Europeans representing commerce, shipping, banking, mining, chamber of commerce and six Africans consisting of important chiefs of Northern and Southern Nigeria (among whom were Sultan Attahiru of Sokoto, the Alafin of Oyo, the Emir of Kano and chief Dogho Numa) and educated Africans from Lagos and Calabar.¹ For clarity, Oluwale puts it as two Emirs from the North, the Alafin of Oyo, one member from Lagos to represent business interest, one from Calabar and one representing the Warri-Benin Area.² In this context, it is regrettable that not even the Obi of Onitsha was considered important in that appointment despite the Igbo doubling as the second most populated tribe in Nigeria.

Similarly, in 1922, the same exclusion was further extended to the Igbo as Sir Hugh Clifford's increase on the number of representatives in the Nigerian Council consisted of official members, 9 unofficial members (none Africans), 6 unofficial members (Africans), 3 elected unofficial members from Lagos, 1 elected unofficial member from Calabar. In this way, one would say that the Igbo's problem has been a structural imbalance that was advanced by the British colonial master and continued up to the modern Nigerian politics. There is no doubt that the Igbo were more patriotic during the liberation struggle but were very naïve to recognize that other tribes were not hence, J. N. Agbo opines that the Igbo were made to think Nigeria first.³

The Igbo Patriotism in Nigeria and the Wise's Foolishness

Of all the tribes in Nigeria and as early stated, the Igbo were the most patriotic during and after the struggle for the independence. The Igbo nationalists demonstrated that Nigeria was first, a national homeland that preceded their nativity. In that, they occupied the forefront of Nigerian nationalism working with their southern brothers to chart a new course for the liberation movement of Nigerians. Before then, Awolowo had assumed the father of Nigerian nationalists.

However, his effort to superintend the movement fell short of popularity until the emergence of Nnamdi Azikiwe who together with his West African Daily Post added a new era to the nationalist struggle. This development threatened the Yoruba as Zik was gaining more popularity for himself and with other Igbo indigenes that had begun to evolve into strong political organization. For example, Godwin Onuoha maintains that it could be argued that the aggressive rise of the Igbo in the 1930s and 1940s colonial Nigeria constituted a threat to the Yoruba because, Zik the main leader of the Igbo had his base and business in Lagos, a Yoruba city.⁴ Possibly, it was feared that allowing the Igbo with any single opportunity means that they would dominate the region with their business dexterity and as such, it was better to contain their expansion on time.

In this context and despite the Igbo constituting a formidable ethnic category of that era, it is instructive to note that the Igbo politics coalesced around the influential and charismatic figure of Nnamdi Azikiwe who just returned from the United State with sundry degrees and emerged the most important and celebrated national leader on the west coast of Africa, if not in all the tropical Africa. This is because, his provocative and combative brand of journalism opened a new vista to journalism and initiated a new era in the nationalist struggle that the Yoruba became wary of him. In terms of its formation, the Nigerian nationalist movement was very narrow in scope. G. C. Olusanya contends that a peculiarity discernable in the nationalist movement was the predominance of the southerners at the outset as leaders of the movement, a factor which sometimes tempts some scholars to question the whole basis of the nationalist movement.⁵ In many literature, scholars have argued that the predominance of the southerners was as a result of their early access to western education, a feat that brought them to occupying certain administrative and commercial activities in the major urban centres. In this context, it is unfortunate that those who were instrumental to the liberation struggle are today regulated to the background because of internal disunity and cut-throat politics that is prevalent among the Igbo ethnic group. For instance, during the nationalist movement, the Action Group emerged as a regional party for the West in 1951 while the NCNC as a conglomeration of various bodies whose aim was 'to provide a medium of expression in order to secure political freedom' for the Nigerians was not a political party. Surprisingly, the AG was formed to first, serve the interest of the West as one of its aims was to bring and organize within its fold all nationalists in the Western Region, so that they might work together as a group and submit themselves to party loyalty and discipline. In fact, it was after the formation of the AG that the NCNC was converted into a party with individual membership and a clearly defined programme of action.⁶ Olusanya further opines that it was the national outlook of the NCNC that exposed her weakness, its lack of discipline and inability to exploit the grievances of various sections of the Nigerian population to political advantage.

