

## Politics of Identity, Affiliation, and National Security Infrastructure in Nigeria, 2015-2023: A Historical Analysis

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### Abstract

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This historical analysis examines the intricate relationship between identity affiliations and national security infrastructure in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. The study reveals how ethnic and religious affiliations have substantially dictated the qualifications of individuals who occupy critical national security infrastructure in Nigeria and the implications arising thereof. Through a critical examination of existing literature and historical data, this study identifies key factors contributing to these security challenges, including colonial disruption, the quest for private accumulation of power and the centralisation of governance. The analysis also explores how identity politics has affected nation-building and constituted security and governance challenges, threatening national integration. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of ethnicity in mobilising access to power and resources, often inciting regional suspicion among the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. The study noted that until Nigeria eschews the politics of ethnic affiliations, authentic development will continue to elude the country.

**Keywords:** *Politics of identity affiliation, Social exclusion and marginalisation, Radical separatism and human security challenges*

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### **Background to the Study**

Nigeria is made up of heterogeneous communities with different cultures, religions and languages. Before the coming of the British, these distinct cultural and ethnic nationalities were living separately in the two major ethnic divides of North and South of the country (Olaopa and Omodunbi, 2019). These indigenous socio-political entities were organised and differentiated in terms of both language, culture, religion and some forms of ideology. Therefore, in Nigeria, while the Northern region is predominantly made up of Hausa-Fulani with Islam as the major religion of the area, the South is predominantly Christian and has Igbo and Yoruba as its major languages. The amalgamation of the protectorate of Southern Nigeria and that of Northern Nigeria by the British in 1914 in their quest to colonize Nigeria brought together these ethnic nationalities thereby fusing people of different tribes, religious and political orientations in what is now referred to as Nigeria (Uduma Oji Uduma, 2013 and Olaopa and Omodunbi, 2019) thus sowed the seed of division across ethnic line.

In an effort to develop a federal idea suitable for the exploitation and economic governance of Nigeria, the British divided the protectorate of southern Nigeria into eastern and western provinces (Ekeeh, 2004), leaving the north together, thereby initiating the problem of imbalance in Nigeria. It was the creation and division of Nigeria into three ethnic lines of Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba that gave birth to divided and rule in Nigeria (Ayatse & Akuva, 2013). This division of Nigeria into ethnic lines led to the factionalisation of Nigeria along major ethnic and regional identities. These major ethnic and regional identities have now become the basis for many political, administrative and economic policies in Nigeria. This colonial orchestrated socio-political and economic formation has continued to influence the pattern and nature of political and economic activities of the Nigerian state to the extent that ethnic sentiment has gradually crept in to find a place in every facet of Nigerian political activity (Ayatse & Akuva, 2013).

Over the years, there have been manifestations of the relationships between ethnicity, religion and the practice of democracy that sometimes result in violence and other forms of mobilisation across ethnic and religious lines (Afigbo, 1986). Politics in Nigeria has often been played along ethnic, religious, and other socio-cultural affiliations and as has been asserted by Quaker-Dokubo (2000):

The worldwide surge in the number and violence of open conflicts revolving around ethnic or religious identities towards the end of the 20th century is a powerful reminder that communal identities are not a remnant of the past, but a potent force in contemporary politics.

Religious and ethnic influenced political decisions and consideration have thus pushed Nigeria to crisis point where every person is first seen from the angle of his or her ethnic, religious or other primordial identities such as state of origin, tribe, or language affiliation. This kind of ethnic and religious consideration characteristic of Nigeria political environment are not only deepening and institutionalising social cleavages as pointed by Quaker-Dokubo but also politicising them in a manner that induced antagonism. This antagonism is prompted by the very nature of politics as the mechanism for the allocation of value to the various

components and segments of the country. In Nigeria, political elites and political class see the acquisition of political power as a potent means to better the economic base of their affiliated ethnic groups, religion and regions or tribes (Oluniyi, 2014). This is seen in the manner of distribution of political values, which always, in many cases, overtly follow religions and ethnic lines, thereby sidelining one or two groups over another. Identity affiliation has therefore been indicated at all levels of social groups marked especially by shared nationality, tribal affiliation, religious faith, shared language or cultural and traditional origin and background (Metumara, 2010).

