

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION, ETHNIC DENSITY AND ETHNIC MARGINALIZATION IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC: A STUDY OF THE IGBO ETHNIC GROUP

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Abstract

From the 2006 Nigerian census figures used by the government for budget planning and policy making, the Igbo ethnic group in South East among the major ethnic group in Nigeria due to her numerical strength has become a minority ethnic group in Nigeria. This trend in ethnic density of Nigeria especially the Igbo ethnic group is detrimental as population largely determines who gets what in Nigeria especially when it comes to elections and resource Control. Currently the Igbo ethnic group is facing marginalization of all sorts due to the population density of Igbo ethnic group. This study is aimed at investigating how colonial administration led to the negative trend in ethnic density of Nigeria that led to the marginalization of the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria's fourth republic. The study made use of Post-Colonial Theory as a framework of analysis. The methods for this research is as follows, ex-post facto research as its research design; content analysis as its analytical technique; secondary source as its data collection base. Hence all data collected were qualitatively synthesized thoroughly to ensure coherence and objectivity. Result showed that, colonial Administration led to the negative trend in the Igbo ethnic density that led to the marginalization of the Igbo in Nigeria through population census manipulation, slave trade, alien religion, cultural domination in Igboland and destruction of Igbo economy. The study recommended among others that: Igbo political elites should improve the economy and standard of living of people in South East by establishing industries, free education, free health care, electricity, and other social amenities to encourage the Igbo ethnic group outside South East to come back to their states.

KEYWORDS: Colonial Administration, Ethnic density, Population, Majority group, Minority group, Population census, De-facto, De-jure, Ethnic Marginalization.

Introduction

The importance of population in any democratic state like Nigeria cannot be overemphasized as population largely determine who gets what in Nigeria's politics. Thus, the Population in Nigeria majorly determines who get the position of

president, who holds any political position and who gets government projects and programmes. Thus, any political party that wants to win an election or get anything from the federal government must work on its population. Instead of this, political parties in choosing their presidential candidates considers which part of the country the person comes from (North or South), the religion of the person (Christianity or Muslim) with the view of getting much population to win the polls; hence some part of the country are perceived to be more populated than others. More so, some religious groups are perceived to be more populated than others. Chigbo (2001) asserts that the concept of population Census had been completely politicized since 1959, when a conscious attempt was made to use it in the determination of the number of seats in the House of Representatives; its inclusion in the constitution gave some sections of the country undue advantage in the federal politics of Nigeria. Eze (2017) observes that the use of census data for the allocation of political and economic power, including the distribution of socio infrastructural amenities, remains at the root of census data manipulation and disfiguration in the country as such the exact population remains questionable.

From the foregoing, the Igbo (South East Nigeria), comprising of Abia State, Anambra State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State & Imo State, classified among the 3 major ethnic groups in Nigeria during the pre-colonial Era, colonial Era and partly post-colonial era due to her numerical strength, has become a minority group in all ramifications. Agbase (2003) notes that some Nigerian scholars distinguished between majority and minority groups not just on the basis of number but also in terms of perceived socio-political disadvantages that some Nigerians are said to be subjected to. Thus, from the 2006 population census figures which is the official population statistics used by the government in budget planning and policy formulation, the Igbo ethnic group in south east geopolitical zone had the lowest population figure and presently in Nigeria the Igbo are crying over marginalization in Nigerian politics. According to Nwankwo (2000) in Uduma (2015), marginalization has become an Igbo bedmate; in fact, it is now in the state of alienation and exclusion. According to Uduma (2015), the marginalization of Ndigbo is so intense that no Igboman, however good his credentials is can today expect to command nationwide acceptance as a leader in the government and politics of Nigeria. This means that; the Igbo in South East geo-political zone has become a minority group in Nigeria either weighed from population or perceived socio-political disadvantage. This is worrisome and necessitated this study. From the foregoing, this paper argues that the marginalization of Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria's fourth republic is as a result of Igbo ethnic density/ population which were affected negatively by colonial administration. Thus, the study saw it as a lulu to investigate the colonial factors behind the negative trend in Igbo ethnic density in post-colonial Nigeria that led to the marginalization of the Igbo.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine colonial administration, ethnic

density, and ethnic marginalization with specific reference to the Igbo ethnic group. Specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the influence of colonial administration on Nigerian ethnic density in the Fourth Republic
2. Identify the ways colonial administration affected Igbo ethnic density in Nigeria's fourth republic
3. Examine the influence of population in the attainment of the Igbo presidency agenda in the fourth republic

Research Questions

From the objectives of this study, the researcher poses and seeks answers to the following questions:

1. How did colonial administration influence Nigeria's ethnic density in the fourth republic?
2. In what ways did colonial administration affect Igbo ethnic density in Nigeria's fourth republic?
3. How did Igbo ethnic density in Nigeria affect the attainment of Igbo presidency agenda in the fourth republic?

