

Politics of Ethnicity: Ndiigbo and 2015 Election

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Abstract: Politics of Ethnicity: Ndigbo and the 2015 Election. Nigeria by design of its founding father Lord Lugard after its amalgamation in 1914 brings today various ethnic groups as one nation. The Lugard amalgamation of expedience with time promotes agitation for ethnic agenda as Politics and politicking use ethnicity as its toga. In order to maintain the amalgamation and check the excesses of the ethnic cliché, policies like federal character is put in place for inclusiveness of all shades of ethnic interest in the system. Unarguably, Nigeria federal system of government made activities at the centre seen as national cake where each ethnic group struggles to get its share. Ethnic lining plays vital role in the Sharing of power, distribution of wealth, employment and admissions one can now understand its assumed positivism. Attention is more on ethnic interest as against the collective interest of the entity called Nigeria. This work will briefly touch the ethnic politics that played out between Nigerians post independence leaders/first republic, the intrigues that gave birth to Obasanjo regime and the just concluded 2015 general elections. This work further tries to probe the genuine intentions of ethnic progenitors. In the course of this work, the researcher observes that the word ethnicity is a divisive language used by the political elites for personal aggrandisement. The study calls for Igbo re-awakening and the need to know that in politics there is no permanent enemy but permanent interest.

Key words: Ethnicity • Ndigbo • Post independence • First republic • June 12 • Presidential election

INTRODUCTION

The word ethnicity according to Oxford dictionary is the state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition. [1], refers ethnicity as a group of people who share the same culture and race including language, religion, history or custom. Ethnicity is the coming together of people who share the same destiny, culture and common history. Although Nigeria has over 400 ethnic groups, it recognises Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba as the three major ethnic groups through which issues and decisions are based. The echo of ethnicity just like racism has eaten deep into virtually all the activities in Nigeria as they breathe it, eat it, drink it as well as carry it like slate. The rate at which it's being practised has given rise to minor ethnic groups in Nigeria, as they rear their heads up seeking for recognition [2].

The tripod under which Nigeria nationalists fought and got independence made it imperative for ethnic politics to thrive. According to [3] "on the contrary, the attraction of power at the regional level or rather tribal

level by Macpherson's constitution, gave Nigeria the sword to divide herself". Even the initial parties floated then all carry ethnic emblem none of them has national outlook. Having been perceived as frontiers and mouth piece of their various ethnic groups, it became impossible to align politically devoid of ethnic linings. Ideally, the introduction of ethnicity or regionalising governance is fundamentally to bring into the fold perceived minorities who are disadvantaged, ignored and excluded in the scheme of things [4]. The Heterogeneous nature of Nigeria makes every ethnic nationality to seek for relevance and to be given sense of belonging. As can be seen, the emergence of the first crop of Nigerian leaders after independence, centred on the three ethnic groups Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, this further solidified the foundation of ethnicity laid by the amalgamation. Alhaji Abubakar Tafa Balewa stood in for the Northerners the Hausa, chief Obafemi Awolowo was the voice of the Westerners the Yoruba while Dr, Nnamdi Azikiwe represents the Easterners the Igbo. This set the foundation for ethnic politics [5].

The ethnic agitation and clamour gave rise to quota system whereby every zone or rather ethnic nationality is given equal representation in all the federal agencies and parastatal irrespective of if the representation spells square peg being fixed in a round hole. Ethnicity is an umbrella through which a hook is thrown to drag and catch attention to be accommodated. The criterion to clinch mantle of leadership is not based on how qualified one is or if the people are giving quality representation [6, 7].

The word ethnicity is not far from mans agitation for self realisation and independence which further breed divisiveness. Its highjack by the political class has left the governed with little or nothing to show as dividends of governance while the politicians ride on the vehicle of ethnicity to enrich themselves [8]. This has continued unabated from the pre-colonial period to the first republic and to the present dispensation. Ethnicity has at the moment assumed dangerous dimension pitching each tribe against one another through hate speeches, blackmail and acrimony [9].

The emergence of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the Nigerian president in 1999 cannot be said to be free from ethnic politics. After the botched June 12 election presumed to have been won by MKO Abiola, a westerner by General Sanni Abacha regime, the Yoruba's took it personal and fought to reclaim the mandate. Some of its sons were forced into exile although they receive sympathy from other tribes. The powers that be saw to General Obasanjo's emergency so as to assuage the feelings of the westerners whose one of theirs was robbed of his victory [10].

Even the most recent elections of the 2015 that prop up President Muhammadu Buhari, a former military head of state were riddled with ethnic politics. Although the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan is from a minority tribe having come from the South, the Igbo saw him as a brother and voted him overwhelmingly. The place of the Igbo in the present political equilibrium is being interpreted by political analysts as having committed political suicide. The Igbo in its drive towards ethnic politics forgot that in politics there is no permanent enemy but permanent interest coupled with the animosity of the civil war of which one of the contestants Buhari played a prominent role in it [11].

In Nigeria today, the agitation has been rotational president. Every ethnic group lays claim to being the rightful group to produce leadership of the country. While the three major ethnic groups the Hausa, Igbo and the Yoruba jostle to outplay one another, other ethnic groups

in minority in their agitation seek for sense of belonging as they allege being subsumed by the formers. Those that are fanning ambers of ethnicity are they really good shepherds and those that have ruled are their people better off? These are the two pertinent questions this work will try to unravel [12].

Post Independence Leaders: The post independence leaders of Nigeria can never be discussed without touching the pre- independence era because it is its carry over that laid founder of the first republic. It is generally agreed that politics of ethnicity is as a result of Nigeria federal system of government introduced by Sir Bourdillon in 1939. Bourdillon divided the southern protectorate into Eastern and Western provinces while the North is left intact. [13], gives reason for North's exclusion "...During the discussions the Northern delegates led by the Sultan of Sokoto had maintained that the Northern tribes who were dominantly of Islamic faith were still very backward compared to the southern tribes in the area of modernity". Bourdillon developed federating idea which later had its regional head in Lagos. [14], explains; "Bourdillon took a practical action to implement his ideas. He divided the protectorate of southern Nigeria into: Eastern and Western provinces"

The west and east that were initially one entity and referred as the southern protectorate was divide to Yoruba (west) and Igbo (east). Prior to this, various ethnic groups are living in their different enclave devoid of envious of other ethnic groups and developing at their own pace. The Bourdillon idea of splitting the southern protectorate into western and eastern region paved way for ethnic rivalry. To further compound the problem, the division of southern protectorate saw to the dominance of the minor ethnic groups like the Ijaws, Efik and Ibibio by the East while Benin and Warri were subsumed by the West. [15], buttresses the effect of the Bourdillon action by saying that; "With the political changes of the 1950 all such ethnic autonomies in Eastern dissolved. The rationalization that occurred turned the Igbo into the majority ethnic group, both demographically and politically".