Therefore, it could be understood that one of the factors which led to the formation of the AG was the weakness and inactivity of the NCNC since 1947, for the AG was formed to meet the need for a political organization in the west first and for the whole country later.⁷ It could be further stated that through the process of new constitution of 1950/51 that while the Westerners were politically disorganized and lacking in leadership, the Easterners were more organized and the Northerners' loyalty accepted the leadership of Balewa, thus, the formation of AG became necessary to fill that void. Therefore, it is safe to say that the issue of ethnicism did not start with the Igbo, it first started with other ethnic groups in Nigeria.

The Igbo and Her Society

The Igbo is one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria preceding the Hausa-Fulani in the North in terms of population and demographical considerations. Their history of origin is often accounted

1. G. C. Olusanya, *Constitutional development in Nigeria 1861-1960*, in O. Ikime (ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan, Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc, 1980, p.44.

2. G. Oluwale, *Nigerian Blue Book*, 1914 and 1919.

3. J. N. Agbo, *Igbophobia: A Cursory Analysis of the Historical, Economic and Political Conditions of Ndigbo in Nigeria*, TADIPrints, Enugu, 2018, p. 44.

4. G. Onuoha, *Contemporary Igbo Nationalism and the Crisis of Self-Determination in Nigerian Public Sphere*, CODSERIA, Yaoundé, 2008, p.14.

5. *ibid.*

6. *ibid.*

on a shrewd speculation of different theoretical hypotheses. However, each of the theories points towards one direction of having religious similarities with the people of Israelites and as the descendants of Jacob through the lineage of Gad. The explanation that surrounds this hypothesis has been provided in Genesis 46:16 vide: Gad and his sons; Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezhon, Eri, Arodi and Areli. Eri was the fifth son of Gad. He was believed to have married Ishamal and had two younger brothers-Arodi and Areli. They left Egypt with a man called Oduduwa crossing over the River Nile to Sudan (old Ethiopia) to Chad and to Lokoja in present day Nigeria through River Benue and through the River Niger to land at a place called Aguleri around 1305 B.C. at the confluence of two rivers: Ezu and Omabala-a tributary of the River Niger. V. M. C. Eyisi opines that on arrival at the confluence of Omabala and Ezu rivers, Eri settled on the eastern basin of the confluence with his followers and he set up an altar known as Iru Agbanabo of Ezu-na-Omabala.⁸ He maintained that Eri's initial settlement was short lived due to constant over flooding of the area and he with his companions further moved into the hinterland to a place known as Aguleri where Eri built a house, which served as a temple and as an altar. He named the house 'Obu Gad' (the house of Gad) in honour of his father and the palace remains today as the tourist site in Aguleri and becomes ancestral homeland of Igbo people.

In fact, this account is suggestive of the fact that the word or Igbo identity came as a corruption of the Jewish word Hebrew-Heebo-Ebo/Ibo or Igbo. In fact, the Encyclopedia Britannica publication of 1929 and a Torah commentary on Sh'mot of 1922 points to the Israeli origin of the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria through the lineage of Gad, the 7th son of Jacob.

Similarly, there are other such theories of oriental assumptions that trace the origin of the Igbo to Egypt. Though, this account was refuted by eminent scholar of Igbo history-Prof Adiele Afigbo who claimed that the Igbo belong to the branch of the Negro race.¹⁰ Indeed, since our concern is to present the Igbo and their world view in this study, we may not deal much in presenting their history of origin according to how they appear but the Igbo are found in the South-east geographical region. They are predominantly Christians with about 2.5% Muslim population, 25% African Traditional Worshippers and 10% combining Christianity with African Traditional Religion. This puts the Christian population at 62.5%. However, the Igbo are very enterprising and believe in the philosophy that a man can attain greatness individually. It is this individualistic philosophy that contributes to their economic recovery after the 1967-70 Nigeria-Biafra war. In fact, the Igbo are capitalists and are politically republican in nature. This implies that there exists a decentralized political system in which decisions are taken at different political units. Apart from this, the heads of the households form the powerful decision-making organ along with the council of elders who preside over serious matters such as land dispute, adultery, incest and take other judicial functions in accordance with the traditions of the land.