Ethnicity and other primordial sentiments have, over the years, become the defining factor in Nigerian political life. Political goods and value are shared according to ethnic, religious lines. These enshrined sentiments have replaced merit and skills. This trend has resulted in the claim of exclusion of one ethnic group or the other in the national political consideration and opportunity, thus setting a stage for a crisis of marginalisation and ethnic mobilisation (Ibeanu, Orji & Iwuamadi, 2016). This mobilisation by the marginalised ethnic groups has increased the spate of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria, with its attendant human security catastrophe. This informed the aim of this paper to interrogate how the ugly trend of politics of affiliation along ethnic lines has undermined the sustenance of peace and security in Nigeria. The paper relying on the qualitative data and analysis of related articles, books and journals is aimed at establishing a causal relationship between the politics of identity affiliation, rise in the ethnic group mobilisation, breakdown of security and deteriorating human security, particularly during President Buhari's tenure in Office in Nigeria. The paper is structured into four parts: introduction, which is the first part that chronicles the background of identity politics in Nigeria, and is immediately followed by theorising politics of identity in Nigeria, where a conscious effort was made by the researcher to trace the foundation and background of identity politics in Nigeria. The next part is the historical origin and manifestations of the politics of identity affiliation in Nigeria, followed by the empirical examination of the impacts of identity affiliation on human security in Nigeria, which also contains the empirical findings and lastly the conclusion.

### **Theorising Politics of Identity Affiliation in Nigeria**

Politics of identity affiliation, according to Osaghae (1995), is a situation where political actors often link themselves and their supporters with primordial cleavages such as tribe, ethnic group, religion, or language. This phenomenon has characterised the Nigerian politics, where political parties, candidates, and their followers frequently organise along some historical and sociological graven such as, regional and religious lines (Ake, 1993). In Nigeria, due to the nature of the post-colonial statecraft, the battle for governmental authority is frequently seen as a way to further the interests of one's affiliated group or minority group. As a result, there are now numerous intricate networks of political patronage, political alliances, and marginalised groups, which have all contributed to unending instability, ethnic mobilisations and insecurity (Suberu, 2001).

Ademola (2014) has defined party affiliation as joining or being connected with a particular political party or group. The politics of affiliation is a strategy of the politicians to perpetuate

the people of their ethnic group in the power equation of the country in favour of people from other ethnic groups. Politics of affiliation, therefore, in the sense of this paper, will mean the state or relation of allowing ethnic and primordial ties to influence and determine political considerations and allocation of political values. This work will be anchored on the theoretical lens of group theory as originally formulated by Arthur F. Bentley (1908). According to Bentley, society, the nation, and the government are all made up of groups of men, each cutting across many others. Competition exists between different interests and groups in society in order to influence the government or state decisions. Group theory opines that conflict usually ensues between different groups in the state competing and struggling for scarce resources and values (Izueke, 2014).

The theory is founded on the doctrine of pluralism and holds that every society includes within it several groups that engage in a continuous struggle for power and domination over another (Izueke, 2014). The theory argues that power is diffused among many interest groups, who are competing against each other for the limited opportunities and resources in society. It is, therefore, the existence of interest that leads to the organisation of groups. Nigeria's society, being pluralistic in nature, is made up of different groups interlocking with each other in the struggle for political power. The forced amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates brought together people of different tribes, religions and socio-political and cultural orientations in what is today known as Nigeria, thereby setting the stage for the struggle by these component groups for who gets what, when and how (Olaopa & Omodunbi, 2019)

Politics in Nigeria has historically continued to be played across group lines, which have manifested in different forms such as ethnic, religious, tribal, language, regional and state of origin. In Nigeria, therefore, politics is largely determined by affiliation and manifests along these group lines, leading to exclusion and marginalisation of one group by the other and the attendant agitation and mobilisation by the aggrieved group or groups. The major factor determining political party formation and political consideration in Nigeria is one's affiliation and manifests in a number of group levels, like one's ethnic, religious, tribal, language or regional groups. At the state level, politics of affiliation has been played along cultural zones, and even at the level of tribe and village, or belonging to the same religious denomination or having attended the same secondary or university schools. It also manifests at the grassroots level; villages and community levels, where ancestral lineage, village origin, caste system and kingship lineage determine the mode of political decisions and choices.