The event that played out between the East and its neighbours also occurred between the Western region and other minor ethnic groups. This arrangement made Nigeria to have three major ethnic groups including Northern Nigeria which was later co-opted into the arrangement for one Nigeria through Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's effort in granting concessions and incentive to the Northern region [16]:

In the end, Azikiwe aligned with the Northern delegates and Awolowo was defeated in the debate and Nigeria as a whole was granted independence in October 1960 with a muslim as the head of state and a British still the Governor General.

This development did not go down well with Chief Obafemi Awolowo as he felt betrayed by Azikiwe. According to Chukweze: Awolowo felt that “Azikiwe has succumbed to the colonial tactics of divide and rule by going into some secret pact with the muslim strangers aided and abated by the Muslim colonial counterparts, the colonial government” [17].

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo were at variance in bringing independence for the whole country. While Zik was disposed with bringing in the North into the fold even if it amounts to granting concessions and incentives to the Northern tribes, Awolowo was of the view that the Northern tribes should not be induced but should be allowed to become part of the independent Nigeria at their right future date. His reason is not farfetched, Azikiwe was championing one Nigeria by trying to bring every region into the fold called Nigeria, Awolowo was of the belief that it will spell doom to join the North in the political arrangement arguing that that would create socio cultural and political problems because the Muslim colonialists understood the value of political power especially absolute power of the prime Minister [18].

When Nigeria eventually got her independence, the structure is based on three tripod; Eastern, Western and Northern Nigeria each region being represented by these three pre independent gladiators Dr. Azikiwe for the East, Sir Ahmadu Bello North and Chief Awolowo for the West. The die is cast the event that played out during the pre independence period shaped the political landscape of Nigeria negatively. Awolowo felt betrayed by Ziks alliance with the North which gave rise to his defeat in the debate. While the Muslim controlled Nigerian government was discontent with Chief Awolowo, Awolowo hated Zik and his people for sale out [19].

The First Republic: When the curtain was raised for the first general election in 1959, most of the ethnic unions formed by various ethnic groups that found themselves outside their regions in search of greener pastures were transformed into political parties. [20] gives insight; “the emergence of urban centres in colonial Nigeria... brought many migrants into the urban area to look for employment following the introduction of tax regime by the colonial government”.

Some of these ethnic groups which later metamorphosed into unions and associations are: Egbe Omo Oduduwa (for the Yoruba), the Tiv Progressive Union (Tiv ethnic group), Idoma Hope Rising (for the Idoma ethnic group, Jamyyan Mutanen Arewa (for the Hausa/Fulani) and the Igbo State Union (for the Igbo). The Hausa/Fulani Jamyyan Mutanen Arewa cultural ethnic organisation became a political party called Northern People’s Congress (NPC) led by Sir Ahmadu Bello, the pan Yoruba organisation, the Egbe Omo Oduduwa transformed into a political party known as Action Group (AG) with Chief Obafemi Awolowo as its leader, the Igbo State Union led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was changed into National Council for Nigeria and Citizens (NCNC). [21] in his analysis attributes the economic downturn and political turbulence in Nigeria to the fact that “the three regionally based and tribally sustained political parties and a weak political class were driven by ethnic ideologies”.

Every step, decision and action was given ethnic connotation. Sir Ahmadu Bello leader of the Northern People’s Congress was working for the interest of the north; Chief Obafemi Awolowo that leads Action Group (AG) was purely for the political and economic wellbeing of the Yoruba. [22], succinctly avers that “the leadership style and strategy of these three great Nigerians differed so much”.

According to [23],

Ahmadu Bello worked so hard to unite the North. Like Awolowo he left nobody in doubt where his interest was. He achieved his aim using religion and politics as a tool. He trained many Northerners in administrative and political positions. He was far-sighted to see the role the Army would play in future in Nigeria.

Each of the political leaders was working for the advancement of their respective regions as against the collective interest of the country. With the exception of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe whose commitment went beyond Nigeria, that earned him the name Zik of Africa. His party though anchored on the Igbo National Union for its formation, has national spread having won election in the East and West and had followers in the North too. [24] gives more insight on Zik; “being a man whose parents were of Eastern origin, born in the North with Northern upbringing and schooled in the West, he took the whole of Nigeria as his home and political constituency”.

Azikiwe's stance of one Nigeria later became one of his undoing as the jungle matured. Just as [25], aptly says: "Zik's thinking was ideal but there are discrepancies between ideals and realities". While his contemporaries are busy championing for the wellbeing of their various ethnic groups, Zik is working towards one Nigeria. Chief Obafemi Awolowo has to his credit to have helped the Yorubas to have firm grip of the economy while Sir Ahmadu Bello encouraged many Northerners to enrol into the Army. He was predictive of the role the Army would play in the future. While the life and time of Zik has nothing to be remembered what he specifically did for the Igbo.

The first ethnic politics explosion is the baptism of fire Zik received when Zik's party, NCNC won 43 out of the 84 seats in the western house. Zik and four other candidates of his party clinched all the 5 seats of the capital territory Lagos a victory that elicited his rejection to occupy the then Western house by the Obafemi Awolowo led Action Group. It is expected that 2 out of the successful 5 NCNC members will represent Lagos in the federal House of Representatives of which Zik and Prince Adedoyin a Yoruba are tipped by their party for the representation. Zik was never allowed to assume that post as enumerated by [26]:

The Obafemi Awolowo led Action Group which now controlled the Western House voted to endorse Dr. Olurunnimbe (who had defied NCNC party decision to send Zik and Adedoyin by putting himself forward) and prince Adedoyin, both of Yoruba ethnic origin, thus dropping Zik, the president of NCNC, who had placed second in the polls in Lagos.

It may interest you to note that Olurunnimbe is among the 5 successful members of NCNC that were victorious with Zik but being a Yoruba man, he was used by the Action Group to thwart the party decision of Zik's choice which is supreme. The deed was perfected as more NCNC members mostly of Yoruba extraction decamped to Action Group a development that forced NCNC to be in opposition while the Action Group is in majority. The intrigue that ousted Zik from the western house of assembly is not far from ethnic coup. Out of dilemma, Zik was forced to quit from the Western House of Assembly and relocate to his home base East where Chief Eyo Ita from Efik a minority ethnic group was the head under the platform of the NCNC. At his home base Zik was confronted with another hurdle as [27] brings to bear:

Dr. Azikiwe's dilemma was further complicated by several other factors. First, the Government of Eastern Nigeria whose leadership he must assume as head of the NCNC party was at that time headed by Chief Eyo Ita, a non-Igbo leader from a minority ethnic group Efik, secondly that government and three representatives in the federal Cabinet, Dr. Raymond Njoku, Mr. A.C. Nwapa and Dr. Jaja Nwachukwu had refused to resign and make way for Zik.