Socially, the Igbo are divided into five major cultural groups: the western or Riverine Igbo, northern or Awka, Owerri, Cross River and Ogoja Igbo.¹¹ Regardless of these cultural groupings, the Igbo respect age and believe that leadership comes from the elders. However, they also believe that respect is not servility and must be balanced by the belief that birth did not grant any privilege to any man. Despite that the Igbo culture emphasizes competition among or between families, lineages and clans.

7. Obafemi Awolowo, Awo: The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, O. U. P., 1960, 179.

9. V. M. C. Eyisi, Igbo History with Bible References, (Onitsha, Chuvic Int'l Agency Ltd, 2010), 3.

They are generally very hospitable, intelligent and possess the capacity for advancing new scientific innovations. In fact, their business ingenuity is so amazing that their society is likened to Dubai and Malaysia.

The Nigerian Politics and the Genesis of Igbo Marginalization

As the struggle for liberation continued in Nigeria and Africa at large, it was certain that the 1954 Lyttelton Constitution was on the path to launch Nigeria into political independence. One of the defects of such heroic attempt was the failure to address the minority problems and the issues of ethno-religious differences which were envisaged to further determine the country's political development whose birth was a matter of time. However, the Nigeria's nationalists were on their own more pragmatic and interested in liberation than the aftermath of the country to be created thereafter. To that extent, they first sought for liberation while putting behind issues of ethnic considerations as factors of later politics. Unfortunately, political parties, civil and public services had been regionalized to the extent that the 1950 Ibadan conference scheduled to discuss the new Macpherson constitution had been dominated by issues about the North and South divide. J. B. Webster, A. A. Boahen and M. Tidy, maintain that on the basis for its larger population the North would control the federal parliament and, as one Southerner said, the West and East will have to accept every legislative proposal from the North.¹² As was the case therefore, the South proposed equal representation for each region and naturally, since there were two Southern regions, a Northerner remarked that if equal representation is given to each region, it seems that the South is to dictate to North. Balewa added that 'Now if it is democracy, gentlemen, which we are trying in this country, and which we hope to try in the future, there is no way out, since on democratic principles the North should receive a preponderant voice. Implicitly, the nationalists knew that the issue of ethnic and regional division was an issue that couldn't have been ignored on the pretence of political freedom but a factor to agree upon before the declaration of independence on October 1, 1960.

At independence, Tafawa Balewa-a Muslim from the Northern region was handed over as the Prime Minister while Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe-a Christian from the Southern region was appointed the ceremonial President by the colonial government. As a prime minister, he was unable to mitigate the growing tensions of 1964-66 that manifested in a partial boycott of the election in 1964, the army unrest and the outbreaks of violence in the Western Region. He was killed in Nigerian Army coup of January 1966 with other prominent leaders from the North and West.

The coup was taunted Igbo coup and in a swift reaction, young military officers of Northern region organized themselves and launched a devastating counter coup that was targeted on the Igbo on July 29 1966. At the same, the angry Hausa-Fulani youths and their military officers jumped into the streets of Kano and Kaduna to maim and carry out pogrom against the unarmed Igbo civilians. The consequences of that pogrom resulted to the declaration of Biafra, an independent republic on May 30, 1967 and on 6 July 1967, at 5.00 am, the Nigerian military leader announced a full scale military confrontation against the new State of Biafra after every effort at Aburi to broker peace stalled. The war raged for thirty months and ended on January 12, 1970 with a popular slogan of 'no victor, no vanquish'. As part of the post-war peace process, Nigerian Federal Military government announced and inaugurated the 3 Rs policy on reconstruction, rehabilitation and

10. Adiele Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture*, (Ibadan, University Press Limited, 1981), 6.

11. J. B. Webster, A. A. Boahen and M. Tidy, *The Revolutionary Years, West Africa since 1800*, (London, Longman Group Limited, 1980), 98.

reconciliation of the war torn areas. Olukunle Ojeleye wrote that the post-war 3Rs Gowon policy is a product of wistful programme.¹³ He cited Prof Adebayo Adedeji as saying that the 3Rs was a one man policy-the policy of the Head of the Federal Military Government, General Yakubu Gowon who arrived at the cabinet meeting in the immediate surrender of the Biafran forces and declared that the war that had just ended was a disagreement between brothers, and his rhetoric that the end of the war must be followed by a process of 'Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation' gave birth to what is now known as the 3Rs.¹⁴ The over-bearing influence of Gowon on the re-integration of the Igbo into post-war Nigeria, and the silenced opposition of key members of Gowon cabinet, is further reflected in the abandonment of the 3Rs as a policy by the Murtala Muhammed/ Olusegun Obasanjo military regime following the overthrow of Yakubu Gowon in a palace coup d'état in 1975.