Conceptual Clarification

The Concept of Colonial Administration

Colonial Administration (Colonialism) is the overall policy of establishing and maintaining colonies, territories, and people held in an interim relationship to another state by Europeans (Egwu, 2013). Okpata (2004) notes that colonial rule in Africa is the culmination of a living process of European-African connection, which dates back to the period of the slave trade; primarily, colonial incursion started with the slave trade and later moved on to trade in goods when European nations brought about rivalry amongst the countries of Europe. According to Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012:4), Colonialism is the direct and overall domination of one country by another based on state power being in the hands of a foreign power (for example, the direct and overall domination of Nigeria by Britain between 1900-1960). The first objective of colonialism is political domination. Its second objective is to make possible the exploitation of the colonized country (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012).

Ethnic Density/ Population

Ethnic density is the residential concentration of one racial or ethnic group (Becares, Dewey & Das-Mushi, 2018). The concept of population has been defined in many ways, biology defined population as all organisms of the same group or species, which live in a particular geographical area and have the capability of interbreeding. In sociology population refers to a collection of humans. Population is the number of people in a city or town, region country or world; population is actually determined by a process called census (Chigbo, 2001). Chambers 21st century dictionary defined

population as all the people living in a particular country, area etc. Ferrus and Winso (2010) define population as a collection of individual of a single species of organisms spatially or temporally isolated from other such group. In some cases populations are geographically contiguous but exhibit gradual genetic variation across their range (clinal variation).

Population is the total number of people as a race, group, country, community, village town who are in a particular geographical location or spread around the globe. Thus population can be de facto or de jure. It is de-facto when it has to do with the number of race, group, country, community, village and town present in a particular place at a particular time and de-jure when it has to do with the number of race, group, country, and community, village town who are both present and those who are in proxy. The study of the human population is called demography. The population of a particular people is known through the conduct of a population census. Population of people changes from time to time as a result of birth rate, death rate, migration and emigration. The population of Nigeria for instance, as shown in the population census figures in 1952/53 was 31.12 million and as at 1962/63 it changed to 55.67m 2006 census has it as 144 and by now it is estimated to be 170 million. The population of a people is very important as it helps the administrators of the group involved in planning and that is why census is conducted to know the total number of people in a place at a given time.

The Concept of Marginalization Burton and Kagan (2005) assert that marginalization is a slippery and multi-layered concept. Marginalization can take place at the global level, national level and societal level. Communities can be marginalized from the dominant social order. Similarly, ethnic groups, families or individuals can be marginalized within localities. Verma and gayathri (2014) assert that the concept of marginalization rests on the principle of exclusion where certain set of people or community are deprived from their right due to endogenous and exogenous factors. The endogenous factors vary from gender, ethnicity, linguistic to race while exogenous factors include poverty, geographic location, lifestyle etc. Marginalization entails exclusion from fulfilling full social lives at individual, interpersonal and societal levels. Marginalized people have relatively little control over their lives, and the resources available to them are limited. They may become stigmatized and are often at the receiving end of negative public attitudes. Their opportunities to make social contributions may be limited, and they may develop low self-confidence and self-esteem (Burton & Kagan, 2005).

Marginalization is the deprivation and exclusion of a group or individuals from sharing or taking part in what is collectively owned by all. Marginalization could occur in all facet of life. In Nigeria, most ethnic groups have cried out for marginalization. Thus in Nigeria, both the majority and minority ethnic groups do cry out for marginalization. The case of the Igbo, Nigeria Delta, Ibibios, Hausa, amongst others are

very good example. Omemma (2019) submits that since its conception as a multinational state, Nigeria has been plunged into a miasma of marginalization and the consequent clamour for the restructuring and self-determination marginalization and discrimination have become dynastic in the Igbo dominated area of the south east in particular and the southern part of the country in general (Anyagwu&Okika, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is post-colonial theory. According to Parsons and Harding (2011: 2), Post-colonialism theory asks for justice: it seeks to speak to the vast and horrific social and psychological suffering, exploitation, violence, and enslavement done to the powerless victims of colonization around the world. It challenges the superiority of the dominant Western perspective and seeks to re-position and empower the marginalized and subordinated “Other” (Smith, 2007). It pushes back to resist paternalistic and patriarchal foreign practices that dismiss local thought, culture, and practice as uniform, “barbarian,” and irrational (Dussel, 2000). It identifies the complicated process of establishing an identity that is both different from, yet influenced by, the colonist who has left. Proponents of the theory include, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak amongst others.

This theory is apt for this study because the study asks for justice: it seeks to speak to the vast and horrific social and psychological suffering, exploitation, violence and enslavement done to the Igbo ethnic group during colonialism that led to the marginalization in this fourth republic. Thus this study traced the colonial factors that affected the population of the Igbo ethnic group which is the main cause of the marginalization they face in post-colonial Nigeria and particularly the fourth republic.

Research Methods The methodology for this research is as follows: ex-post facto research as its research design; content analysis as its analytical technique; secondary source as its data collection base, thus. The researcher made use of university libraries, different public and private libraries, and other government archives; internet/websites were visited for data collection. All data collected were qualitatively synthesized thoroughly to ensure coherence and objectivity.

Colonial Administration and Ethnic Density in Nigeria

Ethnic density or the population of people in any geographical area, is determined through “Population census”. Thus, through the population census, the ethnic density of Nigeria today was established by the colonial master in favour of the North. According to Ota and Ndubuisi (2025:454),

British paternalism towards Northern Nigeria was responsible for manipulating census figures in the North's favour during the colonial era. The hidden agenda was to ensure the perpetuation of the North's domination of Nigerian politics, given the fact that National Assembly

seats then (and even now) are allocated according to bogus population figures. In the end, census figures in Nigeria have remained controversial and have at various times, threatened the very existence of the country. The North has continued to claim numerical superiority over the South.