Expectedly the rest is history as the hammer of the party NCNC fell on Eyo Ita and his cohorts, they were expelled from the party. One could imagine the disposition of Eyo Ita's kinsmen the minority tribe of Efik after his expulsion from the Eastern Assembly? By and large his expulsion and sack still carries ethnic toga just as that of Zik's rejection in the Western Assembly. This no doubt further spurs the emergence of ethnic minority who sees themselves as being swallowed by the major ethnic groups. In the case of Azikiwe, he has an option of going back to his Region the East. But for Eyo Ita, his tribe Efik being in minority by design is subsumed by the major ethnic group (Igbo) development that further raised acrimony, division and agitation for inclusion in the scheme of things. A similar incident was re-enacted in Western Nigeria when Obafemi Awolowo was charged and convicted for treasonable felony along with Anthony Enahoro and others but this time around, it was Yoruba versus Yoruba. [28] asserts that:

Chief Akintola immediately on being suspended as premier, quickly dissociated himself from Action Group, formed a new party called United Peoples Party (UPP) and was subsequently reinstated as the premier of Western Nigeria through the political manipulations of the federal Government of the Northern politicians. Awolowo went to jail alone.

The word ethnic manoeuvre was never used in the Awolowo versus Akintola scenario. It all boils down to intrigue, sabotage, gang-up, sale out and trickery that are the hallmark of politics. In the world of politicians, ambition to get there, alignment and re-alignment can make them commit any kind of atrocity not minding the consequences. Their look out has always been fulfilment of dream which could be self-centred at the detriment of the populace. This assertion will be made manifest as the work progresses [29].

The 1993 Election/Obasanjo Emergence: Hitherto, the state of ethnic politics in Nigeria makes it difficult if not impossible for one region to become its president without the support of other regions. It has become a tradition that while choosing candidates for presidential elections, the president and its vice never come from the same ethnic side rather for a balance, its either the president comes from the North and the vice from the East and vice versa. [30] confirms this; “our political parties have always been formed on regional basis. Each of the three former regions will have its own party so as to present its own candidate”.

This did not end with ethnicity alone. There is other factor that comes to play while pairing for the slot of presidency. Religion plays major role as the pairing usually goes thus: Muslim versus Christian or Christian versus Muslim this serves as president and the vice president. This has been the case in Nigeria political arrangement to satisfy and give sense of belongs to both religious bodies.

The 1993 election that had Abiola as the flag bearer of Social Democratic Party SDP changed the political tradition/equation of inter religious marriage of candidates as he Abiola picked a fellow Muslim in the person of Babagana Kingibe as his running mate. This is as against the balance of power that has existed between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. His choice was never his undoing as he was acclaimed to be the winner of the messed up 1993 election conducted by General Ibrahim Babangida the then Nigerian Head of state. Unfortunately, his assumed victory never saw the light of the day. It was annulled by the President under unfounded trumped up allegations and court order sought by Association for Better Nigeria (ABN) led by Chief Arthur Nzeribe in alliance with the Babangida led government [31].

The annulment sparked off protests that overheated the polity which led the Babangida government to place manhunt on the perceived agitators and pro Abiola movements. The manhunt led several civil society Organisations to leave the country in droves for fear of their lives. Some of them were murdered in cold blood including the wife of Abiola Alhaja Kudirat Abiola while some were arrested by security operatives’ court martial and giving various jail terms. The acclaimed winner of June 12 election Chief Moshood Abiola used both his national and international connection to reclaim his mandate but that was to no avail. He was subsequently arrested in a bid to silence him and to put to rest the protests by his followers and concerned citizens of Nigeria. This did not in any way bury the agitation for

validation of June 12 election rather it fuelled the agitation as violent and persistent protests are recorded daily in most part of the country especially in the South west [32].

When General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida saw that he could no longer contain the spate of protest and pressure mounted by June 12 agitators and the international community, Babangida set up an interim government led by Ernest Shonekon with the above statement “stepping aside”. The interim government of Ernest Shonekon was brief as Late General Sanni Abacha staged a coup that ousted the Shonekon led interim government. The coup by General Sanni Abacha was viewed by political watchers as North premeditated plan to perpetuate itself in power having robbed a southerner Chief Moshood Abiola of his mandate. With the coup that overthrows the Ernest Shonekon interim government, another leader of Northern extraction took over as Nigerian Head of state. All these are attempts to kill the June 12 mandate where Nigerians for once shelved their religious sentiment and voted the Moshood Abiola/Baba Gana Kingibe Muslim Muslim ticket.

By providence, Abacha died in office while the agitation for the revalidation of June 12 elections lasts. Shockingly, within 24 hours of Abachas death when all hopes are high for Moshood Abiolas release from detention and his subsequent declaration as the winner o June 12 Presidential election, news of his death filtered in. Among Nigerians the death of Abacha and Abiola is still seen till today as a misery although several stories and insinuations are being pebbled in that regard. One would have expected that the stepping aside by General Ibrahim Babangida, the death of General Sanni Abacha and Abiola who are gladiators of the June 12 would have been the final burial of the annulment but that was not to be [33]. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo former Nigerian head of state in 1976 that got the fair share of Abacha brutality having been sent to jail after a trump up charge of trying to overthrow Abacha government in 1995 was eventual thrust with the leadership of Nigeria. The choice of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo by the powers that be is not farfetched. This is evidenced in [34] lamentation:

... this callous and contemptuous treatment meted out to Ndigbo is in clear and cruel contrast with compassionate concession, massively supported by Ndigbo, given to the Yorubas in 1999 to field the two Olus- Falae and Obasanjo, for the presumed presidential slot missed by their kinsman, chief M.K.O. Abiola in 1993,

Uwechue was referring to the sidelining of one of their own a South Easterner, Dr. Alex Ekwueme who under normal circumstances judged by Nigerian political arrangement would have emerged the President of Nigeria having served as the Vice President under President Shehu Shagari a Northerner. The continuation or rather completion of the second republic was thwarted by the 1983 coup that brought in General Muhammadu Buhari the Nigerian present President dimmed Ekwuemes chance of emerging the next president of Nigeria after Shagari.

It's not finished, Uwechue is not unmindful of what happened to Ekwueme under the PDP where he was one of the founding fathers and a Presidential aspirant. Ekwueme was one of the strong voices in the G34 a body of eminent Nigerians who vehemently fought the military continued hold unto power. It was this group that later came together to form today's Peoples Democratic Party the (PDP). Ekwueme was one of the presidential aspirants under PDP but the choice of a Westerner by the Northern oligarchy to assuage their battered feelings of the annulled June 12 election presumed to have won by one of their own further put a clog on the wheel of Ekwuemes presidential dream. The preference of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo is a clear case of ethnic politics where by the decision was meant to pacify the Yoruba ethnic group for their June 12 debacle thereby robbing Peter to pay Paul [35].

