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EVALUATION OF THE EFFECT OF TRIBE AND ETHNICITY IN THE COMPOSITION AND MANAGEMENT OF NIGERIA'S PUBLIC BUREAUCRACY: A HUMAN RESOURCE AND PUBLIC POLICY APPROACH

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Abstract. This paper uses empirical studies and case studies to examine the role of ethnicity and tribalism in the Nigerian public bureaucracy. The paper is anchored on social dominance theory and bureaucratic theory. The paper, based on a triangulation approach (content analysis combined with a survey), reveals that tribal affiliation, followed by religion, is the topmost factor influencing the composition and management of the Nigerian federal bureaucracy. The study reveals that ethnic and tribal ties between different ethnic groups have a significant impact on bureaucratic processes and administrative functions such as recruitment and appointments. The study reveals that bureaucrats in Nigeria use administrative discretion to alter public policies and influence public values in favor of their kinship. This causes public bureaucracy to become irrational, unethical, divisive, parochial, and unmeritorious as ethnic and racial

prejudices and biases take precedence in the composition and management of the public sector. The paper recommends inclusive governance and must redesign the institutional structure by creating an overarching level of board management to oversee the affairs of the Federal Character Commission (FCC) to reduce its apparent politicization or skewness that contradicts the original tenets upon which it was founded.

Keywords: affirmative plan, bureaucracy, bureaucratic theory, ethnicity, ethnic dominance, public administration, social dominance theory, and tribalism.

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Introduction

Ethnicity and tribal affiliation are of great importance in developing countries and other parts of the world where culture, religion, and racial identity are diverse. While the problem of race and ethnicity has always been a problem for humanity in ethnically and culturally diverse societies, it has now taken on the character of an unavoidable concern in the modern era. In Africa, for example, ethnicity is regarded as a developmental impediment, a factor that contributes to political instability and a lack of national identity, as well as corruption, destructive conflicts, and regressive consciousness (Ake, 1993). In these states, racial and ethnic attitudes and biases play a significant role in the creation and distribution of resources, access to state institutions, and the power configuration between and among ethnic blocks. Nnoli (1978) paints a picture of this scenario in Nigeria when he observes that Nigerian political leaders have explored the gray lines of ethnicity to drive the dynamics of political competition. He also states that citizens have relied on ethnic solidarity and identification in their electoral choices because they believe that having people of their ethnic background in governance will give them a competitive advantage over other ethnic groups in politics.

This is because citizens in many ethnically diverse states believe that the likelihood of national resources being channeled to them is directly related to the fact that the politician controlling the resources belongs to their ethnic group (Barkan, 1979; Kanyinga, 1994; Posner, 2005). This is evident in their administrative systems, where the race for jobs, development projects, and other state benefits and resources become a competition between various nationalities. Such a phenomenon is observed not only in Nigeria but also in other countries with diverse populations such as India, the Philippines, Cameroon, Tanzania, Ghana, Lithuania, Bosnia, Papua New Guinea, etc. where public policies broadly referred to as affirmative action have been used for ethnic balancing. In these

countries, all aspects of ethnic identity and solidarity, and their related manifestations, influence politics, governance, and policy at different gradations.

Despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”, tribe, race, and ethnicity have continuously played a significant role in the emergence, management, and development of public institutions. The socially constructed concept of public policy has shaped its formulation and implementation around the world (Rutherford and Meier, 2020). However, information about this reality has not attracted serious attention in the field of public administration. For a long time, Eurocentric ideas have dominated public administration scholarship. Some scholars (Meier, 1975; Dobbin and Kalev, 2016; Meier and Nigro, 1976) have not been able to bring the issue of tribalism and ethnicity to the forefront of public administration scholarship, which focuses on representative bureaucracy and the benefits that cultural diversity can bring to public organizations. Barry (1999), Miller (1995), Smith (1969), Museveni (1997), Goodhart (2004), Sambanis (2001), Levine (1997), and Gellner (1983) have investigated the role of ethnicity in violent conflicts, political instability, and growth without paying close attention to how tribalism and ethnicity have shaped public administration in the modern era. Thus, this paper intends to fill this gap by advancing public administration theory and research on the dynamics (manifestations, experiences, impact, and outcomes) of tribe and ethnicity in Nigeria as a case study. Therefore, three research questions (RQs) lead the study:

RQ1: What is the primacy of ethnicity and tribalism in the composition and management of the federal bureaucracy in Nigeria?

RQ2: Has group identity undermined systematic rules in the Nigerian public bureaucracy?

RQ3: Has common origin undermined security of tenure in the Nigerian public bureaucracy?