The reason for the manipulation of census in favour of the North by the colonial is simple, the hatred they developed for the Igbo ethnic group and their paternalism towards the north. Obiajulu (1995) asserts that with the racial suppression of Igbo by the white, the Igbo question suggest a social order very unpleasant and retrogressive to the self realization of the Igbo race. According to Ota and Ndubuisi (2025:454), the British colonial regime never hid its hatred for the South, especially the Igbo. The simple reason is that it took the British about twenty years to conquer and pacify Igboland and other groups in the south-eastern part of Nigeria. This was not the case in Yorubaland and Hausaland, where the conquest was achieved with minimal resistance. Okonjo(1974) submits that the fierce resistance by the Igbo and their neighbours against British colonial penetration and occupation of their territory earned them the sobriquet of being an ungovernable people by the British. From the foregoing, the colonial masters conducted the first population census in Nigeria and introduced all manner of corrupt practices in order to favour the North. Emezue (1998) submits that the first population census in what is today called Nigeria was conducted in 1866 in Lagos. This was soon after the British had annexed Lagos and converted it into a colonial territory. Subsequent headcounts were conducted in the colony between 1868 and 1871, and after that, every ten years. Thus, there were census enumerations in 1881 and 1891 in Lagos (Ota & Ndubuisi, 2025).

In 1911, the colonial masters made the first attempt to have a population census covering the whole of Nigeria. At the end of the exercise, a population of eight million, one hundred and fifteen thousand, nine hundred and eighty-one (8, 115, 981) was ascribed to the Northern Protectorate, while the Southern Protectorate (including Lagos) was given a population of seven million, nine thousand and four hundred (7,009, 400million). The total population was thus put at 15,125,381. For instance, the provincial administrators in the North made their own estimates and disagreed with the figures returned by the Acting Governor of the North (Okoroafor, 1982; Ota & Ndubuisi, 2025). Another census exercise that was conducted by the colonial administration was in 1921. The result of the 1921 census was doctored to favour the North as usual. Thus, the North had a population of nine million, nine hundred and ninety thousand, three hundred and fourteen (9, 990, 314), while the South had eight million, three hundred and sixty-eight thousand, five hundred and twelve (8,368,512) (Emezue, 1998). According to Ota and Ndubuisi (2025:454), the 1921 census-taking was also controversial because the exercise was not done simultaneously in both the North and South, and in the cities and rural areas. The exercise was spread over two

months in the rural areas whereas it lasted for just a day in the cities. It has been argued that because of the tabulation errors noticed in the figures returned, a decision was taken to inflate the returns of indigenous populations in the urban areas by five percent and in the rural areas by ten percent (Sklar, 1965; Emezue, 1998).

In 1931, another population census was planned to cover the whole country but the exercise later covered some areas for some reasons. According to Ota and Ndubuisi (2025:454), the reasons for this is Aba Women's War of 1929, global economic recession of 1929 which reduced the revenue available to the colonial government, and the locust invasion in the North. Thus, the 1931 census was restricted to Lagos in the South and five cities and two hundred and one villages in the North. The figures put the national total at nineteen million, nine hundred and twenty-eight thousand, one hundred and seventy-one (19,928,171), with the Southern province (including Lagos) having a total of eight million, four hundred and ninety-three thousand, two hundred and forty-seven (8,493,247) and the North having eleven million, four hundred and thirty-four thousand, nine hundred and twenty-four (11,434,924) (Ota & Ndubuisi, 2025; Emezue, 1998). From the census result above, there was geometric population growth in the North and arithmetic population growth in the South. Thus, the population of the North increased by over a million (1,436,610) within a decade, while that of the South increased with just a hundred and twenty-four thousand, seven hundred and thirty-five (124,735). There was no official explanation for this “miracle” (Ota & Ndubuisi, 2025).

From the foregoing, the colonial government domesticated the culture of census manipulation in favour of the North and this culture has been upheld in the post colonial Nigeria. Thus, the corrupt practices exhibited by the colonial administrators have been multiplied in all population census conducted in Nigeria after the colonial era to equally favour the north. This is majorly because the colonial masters made the north to believe that their population is more than that of the south. Beke (2006) notes that any census which suggest that the population of the Southern states is larger than that of the Northern states will certainly be unaccepted and dismissed as looked or inflated by Southern politicians e.g the 1962 census result was cancelled on this context and even the officers in charge of the census body was dismissed by the government. Mackintosh (1964) asserts that with the release of the 1962 census figure, it became clear that the provisional figures of the South outnumbered those of the North. The figures of the East was particularly criticized by the other regions, the political implication was a shift in the balance of power in favour of the South. Chigbo (2001) submits that as a result of the unaccepted figures from the South by the North the then federal minister of economic development. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim of the Northern people's congress recommended that a verification exercise be conducted. This verification exercise which took place in the North gave them extra 8.5 million people but the figure was promptly rejected by other regions.