Nigerian 2015 Presidential Campaign/Election in Retrospect: Prior to the 2015 electioneering and election campaign proper, several opinions, analysts and prophets painted a bleak picture of Nigeria in 2015. The predictions and happenings then sent wrong signal on survival of Nigeria as an entity. One of such modern day prophecy includes that of former US Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell who in the year 2011 says: "Nigeria cannot exist beyond 2015. Close to the 2015 election precisely in the month of August 2014 Campbell reiterates:

My view has not changed about the serious challenges Nigeria faces. I think the challenges are more pronounced than they were before the Boko Haram insurrection began in the North. Political life is also unsettled by the approach of the 2015 elections.

Campbell is not alone in this stance about fear of Nigerians disintegration considering the unfolding developments in the country's security and political sphere. Other men of God (prophets) prophesied doom for

Nigerian 2015 elections some predicted war, bloodshed, inconclusive election, crises and disintegration all points at uncertainty. Olabayo founder of the Evangelical Church of Yaweh in his prediction quips; "please let us forget about the 2015 elections for now... what i foresee about 2015 is trouble and anarchy in the land and the political gladiators would undo themselves". The predictions heightened tension as a result many people relocated their families awaiting the election and its predicted attendant effect. [36] reports:

Agaptus Okafor, a company driver said because of the predictions and prophecies, he had relocated his family of five to his village in Imo state till after elections. Chukwuemeka Dike, a businessman and indigene of Enugu state said he has also taken his family members home following the scary predictions concerning the elections.

The campaign strategy of the supporters of the frontline candidates of the two political parties the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) filled with animosity is a pointer to the prophecy. As [37] expresses his fears; "the reality is that Nigeria is on the brink. The frightening truth is that the "war" this time will not be between any clearly defined ethnic nationalities. It is for this reason that we should be concerned". There are fears that the event of 1967 may repeat itself people become apprehensive making movement downward their villages.

Feelers from the two contending political parties PDP and APC and their associates sent similar signal to the predictions especially President Jonathan's kinsmen the Ijaws. Drum of war is being beaten and threat to form a parallel government as well as blowing up the oil pipelines. According to [34]; "Nigeria was already at the brink of disintegration in the wake of the expiration of the 1914 amalgamation treaty, hinting that the defeat of president Jonathan could be the final nail on the coffin". Another Niger Delta militant [5] threatens that; "there would be blood in the streets if Mr. Jonathan is not re-elected n the 2015 election".

The APC on the other hand was issuing its own threat of fighting back if the ruling People's Democratic Party the PDP fails to conduct free and fair election come 2015. APC through their presidential campaign director Governor Rotimi Amaechi threatened to form a parallel government. In a letter signed by its national publicity secretary, Lai Mohammed in his clarification says:

Those who are fretting about this statement are those who are planning to rig the election and they should be warned that Nigerians will no longer accept the outcome of any fraudulent polls. Those who incite the people are those who steal their mandate.

During the campaign period, the uncouth attitude of both the APC and the PDP later translates to physical attack on each other's campaign train. This unholy act was recorded in some states of the federation. Warning through a press statement issued by one of the PDP and President Jonathan Campaign Organisation spokesman Chief Femi Fani Kyode, [8] reports; "yesterday (Tuesday), while going to Katsina for his scheduled rally, a group of broom-wielding vandals, chanting "sai Buhari", hurled stones at the convoy of the president".

PDP also complained of another attack of its campaign train in North central Nigeria precisely Jos in Plateau state accusing the opposition APC of desperation. According to the report, youth supporters APC were accused of masterminding the destroy of PDP presidential campaign buses during campaign in Jos. [9] recalls PDP lamentation; "the Jos attack on the campaign buses of President Goodluck Jonathan would appear to be a pointer to what the opposition APC presidential candidate is planning before and after the February 14 presidential Election".

The terror is vice versa APC on the other hand cries out over the alleged killing of its members in Rivers state pointing accusing fingers on the ruling People's Democratic Party Governorship Candidate in the state Nyesom Nwike as the mastermind of the killings. [12] reports:

Armed militias working for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have intensified their killing of APC members. Scores have already been killed and several others marked for elimination. This morning in Kpitem town, Tai ward 2 and other areas of the state, five people were shot dead by PDPS armed militia.

In the same Rivers state, the then Governor and Director General Buhari Campaign organisation, Rotimi Amaechi raised alarm that gunmen opened fire on his convoy when he went to Obio Okpor to campaign for APC.

The 2015 campaign and election as usual are based on ethnic, tribal and religious line. The Niger Delta region where the incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan came

from sees itself as the hen that lays the golden egg being the zone that produces oil the main economic back bone of Nigeria. They felt that justice demands that one of their own already in power should be allowed to go for second tenure. They also posit that since Nigeria got its independence they have not smelled such a post despite their economic importance to the country. With their brother president Goodluck Jonathan as the incumbent seeking for second term there is no vacancy in Aso Rock.

Northerners on the other hand is aggrieved considering the death of President Umaru Musa Yaradua that robbed the zone the opportunity to complete its first term and second term based on the PDP zoning arrangement. For them, occupying the presidency is not negotiable it should return to the North.

The Igbo Easterners did not hide their dislike for the APC candidate Buhari based on several reasons. The overriding factor being that he fought the Nigerian civil war on the side of the federal government being a Northerner. Secondly, the Igbo detest what they see as Northern attitude of born to rule as record shows that Northern part of Nigeria has ruled Nigeria more than any other ethnic group in Nigeria. Another reason is since Nigeria is playing ethnic politics, an average Igbo sees a South South person more of a brother than a Northerner with the Igbo name Azikiwe in his name.

The Yoruba in the 2015 election is like a beautiful bride having had one of their own Chief Olusegun Obasanjo who served for uninterrupted 8 years their mission at that moment is to remain relevant in the Nigeria politics.

This is the situation Nigerians found themselves throughout the election and electioneering campaign of 2015. It lasts longer than expected with the postponement of the election which was supposed to hold on 14th and 28 February respectively to March 28th and April 11th. The electoral empire INEC gave several reasons for the postponement but the overriding factor is the subtle threat by the security chiefs. Recall Nigeria is battling insurgency from Boko Haram sect. Other reasons are complaint over non collection of PVC by a good percentage of Nigerians. While certain batch of PVC is yet to be printed by INEC.

The election eventually held on March 28th and 11th April for presidential. The rest is story President Buhari Buhari of APC was declared winner of the April 11th presidential election but that is not without dramas and shameless conduct exhibited by desperate politicians. The election having come and gone, winner declared, day

of reckoning stares every zone on the face. It is time to share positions once again ethnic rivalry and political games have resurrected. Whither Ndigbo? [16].

Ndigbo and 2015 Election: The Nigerian election of 2015 will ever remain in the history of the nation as that characterised with hate speech, blackmail, lies and animosity as the contenders try to manoeuvre each other. It shows politicians desperado to cling on to power. Their action further heightened the already built up tension leaving the divided Nigeria more divided than ever.