Political consideration and allocation of political values in the form of appointment and other political considerations in Nigeria have therefore been influenced by one's identified affiliations. Against this diverse background, many political problems abound in Nigeria, which arise principally from the hostility that derives from competition between ethnically different peoples for wealth and power (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). This is why the struggle for political power in Nigeria always takes a primordial character, as one's affiliated group background plays a great role in the whole process of party formation and statecraft. It also explains the incessant quest for secession based on claims of political exclusion,

marginalisation, and perceived sense of injustice by various ethnic groups (Johnson & Olaniyan, 2017). This clamour for a greater stake in the share of national resources and state power by the major affiliate groups in Nigeria and the personalisation of state power by the political elite for the selfish enrichment of their affiliate groups has been a major challenge to peaceful coexistence in the country.

Because political consideration and economic opportunities are made based on one's affiliation, conflict often arise due to exclusions of one or the other groups in the scheme of things. In Nigeria, there appears to be a conscious domination of one ethnic group over and above the other (Ozoeze, 2005) resulting to the issues of crisis of marginalisation and emergence of ethnic based groups agitating for the inclusion of the ethnic stock in the share of the country's politics and economy. There is therefore, a scenario of continuous cry for marginalisation and ethnic based agitation in Nigeria depending on which ethnic group is controlling the state power.

The foregoing scenario have given rise to the formation of many secessionist organisations like seen among the Igbo ethnic group on the ground that the zone has not had opportunity to control the state power since after the civil war in 1970. Groups like Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra whose objective is "the actualization of the State of Biafra, the sovereign independent Igbo nation, using peaceful means and now the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) who is adopting a militant strategy in her struggle for the actualisation of the state of Biafra has emerged to press for the inclusion of the Igbo in the Nigerian project (Druji, 2012). The situations have created 'destructive security challenges and social instability' in the South-east region of the country and have undermined human security in the region (Mbalisi, 2017: 72).

### **Historical Origin and Manifestations of Politics of Affiliation in Nigeria**

The origin of the politics of identity affiliation in Nigeria can be traced to the colonial and subsequent post-colonial states formation in Africa. As canvassed by Chilaka (2017: 105), 'colonialism was principally an economic enterprise designed to under-develop the colonies. Hence, the colonial state was not structured to civilize Africa or build institutional frameworks for the effective functioning of the colonial economy such that will benefit the colonised (Ake, 1996). It was rather 'an occupying force and destroys through force' the indigenous economic system, with which the natives mediated between themselves and their environment (Chilaka, 2017). Though rules and laws were made in the colonial state, it was unable to engender legitimacy because; it was merely arbitrary in nature (Ake, 1996). Colonial politics was therefore, reduced to a mechanism of acquisition of power and appropriation of same for the benefit of the elites or the colonisers.

It was within the above illustrated character that the post-colonial state emerged and so irrespective of political independence, which no doubt brought changes to leadership of state power, the character of the state remained the same. The post-colonial state like its progenitor-continued to be totalistic in scope and so functioned to maintain the status quo (Mbah & Obiora, 2015). The colonial state merely handed over political power to chosen African



politicians who were ready to be subservient to their interests. This made political independence to be a pathway for struggle for power by dominant class in the society, hence sidelining the masses in the political process.

The disarticulation of the indigenous economy by the colonial power gave rise to weak economic base of the post-colonial state. Mbah & Obiora (2015) further explain that because colonial policy prevented the development of indigenous technology, at the point of independence, the group that inherited the post-colonial states was economically weak, thereby using their position of the control of state power to enhance their personal economic position. According to Ake (1996), the tendency to use the state power for capital accumulation reinforced the struggle for political power. This is due to weak material base of the new political leaders, who had been economically marginalised by the 'discriminatory economic policies of the colonial regime' (Ake, 1996, 5).

From the foregoing analysis of the colonial and post-colonial state in Africa, it becomes evident that the struggle for and the use of state for economic survival was the precursor for politics of affiliation in Nigeria. The fact is that in Nigeria, state power is the surest means of economic survival and the citizens are forced to manipulate primordial identities like ethnicity, tribe and religion by association for purpose of economic survival and more importantly, the holder of state power uses it for his selfish enrichment and for that of his relations, tribe and ethnic group. Ake (1981) buttresses this point by explaining the importance of economic conditions in understanding society. He argued that problems such as tribalism and ethnicity cannot be treated merely as consciousness, rather, to grasp it fully; the consciousness should be situated in material condition. For him, tribalism and ethnicity flourishes because it is useful especially in economic sense. In Nigeria, politicians often manipulate ethnicity and primordial sentiments to help them mobilise support for the state power and also tend to see their access to state power as an opportunity to better the economic condition of their families, relations, tribes, religious denominations and well-wishers. No wonder in Nigeria, political appointment or electoral victory are seen more as family or tribal thing more than as a national assignment and those who succeed in clinching the state power are celebrated by their kit and kin as a reminder to them that it is their turn to appropriate the common resources of the country for their benefit. The above scenario however, explains the reason why soon after one is appointed a minister, director or elected into an office, his or her ethnic and tribal nationalities, old schoolmates and other affiliated groups roll out drum, and organise a big celebration ostensibly possess them and personalise the benefit of the office. This means that politics in Nigeria has no national outlook or orientation, it follows tribal, or ethnic line and is normally a zero-sum game, which means that when one ethnic group wins, another loss. This state of affairs in Nigeria politics of affiliation was summarized by Mbah, Nwangwu & Ugwu (2019) when they opine that:

Once state power is achieved, it is often used for personal or sectional economic enrichment of those who have achieved it and for their supporters, friends, members of their families, concubines, cronies, courtiers of government, and praise singers. (P.4)

Consequently, this has polarised the country into struggle for power and resources which are indicated in the rise in the ethnic and cultural-based organisations such as the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, the Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) etc (Olapa & Omodunbi, 2019). This proliferation of ethnic base organisation is a swift response to the exclusion and marginalisation of their ethnic group by the ethnic group who occupies the state power. This is because, in Nigeria, politicians are known to play the ethno-religious strategy by perpetuating people of their ethnic group in the power equation of the country such as seen under President Buhari's administration's lopsided sharing of political values in favour of his Muslim north (Eme & Onuigbo, 2015). In Nigeria, any political party in power is normally dominated by one ethnic group or politicians from the same religious or regional background and so appoint more politicians from their socio-cultural background to head sensitive positions (Ajayi, 2019). For instance, the administration of President Muhammed Buhari currently in Nigeria has demonstrated a clear preference in favour of this northern regional origin in both his political and economic empowerment as seen in Table 1 and 2 bellow. It could be deduced from the breakdown of the ministerial list that greater number of ministers were from the Hausa Fulani ethnic group and are majorly his core associates. The table also shows that in the consideration for ministerial position, key positions were from the North, while the South, especially the South-east got mainly position from weak ministries or junior ministers otherwise known as minister for state. For instance, ministries like Petroleum, FCT, Agriculture, Communication, Defence, Justice and power are controlled by northern Muslims (Eme, 2020).

From the foregoing as observed by (Eme, 2020) there is no doubt that, the pendulum of the cabinet swings to the North, thereby making the other regions to be excluded from the power consideration and opportunity in Nigeria. This and other ethnic favouritism in governance has led to the upsurge of ethnic group mobilisation like the present sustained agitation by IPOB for secession of the Igbo nation in the name of Biafra. In a similar way, the present administration demonstrates a brazen disregard for federal character principle in the composition of the service chiefs or heads of security formations in the country. In Table 2 bellow, showing heads of security agencies and their state of origin, no person from Igbo speaking state and indeed the southeast was considered, thus laying ground for secessionist intent by the IPOB. The implication for this is that in any discussion of national security matter in Nigeria, the Igbo will not be represented. A careful look at tables 1 and 2 will reveal that political positions and consideration under president Buhari's administration were shared in favour of affiliated sentiments like religion, ethnicity, region and state of origin and to members of his age grades across the country. This has increased the spate of ethnic agitation in the country especially in the South-east where the IPOB is currently applying every strategy to make the federal government of Nigeria to grant her demand for secession of the Igbo race. This has however greatly undermined every effort or desire for peace in Nigeria as it has increased the spate of insecurity and conflicts.

### **Politics of Identity Affiliation and Human Security Challenges in Nigeria**

Nigerian political environment has been greatly determined by the complex phenomenon described as the 'politics of identity affiliation' (Osaghae, 2022). This idea explains how people and groups in Nigeria identify with and attaches certain primordial associations, including state of origin, ethnicity, religion, language and tribal orientations in their day-to-day political choices, and how these identities influence political outcomes and processes (Suberu, 2019).

Ethnicity is one of the main determinants of the politics of identity affiliation in Nigeria. With more than 250 ethnic groupings, Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and linguistically plural nation, and political players are historically influenced by ethnicity (Okeke, 2018). Similar to this, religious affinities have also been a major determining force to political alliances and conflicts, especially between the mostly Christian South and the predominantly northern Hausa Fulani.