Okonkwo (1994) observes that the 1962 census figures showed an increase of 71% over the 1953 figures in the east. The figures of the west also increased significantly by 39 percent while that of the North and Lagos increased significantly by 30 percent and 200 respectively. Thus, the 1962 census was canceled because the South was more than the North and due to other irregularities that followed the census. Based on this another census was conducted in 1963. Chigbo (2001) states that having reached a unanimous decision to cancel the 1962 census, a new national head count was slated to take place between the 5th and 8th November, 1963. After the 1963 census the census board announced an interim report on February 24, 1964 which gave the north 53.4%, (29,777,985 of the figure) East 22.6% (12,388,646), west 18.5% (10,278,500), Mid-west 4.5% (2,33,337) and Lagos 1.0% (678,352) of the census figure which totaled to 55,653,821. From the above the North was favoured and this led to agitation especially by the East. Okpara (1964) observes that the result of the census was hotly contested by many eastern especially the then premier of the East, Dr. M.I. Okpara. He declared that the announcement had disclosed an inflation of such astronomical proportions, adding that the figures obtained, taken as a whole were worse than useless. Chigbo (2001) notes that the then prime minister in charge of federal ministry of economic development Allaji Waziri Ibrahim despite the serves of protest against the figures quickly released the result without consulting the regional premiers. He went further to state that it was these figures that formed the basis for the delimitation of constituencies in the December 1964 elections. The population census was used because it favoured the North. In 1991 another census was conducted with a total no of 88.5 millions, it was also contested as it favoured the North but despite the inconsistency it was used as official document of the government. Currently, the 2006 census is been used now by government not because it is generally accepted but because it favoured the North. The result of the 2006 census as published by National Population Commission is as follows:

GEO-POLITICAL ZONE	POPULATION	PERCENTAGE(%)
North East	18,984,299	13.5%
North central	20,369,956	14.5%
North West	35,915,467	25.6%
South East	16,335,55	11.7%
South south	21,044,081	14.7%
South west	27,722,432	19.8%
Total population	140,431,790	100%
Total north	75,269,	722 53.6%
Total south	65,102,068	46.4%

Source: National Population Commission (NPC, 2006).

From the 2006 population census report shown above, one can see that the population of the Igbo has the lowest population figures. Thus, from the population

figure, South-East (Igbo states) had 16,335, 55(11.7%) followed by North-East with 18,984, 299(13.5%), North-Central followed with 20, 369, 956(14.5%). The next is South- South with 21,004, 081(14.7%) followed by South-West with 27, 722, 432(19.8%) and the highest figure is North-West with the population of 35, 915, 956(25.6%). The world in general and Nigeria in particular are using the above figures as accepted Nigerian population figure. The implication is that the world has accepted that the Igbo which is among the 3 major ethnic groups by its numerical strength during pre- colonial era, colonial era and partly post-colonial era has become minority group. From the foregoing, the colonial masters are the major determinant of Nigeria's ethnic density as it is in the census figures and beyond, especially the density of Igbo ethnic group. Thus, there are other means colonial masters used to reduce the population of the Igbo in Nigeria outside manipulation of population census.

Colonial Factors Responsible for the Negative Trend in Igbo Ethnic Density in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Colonial administration in Nigeria did not favour the Igbo ethnic group. Ota and Ndubuisi (2025:454) argue that the reason is because of Igbo resistance to colonial rule. To get their pound of flesh the colonial masters decided to reduce the Igbo ethnic density in Nigeria to allow perpetual marginalization of the Igbo ethnic group. Thus, colonial administration affected the Igbo ethnic population in Nigeria negatively through the following:

Population Census Manipulation

Through population census manipulation, the colonial masters reduced the actual number of the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria have been reduced to nothing just to favour the north. According to Ota and Ndubuisi (2025:454), the manipulation of census figures in Nigeria began during the colonial era. Due to the manipulation of population census which was learnt from the colonial masters, census figures in Nigeria have remained controversial and have at various times, threatened the very existence of the country. The North has continued to claim numerical superiority over the South. The disdainful and arrogant disposition of the Fulani-led Northern Nigeria political oligarchy to other Nigerians on account of this portends enormous danger to national integration (Pierce, 2006). From the foregoing, the actual ethnic density of the Igbo in Nigeria cannot be ascertained as population census is manipulated to favour the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group. Thus, what is used as the population of the South-East geopolitical zone is not the actual figure but a fudged figure.

Slave Trade in Igbo Land

The Igbo in the Atlantic slave trade became one of the main ethnic groups enslaved in the era lasting between the 16th and late 19th century. Located near indigenous Igbo territory, the Bight of Biafra (also known as the Bight of Bonny), became the principal area in obtaining Igbo slaves. An estimated 14.6% of slaves were taken from the Bight of Biafra between 1656 and 1900, the third greatest percentage in

the era of the transatlantic slave trade, the Igbo were dispersed to colonies such as Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, Barbados, the colonies in the future United States, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago among others (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbopeople.atlantic_slave_trade).