Prior to the 2015 presidential election, the Igbo held series of meetings and consultations under their socio-cultural organisation the Ohaneze Ndigbo with the intension of strategising collectively for the election. In one of the meetings the Prof Gary Igariwe led Ohaneze Ndigbo announced the endorsement of President Goodluck Jonathan second term bid a choice that irks the outburst of [20]; “the current leaders of the supposed pan-Igbo organisation were arguably more interested in what was in it for them than what was in it for the greatest number of Ndigbo.

In one of the meetings for a collective Igbo road map for 2015 election, an Igbo Political Summit organised by South East Development Association (SEDPA). The president of SEDPA an organisation that equally enjoy the membership of almost Igbo elites in pan Igbo Socio-cultural organisation Ohaneze Ndigbo is led by Chief Sam Egwu former Governor of Ebonyi state. According to Chief Sam Egwu, the meeting is aimed at harmonising a common and strong voice at the confab and to draw road map for the 2015 election. At the meeting the allegation of marginalisation levelled against the ruling People’s Democratic Party did not go down well with some of the members. Their argument was based on the fact that the Igbo enjoy the appointment of their sons and daughters in key federal government PDP led administration. Quoting the outburst of Chief Nkemdirim Uzoukwu a legal practitioner in Abia against the appointment claim, [21] reports:

...Here there are no federal or state government industries or basic facilities and you say we are not marginalised? Go to port-Harcourt, go to Owerri or Lagos and you said we should not seek for change?... look, we are one leg of tripartite pillars of Nigerian politics anything less than that is a concrete manifestation of degeneration. We need not be appeased with high sounding but empty offices.

Chairman and founder of the United Progressive Party Chief Chekwes Okorie in his submission posits that; “the Igbo political elite must be united to produce the next president of Nigeria in 2015. But the announcement and declaration of the pan Igbo Political organisation the Ohaneze Ndigbo cut the suggestion of Chief Okorie on the nap by endorsing the second term of President Jonathan and subsequent declaration of the acclaimed Igbo party APGA of supporting president Jonathan and so doing did not field presidential candidate.

In view of Igbo stand on re-election of President Jonathan and the Igbo lamentation of being relegated in the Nigeria political field which led to their inability to produce president since after the Nigerian civil war. Still [22] quoting one of the critics of Igbo support for Jonathan:

After Jonathan, how can Ndigbo insist on producing the next president given that Jonathan is from Bayelsa State, their neighbour... the decision of leaders like Governor Rochas Okorocha, Senator Chris Ngige, Prince Apugo and Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu, to dare the PDP establishment is necessary to give Ndigbo a better prospect in the near future.

The presidential election result shows that Ndigbo massively voted for President Goodluck Jonathan Party the PDP who unfortunately could not make it. President Buhari the All Progressives Congress candidate was declared president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The die is cast based on the composition of Nigeria through which arrangement of who gets what, the Igbo seems to have lost out in the power sharing formula as a result of their choice of candidate. However, the blackmail and the picture painted the APC presidential candidate Mohammedu Buhari affected other candidates of the party at the national assembly from the South East zone. Comments like; “he is a good person but he entered a wrong party” was used on APC candidates in South East. This made it impossible for APC to have any of their own representing South East at both green and red chambers except one house of representative member from Imo state.

The sharing of principal officers at the 7th senate with the absence of elected APC senator from the south east zone made it impossible for one of their own to be elected as the senate president. Because the North, by producing the President with Westerner as the Vice, for a balance, political indicator and calculation rests on the South East

to produce the Senate president. The same is applicable to the lower house. Although South East has one APC member in the house of Representative, the house standing order restricts a first timer from being a principal officer of which he is one. Regrets, accusations and counter accusations including throwing of jabs, trailed the Igbo choice of PDP which in their argument robbed their chance of being relevant in the present dispensation. In defence of Igbo choice of Jonathan [23] reacts:

What other choice was left for Ndigbo? None really! How could anyone in his right senses expect Ndigbo to sing the praises of a man who hardly did anything for them while he was military Head-of State? How could anyone expect Ndigbo to have supported and voted for a man who showed his clear disdain for them when he had all the opportunity to prove he was a statesman above tribal and religious considerations during his tenure as Chairman of Petroleum (special) Trust Fund (PTF) wherein he located over 70% of the funds projects in the North while the entire Southeast, South-south and Southwest shared the remaining less than 30% projects among themselves.

Ndukwe by this argument forgets that in politics there is no permanent enemy but permanent interest. He rarely forgets too that the other zone Western Nigeria he listed as those marginalised during Buhari's reign as Head of State voted Buhari without recourse to his acclaimed marginalisation [24].

Findings: I would like to dissect this chapter, using the assertions of [6] where he posits that.

The civil war changed the DNA of the Igbo man. He began to reassemble his makeup and in the process, misplaced some key elements that made him who he was. He became vindictive, fearful, careless, impetuous and acquired an almost brazen appetite to appropriate wealth from any source.

What are the key elements that made the Igbo whom they are? It is their belief in collective interest known as the spirit of "onye aghana nwanne ya", Igwe bu ike, industrious, independent and in all living according to the guiding principle of Igbo values that abhors all forms of tainted life. It is not an over statement if one concludes that the death of Dr. Azikiwe marks an end of an era of

truthful and committed Igbo leadership. During the time of Azikiwe, Igbo has political hierarchical order. This order goes with the spirit of oneness as the upcoming ones queue under a formidable tree that gives them shade. With this Zikist movement comes to mind under which Igbo politicians rallied round to push and foster Igbo agenda through which they reach out to their neighbours. As [8] recalls: "it is a fact that our best days of political glory was under the Zik led NPP in 1979, Igbo not only won the eastern core states, they also won Plateau state".

The present crop of Igbo politicians or rather leaders are not acting for the collective interest/welfare of the entire Igbo but for their personal gains. Politics in Nigeria from inception was formed in ethnic lining but Igbo instead of fortifying themselves, lost grip of this fact playing second fiddle by picking crumble of pie that falls from their masters table. It's in the light of this that [10] while reacting on the political marginalization of Ndigbo says that "the Igbo people themselves have their share of the blame in this, especially given the individualistic and blindly opportunistic of some Igbo politicians, scrambling for the crumbs of public office in total disregard of Igbo collective interest". In the Westerner part of Nigeria, their present political class still walk under the shadow of their legend Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Among the Igbo reverse is always the case as they never entrust the leadership of their zone to a true son to galvanise. [22] points out:

So far, Chekwes Okorie commands a stronger political knowledge of who we are and where we should be going than Tinubu. A small support from our rich business folks and political leaders would cause the emergence of a proud Igbo son.