Similarly, it would be inferred from the outset that the programme was announced to serve the immediate interest of those who desired for the cooperate existence of the nation. On the one hand, the Biafran war was fundamentally a struggle between the forces of self-determination and those of nation-building while on the other hand, it is testament to Nigeria's future politics.

Unfortunately, it appeared that no lesson was learnt from the war as those issues that contributed to the outbreak of civil war are still resurfacing in Nigeria's political circle. There are still wanton killings of the Igbo living in the North with their property being destroyed after the war.

Many Nigerians and ethnic groups have called for restructuring of the Nigeria's federalism and the political system, several constitutional conferences have been called upon to review and re-adopt a federal constitution that would generally be acceptable, unfortunately, their implementations are usually truncated for sheer ethnic considerations. The most worrisome is the issue of federal character and quota system that was invented into Nigeria's political system. Federal character and quota system is a political system or practice that is designed to ensure that power rotates among the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria and government resources and appointments into the Federal Government Agencies, Commissions and Parastatals are carried in a manner that show equal representation of people within the country's geopolitics. Ladipo Adamolekun, John Erero and Basil Oshionebo' assertion is supportive of the foregoing when they stress that the 'federal character' principle, which has been enshrined in Nigeria's constitution since 1979, seeks to ensure appointments to public service institutions fairly reflect the linguistic, ethnic, religious, and geographic diversity of the country.¹⁵ In other words, the expectation of the proponents of this policy was that the application of the principle of federal character would lead to balancing inequality that exists in public service on the principle of quota system based essentially on states of origin. The idea behind this was that the North were educationally backward and only few have the competence to hold technical offices and the only way to strike a balance is by introducing a federal government policy blueprint to take care of it.

In fact, the same practice was expected in the office of Nigeria's President and not the adverse rotation of it between the North and South divide. It is important to state that after 1966 Thomas

12. *ibid*

13. Olukunle Ojeleye, *The Politics of Post-war Demobilisation and reintegration in Nigeria*, (England, Ashgate Publishing limited, 2010), 18. 14. Adebayo Adedeji, *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*, (Boulder, Colo. Lynne Rienner, 2002).

Aguyi Irosni six months as Nigerian Military Head of State, power has been rotating between the Southwest and the North except the one single tenure taking by the South-South. No Igbo man had ever occupied the seat of Nigerian President. Ironically, one would ask if the purpose behind the inauguration of the federal character principle was only to strike a balance in public service and exempt Nigerian presidency.

For example, it is only the Southeast (Igbo) that has five states of all the geopolitical zones, others have six except the Northwest with seven states. More so, the first time an Igbo man was appointed the Secretary to the Government of the Federation was when President Jonathan Goodluck, a South-south man was elected the country's president in 2011 consequent upon the death of President Musa Yar'Adua, a Muslim from the North who was elected based on fact that a president from the South-West extraction was just leaving the office. In fact, after the tenure of Alex Ekweme as Nigerian Vice President to Shehu Shagari in 1983, no other Igbo man has raised to that position again. Therefore, the practice to systematically marginalize the Igbo continued and became worse under President Mahamadu Bahuri.

Elected into office on 29th May 2015, President Mahamadu Bahuri demonstrated a shrewd hatred against the Igbo ethnic group. On assumption of office in May 29, 2015 he announced to the Nigerians that he is for nobody and two months later he disbanded and reappointed the Service Chiefs of the country as follows:

No	Name	Designation	State of Origin/Ethnic Group
1.	Major-General Tukur Y. Buratai	Chief of Army Staff	Borno/ Hausa-Fulani
2.	Major-General Babagana Monguno (Rtd)	National Security Adviser	Borno/Hausa-Fulani
3.	Major-General Abayomi Gabriel Olonishakin	Chief of Defence Staff	Ekiti/Yoruba
4.	Rear Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas	Chief of Naval Staff	Cross River/Ibibio
5.	Air Vice Marshal Sadique Abubakar	Chief of Air Staff	Bauchi/ Hausa-Fulani

See vanguard newspaper of July 13, 2015

Others include the appointment of Mohammed Abubakar Adamu, an Hausa-Fulani from Nasarawa State as Inspector General of Police and Yusuf Magaji Bichi from Kano State, an Hausa-Fulani as a Director of the Department of Security Service. The appointment did not reflect in the principle of federal character and it is done against the background of quota system but as a marginalization against the Igbo ethnic group.