Orji (1987) observes that the Igbo ethnic group was among the exported slaves to Europe and the America. Although the total number of Igbo people who were enslaved is unknown, estimates based on the 18th and 19th century records and the record work of P. Lovejoy, can give some insight into the magnitude of the slave trade in Igboland. The estimates indicate that out of 850,000 slaves from the Biafran hinterland who landed safely overseas. From 1640 to 1800, about 75% or 637,500 of them were from Igboland. Onyegiri (2005) asserts that the first significant trauma that the Igbo culture witnessed was the slave trade. From the figures given by John Adams and English slaving captain, quoted by Isiche at Bonny, it would appear that between 1510AD when the first slaves were transported to new world barring slave trade, at least 5,672,500 Igbo were forcibly carried off their fatherland on slavery. Okere (2005) asserts that so many were transported in the most inhuman conditions across the Atlantic. The trauma of the lucky ones who survived it was to enter into a life of hard labour, chattel slavery unknown in our cultures; those who didn't survive perished like flies, unwept and unknown and we are told that over the 300 years of the slave trade they were in millions dumped into the sea to die if they were too sick. The survivors of the middle passage were clubbed into submission and at times into a martyr's death for freedom. Today many people equate the slave trade of the black man to the holocaust, but in some ways, it was worse (Okere, 2005). The slave trade reduced the population of the Igbo in Nigeria to the barest minimum; thus, the Igbo are spread outside Nigeria as a result of the slave trade, reducing the population of the Igbo in Nigeria, and that is one of the reasons that made the northerners appear more in number whenever a census is conducted.

Alien Religion in IgboLand

The religion introduced in Igboland in Nigeria by the white man is another factor affecting the population of the Igbo in Nigeria. The whiteman, after the abolition of slave trade resorted to the use of religion to achieve her interest. Thus, the introduction of the two alien religion in the northern and southern part of the country. Kukah (1999) observes that the story of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria differs significantly in terms of the historical and cultural experience of Nigeria, with the way both religions arrived, they sought to assert themselves by dislodging the traditional religion of the communities with which they interacted by offering their people new gods as a basis of moral legitimacy. He argued that the attitudes of the missionaries of these religions sowed the seeds for their subsequent politicization in Nigeria. Thus, the white man introduced Islam in the Northern Nigeria which allows a man to marry up to four (4) wives and Christianity that permits a man to marry only one wife in Igboland and other southern Nigeria just to clamp down on Igbo population since population determines who gets what in Nigerian politics. Eteng (2008) observes that African polygamous

marriage was indirect opposition to the Christian religion monogamous system of marriage which was introduced with European contact. He also notes that men who have accepted Christianity were now marrying one wife as an indication of belonging to a higher culture and for social change. He further asserts that Catholic celibacy became an accepted norm. Today, many Igbo catholic priests, reverend brothers, and reverend sisters are not married, talk more give birth, while the Imam in the North is practicing polygamy. Outside the practice of celibacy by some catholic faithful, many other denominations in Christendom practice monogamy. All were aimed at reducing the population of the Igbo ethnic group to favour the North in Nigerian politics.

The introduction of the two alien religions by the white man has affected the Nigerian population density, especially the Igbo ethnic group through religious crises. Thus, many Nigerians, especially Igbo, have been killed during religious crises across the nation. The Igbo are killed in the North and across the country on religious bases without any remorse whatsoever, and the worst of it all is that the bible will tell the Igbo to fold their hands and wait for God to fight for them. Ikenah-Metuh (1994) asserts that Nigeria has recorded very bizarre experience in the domain of religious violence. Some of the prominent examples include those of the Kasuwan Magani in 1980, Zango Kataf and Gure-Kahugu in 1987, Kafanchan and Leru in 1987, Ilorin and Jere in 1989, Tafawa Belewa in 1991, Zango Kataf in 1992, amongst others (Eniola, 2010). In the year 2000, many killings were recorded from religious disturbances; an estimated 3000 people lost their lives in a clash between Muslims and Christians in Kaduna (Sulaiman, 2016). According to Olukorede (2002:8), there was a reprisal attack in Aba, Abia State and about 450 persons were killed. In all religious crises between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, countless lives have been lost. Worthy of note is that the Igbo ethnic group is mostly killed during the religious crises as they mostly practice Christianity.

Moreso, Islam is a religion that uses war (Holy war) to get converts thus, the Jihad war in 1804 by Uthman dan Fodio was aimed at getting members for the Islamic religion in Nigeria, while Christianity, which was introduced in Igboland, abhors war. The implication of using war to get members is that the opposite religion will be killed at any resistance. The major aim of introducing Islam which uses war to get convert and Christianity that abhors war and uses persuasion to get converts is to reduce the number of the Igbo ethnic group just to favour the north in Nigerian politics since democracy is a game of number.

Western Education in Igbo Land

Western education is another causative factor that affected ethnic density in Nigeria especially Igbo ethnic group. Nweke (2008) notes that modern education was first introduced in the southern part by the Christian missionaries who were confronted with the challenge of penetrating the hinterland through evangelism. He further asserts that the people of Southern Nigeria accepted the missionaries and it led to the establishment of churches and mission schools in many areas in the region as from the

1840's to 1960s and after independence. From the foregoing, the introduction of Western education affected the population density of Igbo ethnic groups in many ways. First, some people who are up to the age of marriage will not marry in the quest to attain a certain educational level before they venture into childbearing. Even in making choices for marriage, Igbo people now consider whether the person acquired Western education or not. In most cases, the bride price of those who acquired a western education are heightened, thereby scaring men who are of the age to marry. This practice is detrimental to Igbo population as it affects child bearing which increase population, hence the effect of Western education on Igbo population.