Recall it was Chekwes Okorie that founded APGA, but his brothers that he brought in to help him build the party Peter Obi and Victor Umeh, dispossessed and hijacked APGA from him. Peter Obi as Governor of Anambra state used Ikemba Nnewi Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu on whose personality APGA revolve around to advance his political career. Ojukwu was made Chairman APGA Board of Trustee a development that draw the Igbo to adopt it as their regional party. Not only the people adopted it, Peter Obi on several occasions described APGA as party Ndigbo. It's on this strength that [5] quotes Chris Ngiges lamentation on Obi's defection thus; "if Ikemba had been around, this movement would not have occurred because an APGA chieftain once confided in me that they were using

Ikembas name to win elections and nothing more”. Peter Obi left APGA with this excuse [7] quotes Obi; “nobody is more committed to President Goodluck Jonathan than me. So, i will work with him. I am going to work with the president wholeheartedly and not one leg in APGA and the other leg in PDP”.

This shows politicians high level of inconsistency and their ability to outwit the masses. Tinubu nurtured AD, from AD to AC and to ACN a South western regional party which today through merger with other opposition parties in Nigeria became stakeholder in APC the ruling party. Tinubu through ACN made Yoruba to be relevant in Nigeria political landscape as it gives them negotiation power.

The Igbo blanket support for Jonathan second term bid further eroded the remnants of APGA that survived Obi's defection. APGA under Victor Umeh failed to field presidential candidate for the 2015 election and adopted Jonathan as their sole candidate. The woeful outing of all the National assembly candidates of APGA in the 2015 election despite the blanket endorsement of President Jonathan is same as the fate of Igbo on Ohaneze Ndigbo endorsement of Jonathan. [4] quotes Okorie to have said that; “an endorsement should be a logical outcome of a negotiated understanding contained in a written memorandum of understanding.

The present so called Igbo political elite seem to have forgotten the wise saying “akpaa akpaa a laru na ute”. Meaning to be in accord, one has to spell out terms. The victor Umeh led APGA party no doubt supported President Jonathan out of selfish interest rather than for the benefit of Ndigbo. The truth is not far from the fact that Nigerian politics and one's ability to succeed rests more with the powers at the centre. For the politicians, if the president says you are going you are already there so the endorsement does not rest with the electorate. So APGA felt that their support for Jonathan will soften PDP rigging spree in their catchment area which is Anambra state. They are far from reality being unmindful of politician's desperation to out play each other to clinch power. As [7] rightfully observes; “gradually APGA is going moribund, the idea of an Igbo party is fast becoming eroded and who knows the walls may finally cave in”. As it tallies with [8] saying that “politics is a game of selfish interest: one where politicians disguise as defender of common good, in pretence to enrich their pockets”.

Vindictive: It was Henry Kissinger author of the book Diplomacy a German born American Bureaucrat, a diplomat and 1973 Nobel Prize Laureate and secretary of

state in Richard Nixon administration that said “America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interest”. Also another British statesman who was a two time Prime Minister in the mid-19th Century and leader House of Common Lord Palmerston (Henry John Temple) from (1859-1865) says:

It is a narrow policy to suppose that this country or that is to be marked out as the eternal ally or the perpetual enemy of England. We have no eternal ally and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and those interests it is our duty to follow.

In Politics your enemy today could be your best friend tomorrow because in politics the word we disagree to agree is the watch word hence in the saying there is no permanent enemy but permanent interest. 2015 election was characterised with all sorts of reasons why the APC presidential candidate GEN. Muhammadu Buhari should not be voted into power by the Igbo. Just as [11] asks; “how could anyone in his right senses expect Ndigbo to sing the praises of a man who hardly did anything for them while he was military Head-of State”? Because we are involved as Ndigbo the likes of Ndukwe totally forgot that Buhari as a commissioned officer is expected to protect the country called Nigeria and any officer who acts the opposite is nothing but a rebel.

The Igbo claim that Jonathan is an Igbo man despite coming from South South Nigerian Ijaw leaves much to be desired. If the Igbo can resurrect the sins of Buhari which includes fighting on the side of Nigeria during the Nigerian Biafran war what stops them from recognising the role played by the South Southerners during the Nigerian civil war? During the civil war is the South South people not accused of sabotaging Biafran projects a situation that made Ojukwu to greet Ken Sarowiwa good morning in a broad day light when he was agitating for Ogoni right? After the war the Northerners that seem to have the array of military that fought the Nigeria civil war welcomed Easterners back to their fold with the property of the fleeing Biafrans intact. What happened when the Igbo that are forced home by the war returned to South South after the war? It is only in South South Igbo were dispossessed of their hard earned houses under the cliché abandoned property. This still stands till date. Most Igbo that are house owners in South South Nigeria were never allowed to have them back. Why the selective judgement?.

Though their body language and utterances will point towards fighting for the cause of the Igbo, inwardly they are far from being after their collective interest. A case in hand is that of Mr. Obi who used APGA slogan as an Igbo party to gain political ground only to dump the acclaimed Igbo party after the completion of his second term in Office. [18] points out; "Obi's selfishness has led him to continue without remorse to deceive a large number of Ndigbo by claiming to have their interest at heart", Ejiofor also recalls that one important component in the campaign plan of APGA is the continuous use of tribal sentiments to incite the State against APC candidate Senator Chris Ngige his main rival. He equally tells them how APC seeks to islamise the entire country. Obi should have strived to nurture APGA and expand it to other states of the South East region and beyond, the way Tinubu nurtured ACN if he really planned to give the Igbo voice through it.

Ndigbo always buy propagandas from their political brothers against their political rivals because they usually prop up issues they already know. It cut across every ethnic group not just the Northerners. When a Yoruba person is presented to be elected, the Igbo will remember how Awolowo as minister of finance short-changed the Igbo after the war by approving one pound for each person irrespective of how much you have in the back. The politicians know that Nigeria is divided along ethnic and religious lines so they take advantage of this. [7] reminds:

Politics is a game of numbers and my greatest concern is that Ndigbo has myopically chosen to collaborate with those who cannot really help our larger interests while antagonising those we ought to have fraternising with in order to realize our group objectives. We are not playing good politics at all rather we are exhibiting pitiable naivety and wishful thinking.

How far will Igbo presidency go with the support of the south south people? It's always a challenge as every group brings to bare the support they have given each ethnic group at one time or the other.

Fearful: The thirty month Nigerian Biafran war and the pogrom against the Igbo are still taking its toll on the psyche of an average Igbo person. The betrayal of its assumed friends and neighbours who were consulted before the Igbo launched its secession from Nigeria in 1967 still stir them on the face like a nightmare. For the Igbo, the trauma associated with the massacre of

hundreds of thousands of their kith and kin resident in the Northern part of Nigeria is yet to fizzle away from their mind and sight. The event that played out between Ojukwu and Awolowo prior to Igbo secession left Ndigbo with mixed opinion about an average Yoruba man or woman. Ojukwu in the eve of the Nigerian Biafran war had confided in Awolowo of the intention of the Igbo under his command to secede from Nigeria. As event unfolds, it dawned on Ojukwu that Awolowo did not buy the idea of Igbo secession rather he advised Ojukwu to participate in the reconciliation conference and present his reservations. [9] captures Ojukwu's disappointment; "Ojukwu was apparently rattled by Awolowo's sudden withdrawal of moral support for him to carry on with the war of secession".