Other Departments and Agencies in which the Hausa-Fulani's appointments have dominated include: Nigerian Custom, Immigration, Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Intelligence Agency (NIA), and National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). Others include the newly recommendations of the eleven judges for appointment as Judges of the Federal High Court, Abuja. The recommendations were against the Igbo ethnic group and according to Justice Inyang Ekwo, the president acted in a contravention of the law. The pronouncement was made based on a suit filed against the president by an Abuja-

based lawyer, Oladimeji Ekengba who maintained that the forwarding of the names of the 11 nominees by Buhari to the Senate was in breach of section 256 (2) of Nigerian constitution.¹⁶

The Igbo Unity and the Search for the Nigerian President of Igbo Extraction

The Igbo political organization cannot be completely different from the nature of her society as republican system. The Igbo republican system allows decisions on important issues to be taken at various political units thus, the Igbo are politically republican. This system is said to have encumbered the prospect for a unified decision to the extent that the Igbo practice of individualistic politics has been negating their political interest in national politics. As a republican society, the Igbo believe so much in themselves and had never allowed any situation to deter their morale for achieving greatness. In fact, they seek political growth through individual efforts thus, making consensus and adoption of candidate practically difficult. This is not to say that the Igbo don't consult at the early stage of political interest, they consult but they don't allow the outcome of such consultation to impact on their interest. Unlike other ethnic groups, the absence of a centralized political system negatively affects their political unity. To that extent, politicians of Igbo extraction often feel that they can attain any political position by working with the Hausa-Fulanis rather than working with their brothers.

Indeed, one can say that apart from the first Republic Igbo political unity, the people have never come together again politically. The evidence of this internal disunity, greed and selfish interests among the Igbo politicians are still impacting on their political development to the extent their chances of produce president of Igbo extraction are very narrow.

The Challenges of Igbo Unity and Whether the Igbo can produce a President of Igbo Extraction

The rhetoric of Nigerian president of Igbo extraction has remained a source of worry to many Igbo people and lovers of Igbo nation. Since the inception of Nigerian democracy in 1999, the Igbo have been discriminated from the Nigerian leadership. No reason was given but there are those who view such marginalization as the consequences of going to war with the Federal Government of Nigeria and for being defeated in the war. There are those who believe that except for God's intervention and on a general consensus, the dream to have a Nigerian president of Igbo extraction will be marred by a lot of factors. This is because they are challenged by internal disunity orchestrated by greed, selfishness and individualism. According to Acho Orabuchi, the Igbo unity tends to be an elusive concept to some because, to achieve it, hard work and time in conjunction with other factors must be expanded.¹⁷ The Igbo recognize that lack of unity and high degree of selfishness among themselves is a perennial problem. Selfishness is one serious problem to political unity. In 2003, there were two major Igbo aspirants that came out to contest the All Nigerian Peoples Party presidential primaries and many others from the North. Chuks Ugwoke, Paul Odili and Rotimi Ajayi, maintains that before the party primaries, the party leadership asked the Northern aspirants to produce a consensus candidate from their rank and their Southern counterparts to do same. The Northern aspirants accordingly chose General Mahammadu Buhari with Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, Alhaji Lema Jubrilu and Alhaji Ysusf Ali withdrawing from the race. Most of the Southern aspirants were said to be against the idea, and preferred instead to try their strength at the convention.¹⁸ Before then, National Executive Council and members of the party Board of Trustee were said to have met and the issue of Buhari and Okadigbo had been suggested. Chuks et'al opine that the suggestion was contested by majority of the delegates who believed that

the dual would be difficult to sell. In utmost conspiracy, and when it was clear that the Igbo would not get the ticket, Okadigbo made a quick overture and immediately reached out to Buahri's campaign to suggest that he would settle for the Vice-president position.