Secondly, the Igbo now value Western education more than any other thing that they migrate to acquire Western education. The most unfortunate thing is that when the Igbo go abroad to acquire a Western education, the white man does not allow them to come back due to their intelligence and industrious nature. In other words there exist brain drain of the Igbo race and the reduction of Igbo population in Nigeria. The case of Dr. Philip Emeagwali, who made a significant contribution to software development, is a good example. Moreso, Western education introduced cultism in the Nigerian educational system, and this has claimed lives of many Nigerians across Nigeria, including the Igbo race. Every time in the news, there are cases of cultism across universities in Nigeria and even on the street as cultism are found in all parts of Nigeria. Nweke (2008) noted that one of the problems of modern education is student cultism. He is very right because cultism has led to the death of many Nigerians, including the Igbo race.

Western Education was brought by Christian missionaries who were confronted with challenges of penetrating the hinterland through evangelism (Nweke, 2008). The above assertion from Nweke shows that Western education in Igboland was used as an instrument by the white man to achieve his aim of penetrating the land and favouring the North in Nigerian politics. Thus, Western education in Igbo land and Africa at large is an instrument of colonialism or neo-colonialism. Through Western education, the white man made many Igbo in Nigeria flee to their land, work for them, and never return to Nigeria.

Cultural Domination in Igbo Land

Colonial administration affected the ethnic density of Nigeria, especially the Igbo ethnic group, through cultural domination. thus, the replacement of Igbo culture with whiteman's culture have affected the Igbo population negatively as imbibing white man's culture has led to high migration of Igbo to Western countries and other parts of the world, as Igbo are scattered all over the world. When the white man arrived, he discovered that culture will be an obstacle to his interest which include making Africa a market where he sales his finished goods and where he can get raw materials and humans to produce, he decided to brain wash, intimidate and humiliate Africans to abandoned their culture as Obi-Ani (2004) asserts that the European colonial rulers

realized that a thriving African culture would someday or later cast off their exploitative and domination of Africa and resorted to despising Africa's cultural values through intimidation, and humiliation. Onyegiri (2005) also notes that the Igbo were one tribe in Nigeria least able to resist that cultural change.

The Igbo are trapped as the white man brainwashed them, intimidated them, and humiliated them to abandon their culture, which they did. Obiajulu (1995) observes that Igbo people, as victims of cultural domination, are simply reacting and adjusting to the features of the capitalist social system, which now form part of its periphery. From the foregoing, the Igbo population has drastically reduced since their culture was shortchanged to that of Western culture. The likeness for the Western culture they embraced has led them to even seek opportunities to become Western citizens. Thus, they took the risk of going through deserts and other illegal means to Europe. People now take their wives to Europe to give birth so that their children will become citizens of European countries, and they will grow up and become citizens in the European countries. Moreover, the likeness for whiteman's culture made the Igbo to embark on "Ego mbute" which has made many Igbo in recent times to flee abroad. Igbo now go to Malaysia, South Africa, European countries among other countries in order to make money to mimic white man's culture in terms of building, cars, dressing etc, thereby reducing the population of Igbo in Nigeria.

Divide and Rule System of Administration and the Nature of Nigerian Politics

Colonial masters created disunity in Nigeria through the divide-and-rule system deployed during colonial administration. This act is the major factor responsible for the nature of Nigerian politics in the post-colonial era. Thus, Nigerian politics is characterized by ethnic chauvinism, disunity, agitations, and violence, which have led to many deaths of the Igbo. Nwobashi (2014) asserts that the persistent lack of unity among Nigerian political elites and the absence of strategic elites and the dominance of segmental elites have made Nigeria a violent state since colonial times. He further stated that Separatist agitations serve as a ready instrument in hands of a section of Nigerian elites who always turn to this ethnic phenomenon when they are disadvantaged in the contestation for national power and resources. Boka (1982) earlier asserts that, eight other separatist agitations in the post independent Nigeria exist. First, the revolt of Isreal Adaka Boro, who on 23rd February 1966, declared the southern part of the country of the present Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta State "the Nigerian people's congress" second, the counter camp of 29th July, 1966 was code name "Arabia" third, on 27th May 1967 the consultative assembly announced its decision to establish an independent state called the republic of Biafra among others.

The activities of the aforementioned groups, have led to riot, wars and the death of many. Worthy of note is that the major ethnic group that is been killed across the country is the Igbo. The Igbo have been killed during the war, during the Kano riot, Kaduna, Python Dance, the counter coup of 29th July 1966, among others. Feron (2006)

asserts that Most of the victims of the political violence were Igbo. Obinoyo (2007) letter observes that the killing of the Igbo and looting of their property in other parts of the country, especially in the North at the slightest provocation even when the issue is not caused by the Igbo ethnic group led to agitation by the Igbo. For instance in 2006, riots weretriggered by Denmark cartoon in which many Igbo people were attacked and killed by angry Muslim youths of the North come to mind. Nwobashi (2014) asserts that the civil war claimed the lives of about one million people and displaced many people. This nature of Nigerian politics has a colonial background as the colonial masters created disunity in Nigeria through the divide and rule policy deployed during colonial administration.