Ndigbo still see the Awolowo tendency in every Yoruba person up till today as they always likened them to chameleon. Their South South neighbours are not left out in this suspicious cohabitation as Igbo likened themselves to Israelites who are surrounded by enemies. Every move or utterance is usually viewed as a move to annihilate the Igbo or conspiracy to suppress their growth because to the Igbo other tribes are suspects and enemies.

Careless: Ndigbo in the 2015 election was very careless by not doing the needful. Recalling the Igbo and the 2015 election brings to mind the popular saying "purposeful planning prevents poor performance" that's the five ps. The effect of the 2015 elections to Ndigbo could be likened to the effect of fall in oil price to Nigeria. Just as Nigeria should have diversified its economy that's the same way the Igbo should have diversified their support. Rather they arbitrarily laid their egg in one basket thereby not having plan B should plan A fails. As [1] captures; "it is tragic that today that rather than plan the best strategy for our benefit, our leaders have since hugged Jonathan and PDP as if our problems have been and will be adequately solved by PDP". [12] quotes Ikedifes lamentation; "I had always warned during the campaigns that the Igbo should not put all their eggs in one basket. And the impression will be that the president elect was not supported by the people of the South East".

The carelessness of the Igbo did not limit to their poor planning. Prior to the 2015 election campaign and the campaign proper Ndigbo made unguarded utterances that could trigger civil unrest. Everything about them assumed a dimension of tribal and religious diatribe. According to the Human Rights Commission, hate speech is when you insult people for their religion, abuse people for their ethnic or linguistic affiliation, deliberate spread of

falsehood or rumours that demeans or maligns or otherwise ostracises other people on the basis of religion, ethnicity, gender or place of origin. The rate of inflammatory statements from the Igbo during the 2015 election leaves much to be desired. Ndigbo being emigrants in other peoples land, their loquaciousness placed them as an endangered species. Their uncouth and uncultured behaviour exposed their businesses which is scattered at every length and breadth of the country and life at risk and it negates the Igbo wise saying; “o biara be onye abiagbule ya o laba ma mkpukpu apula ya”.

One of such careless talks as contained in [13] reaction:

It is not only funny but ridiculous that Orji Uzor Kalu would refer to Lagos as a no man’s land, perhaps he has forgotten so soon that shortly after the June 12 crisis broke out and Lagos was on fire as a result of the activities of the military junta, his Igbo brothers packed their loads and headed back to their homes.

Still on the aforementioned statement, a pan Yoruba body known as Odua Solidarity Front quoted Ohaneze to have said that “the Igbo are key stakeholders in the affairs of Lagos. We constitute over 46% of Lagos population it is the Igbo that made Lagos what it is and without them Lagos will go to sleep”. The Igbo in Lagos have the capacity to defend themselves. Both statements are quite derogatory, provocative, offensive and inciting. It is in view of this that [3] in his remark says; “Igbo are now the subject of most discussions in the political circle; their political miscalculations, lack of enduring leadership, noisy nature and tendency to dominate their hosts”.

Granted that other ethnic groups engaged in uncouth and derogatory statements during the 2015 election, but the Igbo being travellers with much of their investments cut across the country, should not in the first place engage in act that will overheat the polity. After all how many Yorubas have investment in East same is applicable to the Northerners. The Igbo are like one that lives in a glass house and should not for any reason venturing in throwing stones.

Impetus: The Igbo in 2015 election become more daring as can be seen in the outcome of the National assembly election in Lagos state. Two candidates of Igbo descent that contested under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) made it to the house of representatives in the last. The Igbo have not had it so good of late considering the ethnic rivalry between them and their hosts. Such feat was

last recorded during the old days of Zik and Awolowo when Zik under NCNC won majority seats in the west as against Awolowo a Westerner UPGA party. Zik was never allowed to assume the premier of the western region a development that blistered the ethnic rivalry between Southern and Western political class of that time and snowball into what we are seeing today.

The victory of non indigenes in Lagos state during the April 11 2015 National Assembly elections did not go down well with the indigenes as they made inflammatory statements including threats of death. [23] reports; “on Saturday, if any of you goes against Ambode whom I picked, that is your end. If it does not happen within seven days, just know that I am a bastard and it is not my father that gave birth to me”. Oba Akiolus threat spring up wide spread condemnation both from the westerners and Igbo organisations including Civil society Organisations. Ohaneze described the statement as very weighty with a promise to respond to him at the appropriate time.

Appetite to Appropriate Wealth: The 2015 election witnessed gross inducement of all and sundry by politicians. No organ, organisation or body is free from this contamination. The allegation of being bought over by politicians reached its crescendo as Spiritual leaders are also indicted. The Pan Igbo socio cultural organisation Ohaneze Ndigbo is not left out from the bribery allegation of the 2015 election. [25] reveals:

Another round of war has enveloped the crisis ridden Apex Igbo Socio-cultural organisation Ohaneze Ndigbo, over the sharing formula of alleged bribe money given to the body by the President Goodluck Jonathan for the endorsement of his second term ambition...

The endorsement of Jonathans second term bid by Ohaneze is viewed by many as a result of the monetary inducement of its members by the ruling People’s Democratic Party. Political analysts are of the opinion that endorsement would have come with some sort of commitment a case that did not happen between the Ohaneze and President Jonathan. Rather Ohaneze gave President Jonathan blanket endorsement devoid of Memorandum of Understanding. The 2015 election among the Igbo boils down to, who get what. The Igbo political contractors in their bid to maintain their source of livelihood dole out money, influencing electorate to vote their preferred candidate irrespective of whether it’s for the benefit of the Igbo or not.

Suggestions: For obvious reasons Nigerian politics from inception is anchored on ethnicity and Nigeria by its design made it impossible for one ethnic group to singly produce the president devoid of other ethnic groups. Based on this strength, the Igbo should as a matters of urgency fortify its territory that is the South East zone politically. How can they achieve this? They should borrow a leave from the political strategy of their Western neighbours led by Bola Ahmed Tinubu who through his political party AD that later metamorphosed into ACN and today give the Yorubas political power to negotiate. Just as [1] suggests; “for the Igbo to occupy their rightful place in the Nigeria, all Igbo speaking communities must set aside artificial animosities and cleavages deliberately orchestrated by Igbo haters to divide them and forge a collective vision for Igbo renaissance preferably within Nigeria”. It’s unfortunate that APGA formation which at inception tried to give the Igbo such a platform was cut short by self serving politicians who claim to have Igbo interest at heart.