The politics of identity affiliation in Africa and Nigeria can be traced to the pre-colonial state formation and the division and amalgamation of distinct ethnic groups by the colonial powers for administrative convenience (Okafor, 2019). This creation of and the forceful amalgamation of distinct identity groups result in the politicisation of these ethnic nationalities in post-independence states of Africa, as the elites struggled to consolidate power (Osaghae, 2015) by favouring their own ethnic, religious or regional affiliations. In Nigeria, as observed by Suberu (2001) the three major ethnic groups of Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba have a long history of struggle for socio-economic and political dominance within the country's landscape (Suberu, 2001). However, the politics of using state power to promote one's ethnic, religious, tribal, or regional affiliations has fueled the crisis of exclusion and perceived marginalisation of other ethnic groups, exacerbating human insecurity in Nigeria (Adebayo, 2017). According to UNDP (1994, human security as a concept comprises seven dimensions which include: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. It is a notion of security that focuses on the individual, away from the state-centric security dominance. In Nigeria, the use of state power for identity affiliation and promotion of one's affiliated groups has undermined human security, more especially in the South-East region, where the crisis of perceived marginalisation of the Igbo ethnic group and brazen exclusion from the country's political and economic mainstream has been a source of mobilisation (Nwangwu, 2022; Okolie, 2019).

The use of state power for the advancement of particular identity affiliations has been a recurring source of conflict in Nigeria's post-colonial history. Successive administrations in Nigeria have tendered to personalize the state power for the benefit of the selected elite, their cronies, and ethnic affiliated groups. The President Buhari administration from 2015-2019 seemed to have promoted the brazen personalisation of state power based on his favoured ethnic and primordial affiliations (Eme & Onuigbo, 2015). The disproportionate use of state power by the Buhari administration to advance the socio-economic and political resources of his Hausa Fulani ethnic stock through appointments in key government agencies has been widely acknowledged (Eme and Onuigbo, 2015; Adebayo, 2018). According to Ibeanu (2020) has led to feelings of systematic marginalisation and exclusion of other groups, especially the Igbo in the southeast, thereby fuelling the clamour for a separate Biafra state through the secessionist agitations by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).



The intensification of radical separatist campaign by the IPOB including the declaration and enforcement of "sit-at-home" orders in South-east region of Nigeria and the formation of the pro-separatist militia, the Eastern Security Network (ESN) has been confronted with the repressive apparatus of the state (Nwangwu, 2022). This has resulted in the escalation of insecurity in the region with the attendant civilian casualties, destruction of private and public infrastructure (Owoeye, Ezeanya & Obiegbunam, 2022). The series of clashes between the state security forces and the pro-Biafra groups in the region has led to general breakdown of law and order in the southeast, and undermined human security in the region (Okoli & Orinya, 2018). According to Ike (2021), the formation of the Eastern Security Network, has resulted in the escalation of attacks by state security forces and implicated in the emergence of "unknown gunmen," which has led to the massive civilian casualties of Igbo people and the destruction of public and private infrastructure in the South-East states. This radical separatism which evolved as a result of progressive marginalisation of the Igbo in Nigeria undermined the economy and livelihood of the people of South-east region. The continued closure of markets due to the enforcement of Sit-at-home orders by the IPOB and the rise in insecurity associated with the activities of the unknown gunmen and the repressive forces of the state has undermined the human security in the region.

Human security therefore, as espoused by Aworawo (2020) has been seriously compromised through identity politics in Nigeria, where the marginalisation and exclusion of particular groups has exacerbated poverty, violence, and instability. In light of the continuous conflict and violence that have disrupted livelihoods, access to basic services, and general quality of life, the South-East crisis has had an especially devastating effect on the region's economy and citizens' well-being. The progressive decline of human security in Nigeria has been largely caused by the politics of identity association, as exemplified in the Buhari administration's preference for its Hausa-Fulani base and the Igbo people's subsequent feelings of marginalisation. This situation has been made worse by the violent official response to the radical secessionist campaign of the IPOB, which has led to several fatalities, property devastation, and a decline in personal and communal security. Restoring human security in Nigeria requires addressing the underlying causes of this conflict, which include the requirement for a more inclusive and equitable government.