Furthermore, they maintain that Okadigbo's action did not go down well with his fellow Igbo aspirants, who felt that without putting up a fight, Okadigbo was endorsing a Northern candidate.¹⁹ After this, many Igbo political leaders left the party for another political party. For example, Mobolaji E. Aluko, maintains that during the general elections, only the Igbo people fielded four presidential candidates. He supplied their names and their political parties as follows:

1. Emeka Ojukwu- All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA),
2. Arthur Nwankwo-People's Mandate Party (PMP),
3. Jim Nwobodo- United Nigeria People's Party (UNPP)
4. Ike Nwanchukwu- Natioanl Democratic Party (NDP).²⁰

Furthermore, the Yoruba had two candidates, and the Hausa-Fulani had two candidates and peoples' view was that the Igbo were very weak to challenge the incumbent, President Olusegun Obasanjo of the People Democratic Party. But one can say that such assertion was conjured scientifically to deny the Igbo, the presidential ticket in the party. Aside from political differences, the Igbo are being challenged by the philosophy of individualism. The Igbo conception of the world is seen from the attempt to achieve greatness through individual struggle. So, whether they get supports from their fellow Igbo people is contrary to their political philosophy. Therefore, this individualism has or will adversely affect their dream to produce the Nigerian president of Igbo extraction in 2023. Except on mutual consent, some prominent Igbo leaders are now playing up against one another. The absence of centralized and unified political system, contributed to Igbo political marginalization. There are people who are calling for Nigerian president of Igbo extraction in 2023 and Ebere Onwudiwe maintains that this requires building a strong and expensive nationwide coalition across the country to shake off the excessively individualistic pursuit of the highest office in the country.²¹

Conclusion

The Nigerian political system over the years has remained largely a confused system. The process has shown a lot of irregularities, instability, maiming, cut- and divide and rule political system that thrive on ethnic marginalization of the Igbo from the rest of the geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The reasons for this are often born from the fact that the Igbo fought a liberation war. However, the reason for the war was the outcome of the pogrom that was meted out on Igbo as a consequence of the January 1966 coup d'état which aimed at saving the country from corruption that permeated the country's first Republic. Unfortunately, from the beginning of 1960 Nigerian political independence, the issue of ethnic marginalization has dominated Nigerian political system. This is because, the Nigerian nationalists were more committed to liberation than the aftermath of the country that would come with the liberation. By this, they ignored the weightier issues bordering on ethno-religious divide and cultural differences for one Nigeria hence the country has been battling for survival.

17. Acho Orabuchi, Igbo Unity a Hopeless Conundrum, *the Sun*, 2013, sunnewsonline.com

18. Chuks Ugwoke, Paul Odili and Rotimi Ajayi, ANPP Moved to Settle for Buhari Okadigbo Ticket, *Vanguard Newspaper*, January 8, 2003.

16 Inyang Ekwo, Court Faults Buhari over Breach of Law on Judges' Appointment, *Nation Newspaper*, Wednesday, 23 September, 2020

Contrarily, the Igbo have diversity of history of origin. Each shows that the Igbo business expertise is likened to that of people of Dubai hence, they were able to survive the post Nigeria-Biafra war economic crisis. Aside this, the Igbo society are very republican in nature. It allows decisions to be taking at different political units which sometimes retard the prospect of Igbo political unity and development. Unlike the North and West in which the Arewa Consultative Forum and Egbe-Omo Oduduwa serve as strong political organization for collective decision taking, the Ohanaeze becomes such a passive political unit of the Igbo. It is against this background that this study found the consequent of Igbo political marginalization to be the outcome of the decentralized political system that permitted Igbo philosophy of individualism and concluded that Igbo political marginalization in Nigeria is partly the pay back of Nigeria-Biafra war years and partly the outcome of Igbo political character. Therefore, if the character is not contained with the present state of things, the Igbo dream of producing Nigerian president of Igbo extraction will only end as an imagination.

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5. *ibid.*
6. *Ibid*
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18. Mobolaji E. Aluko, Nigerian Elections 2003: Update 003-The State of Candidates So Far, *Vanguard Newspaper*, Sunday, January 12, 2012.
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