Secondly, the Igbo should distinguish between political mercantilism from selfless leaders as this will make them to be relevant in the political sphere of the country instead of the political suicide of 2015 election. As [2] analysis; “recently, the political miasma of the last election swept off any foothold the Igbo had in the political pool”. Although the Igbo are often referred as “Igbo enweze eze”, it’s high time the Igbo should access their acclaimed leaders. The Ohaneze Ndigbo is today seen as the rallying point of the Igbo through which decisions binding on the Igbo are taken in fact they are seen as the mouthpiece of Ndigbo. Is Ohaneze made up of which manner of people? They are political contractors and card carrying members of various political parties. It will be expedient if such a body should have elder statesmen that are not into partisan politics with impeccable character as its members. By such arrangement their position will not be farther from that that will benefit the populace. How can Ndigbo have confidence on elders that are always riddled with corruption? [5] laments:

Recall that Ohaneze under Joe Irukwe, did same thing during the failed 3rd term bid of ex-president Obasanjo... it’s quite unfortunate that those always piloting the affairs of the Igbo umbrella body, Ohaneze are people without conscience & integrity.

Ohaneze during Jonathan’s election in 2011 canvassed an Igbo block vote for him. In their advertorial Ohaneze said Jonathan has accepted to use the powers of

incumbency to facilitate the emergence of a president of Igbo extraction in 2015 (a tacit agreement that he would spend only one term in office) and create a sixth state in South East. Ohaneze also said the president would approve dredging of the River Niger and transformation of Onitsha into thriving deep Inland Seaport. Furthermore, Jonathan pledged to build a second Niger Bridge before 2015 and complete the rehabilitation of the Onitsha/Enugu and Enugu/PH expressway. None of this was accomplished in Jonathan’s first term and the same Ohaneze endorsed him for second term. What formed their decision still remain a puzzle to an average right thinking Igbo. For the Igbo to make any head way, [9] says; “Ndigbo must collectively shed our burgeoning “trader mentality”... Ndigbo must now begin to shun all those who pride themselves as voyeurs of the politics of mercantilism”.

Ndigbo should build alliance with other ethnic groups in order to be integrated into the political landscape of Nigeria. Before this could be effective, they should first of all do what is called self assessment devoid of sentiment. Ndigbo are of the opinion that they are hated by all the ethnic groups in Nigeria but they have never made out time to find out why rather they make the analysis in a way it suits them. The researcher brings the wise saying of her father of the blessed memory (Ugonwanne) Herbert Ozoemena; i jere eke luo ogu ekpee ikpe i merie, jee Orie luo ekpee i merie, jee Afor na Nkwo luo ogu ekpee ikpe, i merie. O juo, o bu naani gi biara ahia? Meaning you attended all the markets in Igbo land and fought in all of them. After judgement you are adjudged innocent and he asks are you the only person that attends those markets? Ndigbo should make out time and ponder over the assertions of [3] about Igbo “noisy nature and tendency to dominate their hosts” coupled with provocative statements and threats that will never see the light of the day.

Nigeria is on a tripod stand; East (Ndigbo), North (Hausa) West (Yoruba) but Nigeria political equation has relegated Igbo to be a minority tribe as the minority among them are being used to make them irrelevant while they ignobly accept it without giving it a second thought. [16] fumes; “look we are leg of the tripartite pillars of Nigerian politics and anything less than that is concrete manifestation of degeneration”. With regards to the 2015 election, the Igbo are made to believe during campaign that APC is Yoruba party, at a time it was also tagged Boko Haram party. The Igbo people gullibly accepted this notion and voted massively for the PDP without asking certain pertinent questions like? If APC is a Yoruba party and later become Boko Haram party which is the Hausa it

becomes imperative that the Igbo (Biafra) should be there too to make the tripod stand firm. But Ndigbo didn't listen to the voice of reason from Chief Dozie Ikedife former President General of Ohaneze Ndigbo, who was crying like a voice in the wilderness calling on the Igbo not to lay their eggs in one basket. Bdigbo should learn to embrace political diversification just as Okoye suggests; "...no matter which party wins, there is still something in the pot for different regions". They forgot that you can only make an impact on a system when you are part of it.

Lastly the Igbo should stop crying victim all the time. They should brace up and get integrated in the country they find themselves which is Nigeria having fought the civil war and lost. Yes it is always said that unexamined life is not worth living but my people equally have this saying that "dibuno epeghi ariri, naani ya ebiri", elee aghara ka eji ebi". All these are Igbo wise sayings that propel them despite the hurdles until they get to their destination. Just as Kogbara explains; "I have met loads of frightening incompetent and disgustingly greedy Yoruba, Northerners, Igbos and foreigners throughout my life. But I don't automatically assume that all Yorubas, Northerners, Igbos and foreigners are worthless!"

CONCLUSION

Politics is when you say you are going to do one thing while intending to do another. Then you do neither what you said nor what you intended. "Saddam Hussein" Nigerian politicians play ethnic politics for their selfish gain. [17] agrees to this when he says "the last person to trust absolutely is a politician; a bunch of them, in my view make up the devils workshop". Even the Nigerian Nationalists cannot be exonerated from this allegation in as much as they are assumed to be selfless leaders of their time; they still used ethnic language and sentiment during the election and electioneering campaign.

To buttress this point according to Nigeria history, northerners have ruled Nigeria more than every other region. If ethnicity has its positivism, North is not supposed to have more poor people amongst them but record shows that they are the most backward ethnic group in Nigeria which means the political class among them are after their selfish gains. [23], gives credence to this "zoning anything, is for people with selfish interest. We the Igbo have produced many Senate presidents, what did they do for us"? Same is applicable to other ethnic groups as their politicians use ethnic chant to attract sympathy when they feel that the odds are against them because the way people from another ethnic group outsmart them at the centre is the same manner they

outsmart each other within the same ethnic group (intra ethnic politics). "gwam ihe onye Awusa ma o bu Yoruba mere onye Igbo, Igbo emeghi onwe ha? [26] quoting Sultan of Sokoto Saad Abubakar 111 collaborates:

Xtians and Muslims are not at war, but the evil perpetrators are the ones waging war against the unity of Nigeria and Nigerians. Whether we admit it or not; facts have proven that these are politicians among us, who, have allowed selfishness to derail them every sense of social responsibility to the populace.

If politicians and politics is practiced with sincerity of purpose one need not to be at the centre to benefit from the dividends of democracy irrespective of your ethnic lining. The constant cry for ethnic balance has propagated corruption and throw up mediocre into the system. It equally diminishes the people's broad-minded tendency to concentrate on issues by getting every office holder accountable. In Nigerian context, a corrupt politician facing trial will always cry out that he is being persecuted because of his ethnic lining. Just as Mazadu rightly says; "the desperation to cut from the national cake has bastardized democratic norms in the country". By and large, Politics of ethnicity is the weapon of the politicians and the undoing of the electorate. It all boils down to mans selfish quest to conquer his environment how he achieves this notwithstanding.

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