**Table 1:** Ministers and their Portfolios under President Buhari's Second Term Administration, 2019

SN	Name	Portfolio	State of Origin	Religion	Region
1	President Muhammadu Buhari	Petroleum	Kastina	Islam	North
2	Mohammed Musa Bello	FCT	Adamawa	Islam	North
3	Godswill Akpabio	Niger Delta	Akwa Ibom	Christianity	South
4	Christ Ngige	Labour and Employment	Anambra	Christianity	South
5	Sharon Ikeazor	State for Environment	Anambra	Christianity	South
6	Adamu Adamu	Education	Bauchi	Islam	North
7	Maryam Katagum	State for Industry	Bauchi	Islam	North
8	Timipre Sylva	State for Petroleum	Bayelsa	Christianity	South
9	George Akume	Special Duties	Benue	Christianity	North
10	Mustapha Baba Shehuri	Agriculture and Rural Development	Borno	Islam	North
11	Goddy Jedy Agba	State for Power	Cross River	Christianity	North
12	Festus Keyamo	State for Niger Delta	Delta	Christianity	South
13	Ogbonnaya Onu	Science and Technology	Ebonyi	Christianity	South
14	Osagie Ehanire	Health	Edo	Christianity	South
15	Clement Ike	State for budget	Edo	Christianity	South
16	Richard Adeniyi Adebayo	Industry, Trade and Investment	Ekiti	Christianity	South
17	Geoffrey Onyema	Foreign Affairs	Enugu	Christianity	South
18	Ali Isa Pantami	Communication	Gombe	Islam	North
19	Emeka Nwajiuba	State for Education	Imo	Christianity	South
20	Suleiman Adamu	Water Resources	Jigawa	Islam	North
21	Zainab Ahmed	Finance	Kaduna	Islam	North
22	Muhammad Mahmood	Environment	Kaduna	Islam	North
23	Sabo Nanono	Agriculture and Rural Development	Kano	Islam	North
24	Basher Salihi Magashi	Defence	Kano	Islam	North
25	Hadi Sirika	Aviation	Katsina	Islam	North
26	Abubakar Malami	Justice/Attorney General of the Federation	Kebbi	Islam	North
27	Ramatu Tijjani	State for FCT	Kogi	Islam	North
28	Lai Mohammed	Information and Culture	Kwara	Islam	South
29	Gbemisola Saraki	State for Transportation	Kwara	Islam	South
30	Babtunde Fashola	Works and Housing	Lagos	Islam	South
31	Adeleke Mamora	State for Health	Lagos	Islam	South
32	Mohammed H. Abdullahi	State Science and Technology	Nasarawa	Islam	North
33	Zubair Dada	State Foreign Affairs	Niger	Islam	North
34	Olamilekan Adegbite	Mines and Steel Development	Ogun	Islam	South
35	Tayo Alasodura	State for Labour and Employment	Ondo	Islam	South
36	Rauf Aregbesola	Interior	Osun	Islam	South
37	Sunday Dare	Youths and Sports	Oyo	Islam	South
38	Paulen Tallen	Women Affairs	Plateau	Christian	North
39	Rotimi Amaechi	Transportation	Rivers	Christian	South
40	Maigari Dingyadi	Police Affairs	Sokoto	Islam	North
41	Sale Mamman	Power	Taraba	Islam	North
42	Abubakar D. Aliyu	State for works and Housing	Yobe	Islam	North
43	Sadiya Umar Faruk	Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Mgt	Zamfara	Islam	North
44	Ikechukwu Ogah	State for Mines and Steel	Abia	Christian	South

**Table 2:** Heads of Security Agencies and their State of Origin

SN	NAME	AGENCY	STATE OF ORIGIN
1	Leo Irabor	Chief of Defence	Delta
2	Isiaka O. Amao	Chief of Air Staff	Osun
3	Usman A. Baba	IGP, NPF	Yobe
4	Ahmed A. Rufai	DIG, NIA	Katsina
5	Mohammed Babatunde	Controller NIS	Jigawa
6	Ahmad A. Audu	CG-NSCDC	Nasarawa
7	Liman Alh. Ibrahim	CG Fed. Fire Service	Niger State
8	Bolaji Owasanoye	Chairman, ICPC	Ondo
9	Ibrahim Attahiru	Chief of Army Staff	Kaduna
10	Awwal Z. Gambo	Chief of Naval Staff	Kano
11	Yusuf M. Bichi	DG –DSS	Kano
12	Hameed I. Ali	CG- NCS	Bauchi
13	Babayo O. Oyeyemi	Corps Marshal FRSC	Kwara
14	Abdulrasheed Bawa	Chairman, EFCC	Kebbi
15	Buba Marwa	Chairman, NDLEA	Adamawa