RQ1 serves as a harbinger for the introduction of the main subject area, namely ethnic domination detailed in RQ 2 and RQ 3. It helps in rating the factors that have the greatest influence on the composition and management of public bureaucracy in Nigeria. The public bureaucracy in Nigeria consists of the enlarged public service, which includes the following: (a) the services of the state and national assemblies; (b) the judiciary; (c) the armed forces; (d) the police and other security agencies; (e) the paramilitary agencies (immigration, customs, prisons, etc.); and (f) “parastatals” and agencies, including social services, commercially oriented agencies, educational institutions, research institutions, etc.

The study pays primary attention to the last political dispensation led by President Muhammadu Buhari between May 29, 2015, and May 29, 2023, a period chosen because of public criticisms of the administration’s ethnic and tribal inclination to promote the dominance of the president’s ethnic group – the Hausa-Fulani. Ethnicity and tribalism are treated as one variable as they are symptomatic of a phenomenon that leads to unequal relations between diverse ethnic/racial groups in the public sector. Both ethnicity and tribalism are characterized by nepotism, favoritism, inequality, primordial interests, and a feeling of solidarity and superiority of one ethnic/tribal group over others.

The significance of this study is emboldened by the fact that early research in the field was founded on the problematic foundational notions of westernization of non-western bureaucratic systems to the exclusion of non-western state peculiarities. This problematic legacy of the dominant international public administration paradigm lives on in the form of persistent neo-colonial influences and practices on non-western bureaucratic and development models (Haque, 2013). To achieve the objectives of this paper, it is organized into 7 sections.

Conceptual clarification: ethnicity and bureaucracy

Boundless (2017) describes ethnicity as the shared cultural practices, values, and beliefs of a group of people. This can include but is not limited to a shared language, religion, and traditions (Boundless, 2017). It is the shared norms that bond one ethnic group and distinguish it from another (Banton, 2008). Deng (1997) sees it as “the embodiment of values, institutions, and patterns of behavior, a composite whole that represents the historical experiences, aspirations, and worldview of a people.” In the literature, ethnicity is defined from four perspectives: (1) ethnicity as a primordial phenomenon; (2) ethnicity as an epiphenomenon; (3) ethnicity as a situational phenomenon, and (4) ethnicity as a purely subjective phenomenon. Geertz (1963), Isaac and Stack (1986), and Isajiw and Toronto (1992) explain ethnicity from a primordialistic perspective as something given, ascribed at birth, and derived from the kinship and clan structure of human society, which is fixed and permanent. According to Hechter (1978), cited in Isajiw and Toronto (1992), the epiphenomenon approach views ethnicity through the two dominant economic structures in human society – the center and the periphery. They correspond to those who perform marginal jobs such as agricultural labor with meager compensation and those who perform the most rewarding jobs. In this light, ethnicity is something that is created and maintained through an unequal economic and exploitative relationship (Nagel and Olzak, 1982 cited in Isajiw and Toronto, 1992). According to Isajiw and Toronto (1992), the third approach (situational approach) is based on rational choice theory, which views ethnicity as relative, depending on the situation in which individuals find themselves. In this context, Bell (1975) and Ross (1982) see the greater political significance of ethnicity when resources are mobilized to serve particular ethnic groups and their interests. The fourth approach (the subjective approach) regards ethnicity as basically a socio-psychological reality or a matter of perception of ‘us’ and ‘them’, as opposed to viewing it as something given, which exists objectively as ‘out there’ (Isajiw and Toronto, 1992).

Furthermore, this study chimes essentially with the primordial and situational approaches. These approaches allude to ethnic consciousness and ethnic identity as factors influencing the public life of majority and minority ethnic groups where ethnic identity plays a significant role in determining access to state resources as is the case in Nigeria. This approach is also in line with the social dominance theory developed by Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto in 1999, on which this study also hinged. The theory sees group identity as propelling ethnic dominance.

Closely related to ethnicity is tribalism. Tribalism refers to the state of being organized and advocating for a tribe conditioned by a way of thinking or behaving in which people are more loyal to their tribes than to their friends, countries, or social groups (Okogu and Umudjere, 2016). In multiethnic states, tribal sentiments and solidarity with the tribe are considered influencers of public bureaucracy composition and management.

A bureaucracy is an administrative system or social system with a hierarchical structure and complex rules and regulations (Banton et al., 2024). It is an administrative group of non-selected officials charged with implementing government policies and programs. David (1974) cited in Inakefe, Bassey, and Innah (2021) contends that bureaucracy is rational given that it involves control based on knowledge; it has clearly defined spheres of responsibility; it operates according to analyzable rules and is predictable in its operations. Bureaucracy is defined by rules and regulations, labor division and specialization, a clearly defined hierarchy, impersonality in the discharge of functions, meritocracy in appointment, and technical specialization. Although the concept has received pejorative meaning among some writers, it remains incontestable that it is through the bureaucracy that citizens encounter their government. Similarly, the pursuit and realization of public interest manifest through the bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is a fundamental element of democracy and if democracy is not operating well, part of it might be explained by bureaucratic dysfunctions (Lotta, 2021).