Destruction of the Igbo Economy

The Igbo population has been affected negatively through the destruction of the Igbo economy by the metropolitan bourgeoisie, who linked the Igbo economy in particular and Nigeria at large with the capitalist system. This act destroyed the Igbo economy and underdeveloped it. The implication on Igbo population is that people reduced the number of children given birth to in the recent time as opposed to the number of children given birth to in the pre-colonial times when the Igbo economy was still good .in the pre-colonial era, most Igbo gave birth to 10 children and some polygamous families gave birth to more than 10 and still the economy in pre-colonial era sustained the population. In the post-colonial era the economy of the Igbo cannot sustain a man as it were in the pre-colonial times talk more sustaining their children. Thus, many have resorted to giving birth to only one child; the highest range may be 3-5 children as a result of the bad economy. The economy has affected the number of children given birth to in Igbo land negatively as a result of colonial masters linking the Igbo economy to the capitalist system. Chukwu (2015) observes that the Igbo economy like most economies world over started as a local phenomenon. It was organized in three major sectors, namely, agriculture, non-agricultural production, and trade. All these sectors prospered in the pre-colonial period, taking care of the needs of the people at the local, village group and Igbo national levels. The economy began to face threats and challenges since the inception of European influence in the area from the 17th century onwards. For instance crushing roles of slave trade, colonialism and the associated problem of importation of European made goods did not augur well with the economy.

The destruction of Igbo economy and the linkage of Igbo economy to whiteman's capitalism made the Igbo ethnic group to scatter across the world in search of greener pasture. Thus, the Igbo's are scattered over the world for economic reasons. Economic activities of Igbo people have affected their population density in Nigeria. Onyegiri (2005) states that, today the Igbo ethnic group cannot be described as occupiers of a piece of earth's terrain of specific geographical location. Their readiness to travel and tenacity of purpose, especially when seeking employment, have carried many of them far beyond their native environment. The linkage of the Igbo people's economy to the capitalist system has reduced the Igbo population as the people who

destroyed the Igbo economy planned it just to suppress the Igbo. The Igbo in pre-colonial times practiced polygamy and non-restriction of child birth, which made the Igbo population grow geometrically in the pre-colonial Era, and still their economy sustained them. Presently in post-colonial Igboland, though people practice monogamy, which expunged polygamy from Igbo culture, which the white man's religion introduced in Igbo land during the colonial era, the economy cannot sustain them.

Igbo Ethnic Density and Igbo Ethnic Marginalization

The Igbo Ethnic group, since the fourth republic, has been crying out over the issue of marginalization. Since 1999 (the beginning of the fourth republic) till 2019, the Igbo have not been neither the president nor vice president of Nigeria, the Igbo have been victimized in Nigerian politics as they are been killed at any provocation, as Fearon (2006:5) observes that most of the victims of the political violence were Igbos. Obinoyo (2007) also notes that the killing of the Igbo and looting of their property in other parts of the country especially in the North at the slightest provocation even when the issues is not caused by the Igbo; was among the grievances of Igbo people that gave rise to agitations. Other grievances of Igbo nations that made them felt marginalized includes the non establishment of federal institutions popularly parastatals, international airport, industries, seaports in Igbo States when compared to other states of the country, the abandonment of federal roads in the region, the dredging of river Niger to serve as a seaport for the southeast, the under representation of the Igbo in top political positions, non creation of states in south east as they have less states when compared to other parts of the country, the use of quota system to slow down the pace of educational attainment of the Igbo among others (Fearon, 2006; Obinoyo, 2007; Nwobashi, 2014).

The feeling of marginalization has led to specialist agitations in Igbo land hence the formation of movement for the actualization of sovereign state of Biafra by Chief Relfh Uwazuruike. On the 13th September, 1999. Nwobashi (2014) submits that occurrence of separatist agitations in Nigeria is a direct result of the deprivations and exclusions of some ethnic groups by various successive administrative in Nigeria. Other scholars like Abbert (2002:311), Ihunna (2002), Uwalaka (2002) Mbaugwu (2004), Opata (2004) among others argue that separatist agitations occur because of the failure to equitably distribute the national resources and position of government among the ethnic nationalities in the country.

From the forgoing, it has been argued that the marginalization of the Igbo is partly as a result of the divided and rule system of the colonial masters that created hatred among the Ethnic group in Nigeria. Also speculated is that the first coup of 1966 led by an Igbo junta major Kaduna Nzogwu with the intension of sanitizing the Nigeria system which later was conceived as Igbo coup due to the outcome of the coup, thus the coup was successful in the North achieved little success in the west and failed totally in the East. Since after the coup the Igbo's have been the victim of Nigerian politics as even

the counter coup of July 29 1966 was targeted at Igbo people. Hence the Massaca of the Igbo in 1966 counter coup. The declaration of civil war by Ojukwu is another factor argued that led to Igbo marginalization especially when it comes to becoming the president of the country and holding of key positions in the country due to fear and speculation that making an Igbo man a president may lead to dividing the country. Thus, since after the civil war only Alex Ekwueme of the Igbo have been the vice president of Nigeria and from 1999 till date the Igbo have not been allowed to be the president nor vice president. Far from all the speculations, the main factor responsible for the marginalization of the Igbo ethnic density in Nigeria as colonial administration reduced the population of the Igbo ethnic group in many ways just to favour the north in Nigerian politics. The table below will help in understanding the impact of population on the Igbo ethnic marginalization.