**Source:** Adopted from Shehu, 2021.

**Table 3:** Some cases of Attacks by the unknown gunmen in the south-east region from 2021

S/N	REPORTED IPOB RELATED ATTACK	DATE	PLACE OF ATTACK	SOURCE
1	Two operatives of Neighborhood watch group killed and two operations vehicles burnt.	Tuesday October 6, 2021	Ogurute, Igbo-Eze North LGA	The Guardian : <a href="https://guardian.ng/news/police-confirms-killing-of-2-neighbourhood-watch-operatives-in-enugu/">https://guardian.ng/news/police-confirms-killing-of-2-neighbourhood-watch-operatives-in-enugu/</a>
2	Many people Injured and Valuables destroyed and looted as masked men on motorcycles invaded Ogrurute headquarters of Igbo-Eze North LGA	Monday 9th August, 2021.	Ogurute, Igbo-Eze North LGA	The Sunnews <a href="https://sunnewsonline.com/6-killed-as-ipob-sit-at-home-grounds-south-east/">https://sunnewsonline.com/6-killed-as-ipob-sit-at-home-grounds-south-east/</a>
3	Masked men Attacked traders who came early to display their wares with various weapons	Monday 9 August, 2021 `	Nkwo Aji Market, Igbo Eze North LGA	Sun News <a href="https://sunnewsonline.com/6-killed-as-ipob-sit-at-home-grounds-south-east/">https://sunnewsonline.com/6-killed-as-ipob-sit-at-home-grounds-south-east/</a>
4	Gunmen enforcing the IPOB Sit-at-home order attacked shops and markets and schools in Enugu.	Wednesday 5 July, 2023	Enugu Areas: Asata, Trans Ekulu, New Heaven, Artisan Market, Coal Camp and Uwani Enugu.	BBC: <a href="https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cqvqvjxwz97o">https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cqvqvjxwz97o</a>
5	INEC official injured, electoral machines destroyed as gunmen attacked registration center in Enugu.	Wednesday July 13, 2022	Community primary school Umuopu, Igbo-Eze North LGA	Daily Nigerian <a href="https://dailynigerian.com/inec-official-injured/">https://dailynigerian.com/inec-official-injured/</a>
6	Unknown gun men burnt down the INEC office, Ogurute.	Sunday July 3, 2022	Ogurute, the headquarters of Igbo-Eze North LGA.	Daily Nigerian: <a href="https://dailynigerian.com/inec-official-injured/">https://dailynigerian.com/inec-official-injured/</a>
7	Gunmen killed at least seven police men in Enugu state capital	11-12 February, 2022	Enugu	Crisis Watch Group: <a href="https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?page=2&amp;location%5BO%5D=28&amp;da=">https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?page=2&amp;location%5BO%5D=28&amp;da=</a>
9	Unknown gunmen killed two persons and injured three with machete in Nkpologwu, Uzo-Uwani LGA. One of the dead is a member of neighborhood watch.	Monday January 17, 2022	Nkpologwu in Uzo-Uwani LGA	Vanguard: <a href="https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/01/sit-at-home-enforcers-wrak-havoc-in-s-east/">https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/01/sit-at-home-enforcers-wrak-havoc-in-s-east/</a>
	A trailer loaded with motorcycle spare parts was set on fire by unknown gunmen claimed to be enforcing IPOB's Sit-at-Home order.	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> September, 2021	Eluagu Junction Obukpa, Nsukka LGA.	SB Morgen Intelligence. <a href="https://www.sbmintel.com/2021/09/impact-of-ipob-ordered-sit-at-home-protests/">https://www.sbmintel.com/2021/09/impact-of-ipob-ordered-sit-at-home-protests/</a>
10	Gunmen set ablaze a bus conveying tomatoes, vegetables and other foodstuffs to Enugu for violating the Monday Sit-at-Home order.	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> September, 2021.	Edem Junction, Ibagwa Nike in Enugu east LGA of Enugu state.	Punch Newspaper <a href="https://punchng.com/hoodlums-allegedly-enforcing-ipob-sit-at-home-set-ablaze-bus-carrying-foodstuffs-in-enugu/">https://punchng.com/hoodlums-allegedly-enforcing-ipob-sit-at-home-set-ablaze-bus-carrying-foodstuffs-in-enugu/</a>