Table 2: Two major political parties and the president/vice presidential Candidates' elections in the fourth republic 1999- 2023

Winning party of president/vice presidential candidate	Geo-political zone	Political Party	Runner party president/vice presidential candidate	Geo-political zone	Political Party
Oluseguobasanjo	South West	PDP	Olufallae	South West	AFOAPP
Atiku Abubakah	North East	PDP	umarushinkata	North	AFOAPP
2003					
Olusegun Obasaj	South West	PDP	Mohamed Buhari	North west	ANPP
	North EAST		Chuba Okadigbo	South East	ANPP
Atuku/Abubaka					
2007					
Umarumusa Yaradua/	North West	PDP	Mohammed Buhari	North west	ANPP
goodluck Jonathan	South south		Ume-Ezeoke	South East	ANPP
2011					
Goodluck Jonathan	South South	PDP	Mohammed Buhari	North west	CPC
Namadi Sambo	North west		Tuned Bakere	South West	CPC
2015					
Mohammed Buhari	North west	APC	Goodluck Jonathan/	E. South. South	PDP
Yemi Osibanjo	South West		Namadisambo	North west	PDP
2019					
Mohammed Buhari	North west	APC	Atiku Abubakar	North East	PDP
Yemi Osibanjo	South west		Peter obi	South East	PDP
2023					
Bola Amed Tinubu	South West	APC	Atiku Abubakar	North East	PDP
Kashim Shettima	North West		Ifeanyi Okowa	South south	PDP

Source: Compiled from INEC released election candidates from (1999-2023)

From the above table one can see that all major political parties that has Igbo vice candidate came second. Again none of the major political parties had ever choosing the Igbo as their presidential candidate. In 2007 and 2011 president Buhari choose Igbo people namely ChubaOkedigbo and Ume-Ezeoke as vice president and that made him to lose elections. In 2015 he choose a running mates from south west including 2019 and he won the elections. The reason for this is simple. The population of the North -west and south west joined together are more than that of South East and North-West. Thus, in the fourth republic the Igbo, South East geopolitical zone has the least number with 16,335, 55 (11.7%) as seen in the 2006 population census. Judging with the 2006 census result the Igbo is the minority in the country. That is majorly the reason behind the denial of Igbo presidency. The Igbo have much population but the problem with them is that they are scattered all over the world due to colonial influence.

Conclusion

The Igbo ethnic group is facing marginalization in Nigeria's fourth republic due to its population that was negatively affected by Colonial Administration. The colonial government through many ways reduced the Igbo ethnic density in Nigeria to favour the North knowing full well that Nigeria practices democracy which is a game of numbers where the majority will always have what they want. Nigerian politics is characterised by winner takes all, loser loses all. Centrifugal practice is dominant in Nigerian politics than centripetal when it comes to resources control. Thus anybody that have any political position in Nigeria at the federal level seems to favour his ethnic group and not the entire country and since 1999 the Igbo have not held the position of the president to favour their group and this is why they felt marginalized as other parts of the country have had the post and favoured their people.

Colonial Administration had negatively effect on the Igbo ethnic density/population through population census manipulation by the colonial government, slavery (slave trade), cultural domination, religion amongst others. The white man's culture introduced many things in Igboland that dealt with the Igbo population negatively. Thus, the establishment of industries that produces harmful chemicals that are detrimental to people's health and by implication reducing the life expectancy of people, introduction of guns, which was used to kill many during wars, introduction of monogamy, celibacy and even the introduction of contraceptive in Igboland were all geared toward suppression of the Igbo as population determines who gets what when and how in Nigerian politics. This suppression is just for the interest of the white man to be actualized. Apana and Shobharam (2015) assert that the white missionaries suppressed and oppressed the Igbo tribes through their new religion. Obiajulu (1995) collaborated this when he asserts that with the racial suppression of the Igbo by the white, the Igbo question suggest a social order very unpleasant and

retrogressive to self-actualization of Igbo race. The Igbo should be aware of these strategies deployed by white man to reduce her population in Nigeria so as to make her perpetually marginalized in Nigerian politics. When this is done, the interest of the white man will be jeopardized and population of the Igbo will appreciate and the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria will have a say in the national politics.

Recommendations

To improve the Igbo ethnic density/population which led to marginalization of the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria, the following were recommended:

1. Igbo political elites should improve the Igbo economy and standard of living of Igbo living in South-East by establishing industries, free education free health care, electricity and other social amenities to encourage Igbo outside South-East to come back to their states and invest in South-East, thereby increasing Igbo ethnic density/ population in Nigeria.
2. Igbo indigene in South-East should avoid communal crises, investing outside Igbo land as this will help to increase the Igbo ethnic density in Nigeria and help them to have a say in Nigerian politics.
3. Igbo political elites should stop the use of separatist groups, riots and other violent means that can lead to death of Igbo citizens in South-East and embrace dialogue. This will help to improve the population of the Igbo and make them have their say in Nigeria politics.
4. Igbo Abroad and outside South-East should always return during population census and general elections. This will make the population of the Igbo in South-East to improve in the census result and equally help the Igbo to win some political positions at the federal level.

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