**Source:** Compiled by the researcher from the major newspapers in Nigeria

**Table 4:** Some attacks on security agents and security formations in the South-east in 2021 alone

S/N	DETAILS OF THE ATTACK	DATE
1.	3 policemen killed by armed men at Onueke Police Station in Ezza LGA, Ebonyi state	January 8, 2021
2	Two policemen were killed by unknown gunmen in Aba, Abia state	January 23
3	Gunmen numbering 20 attacked and killed one policeman at Omaba Divisional police station in Ngwa South, Abia state.	February 1
3	Unknown gunmen burnt the Isu police station in Onicha LGA, Ebonyi state.	February 4
4	Two policemen were killed at the Umulowo police division in Obowo LGA, Imo state.	February 5
5	A policeman was killed as gunmen attacked Abayi police station in Osisima Ngwa LGA in Abia state	February 23
6	Gunmen killed a police officer and burnt a patrol vehicle in Ekwulobia, Anambra state	February 24
7	A policeman was killed when gunmen attacked the Aboh Mbaise police station in Imo state.	February 25
8	Gunmen attacked and burnt an Izzi police station in Ebonyi state	March 1
9	A police station was burnt in Ihitte Uboma LGA in Abia state	March 9
10	Many policemen killed by organised attacks in Ekwulobia, Anambra state	March 18
11	Gunmen attacked the divisional police headquarters at Isiala Mba-no in Imo state	March 20
12	3 policemen killed by gunmen attackers at Abariba police Division in Ohafia LGA in Abia state	March 22
13	3 policemen attached to Charles Soludo killed in Isuofia Anambra state	March 31
14	Gunmen attacked the Imo police command headquarters and the Nigerian Correctional Centre in Owerri Imo state, looted the armory, burnt vehicles and freed 600 detainees and 1,844 inmates.	April 5
15	Gunmen set ablaze four operational vehicles at Ehime Mbanov Police Division in Imo state.	April 6
16	Gunmen attacked Ugbodo Police station in Ebonyi LGA of Ebonyi state	April 6
17	Gunmen attacked the Mberi Divisional police headquarters in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo state. Some suspects were freed.	April 8
18	3 policemen of Safer Highway Patrol Team in Ebonyi state were Killed in Ogoja/Abakiliki Express road.	April 14
19	Gunmen attacked and killed two policemen in Zone 13 Police headquarters in Ukpo Dunukofia LGA in Anambra state.	April 19
20	Gunmen burnt a police station in Uzoakoli, Bende LGA Abia state.	March 19.

**Source:** Adapted from Jibueze and Anioke. (2021).

Date from Tables 1 and 2 shows how the Igbo ethnic stock was grossly marginalised by President Buhari's administration in his appointments to key ministerial positions between 2015 and 2019 while Tables 3 and 4 captured a glimpse of the sporadic attacks and killings by gunmen believed to be militias of the pro-Biafra separatist group. In Nigeria, access to state power is key to ethnic socio-political advancement, and so denial or exclusion of one's ethnic group from the state's political and economic benefits could be a ground for the emergence of



separatist agitations (Ugwueze, Ibenekwu, Okonkwo, Iwundu & Onah, 2020). IPOB, therefore, emerged due to perceived marginalisation of the Igbo and tittered toward radical instinct due to President Buhari's perceived high-handedness against the Igbo (Ekpo, 2019). The foregoing analysis implies that in Nigeria, unless there is enthronement of genuine democracy, based on the rule of law, which will make it difficult for state leaders to personalise public office for personal use, there is no end in sight for the ensuring marginalisation and separatist agitation with its resultant human security dilemma.

## Conclusion

The use of state power for the benefit of one's ethnic and primordial affiliations has continued to define the parameters of Nigerian politics. This birthed from the polarisation of the ethnic groups by the colonial powers through divide and rule policy has been implicated in the ongoing ethnic based conflicts confronting the Nigeria state in its post-colonial era. The fact that under the administration of President Muhammed Buhari, political goods and values were shared according to ethnic-religions line generates claims of exclusion and marginalisation from various components ethnic groups that felt short-changed in the stake to state power and resources. This scenario has increased the agitation by these concerned ethnic groups, particularly the Igbo thereby making Nigeria a theatre of conflict and result in insecurity and loss of livelihoods. This agitation for inclusiveness and self-determination among the ethnic groups has undermined the human security in Nigeria.

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