Ethnicity: origins, manifestation, and political dynamics

Ethnicity is commonly regarded as something constructed, created, and invented (Barm, 1969; Anderson, 1983; Saul, 1979; Sharp, 1988; Cohen, 1978; Deng, 1997). This viewpoint is also associated with the belief that ethnicity is a figment of human imagination, a colonial creation (Ake, 1993). In Africa, the social and cultural construction of ethnicity is linked to colonialism (Berman, 1998). During the process of colonial state formation, various groups were divided and merged, and they were placed in entirely new administrative frameworks governed by new institutions, values, principles, and techniques (Deng, 1997). Pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria, for example, was made up of a plethora of multi-religious and linguistic groups, but the first approach to identifying and socializing the local inhabitants based on tribe and ethnicity had a colonial origin (Nnoli, 1978). The colonial administration combined various territories with the coercive influx of various people to form the colonial state (Ake, 1993; Obi, 2001). According to Obi (2001), the Africans who existed before European incursion established mutual relationship through wars, diplomacy, and trade, and existed as autonomous city-states and Kingdoms. According to the author, the idea of “ethnic minorities” arose because of a power struggle between numerically advantaged groups and those with less numerical strength. The authors further argue that, while the colonial state theoretically expressed its commitment to treating all groups as “equals,” colonial patrimonialism and the principle of “divide and rule” that was characteristic of colonial governance, combined

with the rise of an intermediary Nigerian class that facilitated and aided colonial administration in extracting resources and maintaining order, tipped the power pendulum and the struggle in favor of the elites.

The British system of indirect rule, which relied on the natives in the British colonial administration, divided the country into three geographical areas corresponding to the three major ethnic groups (Ake, 1993). To alleviate the pressure of an uprising caused by the forcible division of a people, the colonial governments introduced a welfare system that provided meager welfare services to appear legitimate (Deng, 1997). According to Ake (1993), in response to nationalist pressure, the British colonial government devolved powers to the regions with the 1954 constitution, often dubbed the regionalist constitution, thereby giving residual powers to regional governments with self-administration under regional prime ministers. The leading nationalist leaders, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello in the north, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in the east, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the West, favored regional politics over control of Nigeria, which was then dominated by regional-ethnic politics (Ake, 1993).

According to Okpu (1977), cited in Obi (2001), “ethnic nationalities became part of the Nigerian vocabulary only after the onset of regionalization in the mid-1940s.” According to Obi (2001): The division of Nigeria into three (unequal) administrative regions by the British (through the Richards constitution) roughly coincided with the “territory” of the three ethnic majorities: Hausa-Fulani (Northern region), Yoruba (Western region) and the Igbo (Eastern region) thus providing a tripod for polarizing Nigerians along the lines of ethnicity (Obi, 2001, p. 17).

Obi (2001) adds that the North, as the largest of the three regions (including the East and West combined), had a numerical advantage because it was more strongly represented at the federal level. This unequal balance of power between the dominant groups resulted in the formation of minorities in all regions of the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers region in the south, Southern Zaria, the Midwest, the Middle Belt, and Borno in the north (Obi, 2001). The immediate result was power competition and struggle between and among dominant ethnic groups on the one hand, and majority and minority ethnic struggle on the other, with minority ethnic groups marginalized in their respective regions in terms of access to resources, power, and participation in governance (Obi, 2001).

Ethnic minorities saw “politicized ethnicity” as a means by which they could gain power at both federal and regional levels, as it was everywhere (Obi, 2001). The politicization of ethnicity was also visible in the political parties of the First Republic. The Northern People’s Congress (NPC) of Amadu Bello and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) of Aminu Kano represented the various regions and ethnic groups with a rare dose of cynicism, ethnic and humorous tribal sentiments couched into them. The approach was not to foster national unity but to use the political parties as a rallying point for the warring tribes to bargain for power.

The events within the second republican parties – UPN, NPP, GNPP, PRP – demonstrate the ethnic disputes that thrived within the parties, became fatal, and eventually ruined the political parties. Thus, political ethnicity found

fertile ground in the post-colonial era. Ethnicity became politicized, and politics became ethnic, with ethnic groups wielding disproportionate power in the political competition for the exclusivity of belonging to an ethnic group (Ake, 1993). Fishman (1999) presents the state of Africa about tribalism and ethnicity in pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa. Before the European incursion, Africans lived primarily on the basis of ethnic and linguistic differences, according to the author. The author further states that each group was self-administered through political and administrative institutions. For example, the Akan in Ghana saw themselves as a state with their language serving as a unifying factor (Fishman, 1999). According to Fishman (1999), the cohabitation of different people along linguistic and ethnic lines ended with the arrival of European missionaries, traders, educators, and colonial officials in certain areas, which resulted in the formation of new settlements with distinct identities.

In this context, the author specifies by stating that: New political frontiers cut through ethnic groups and led to situations in which the inhabitants were torn between ethnic and linguistic allegiances and allegiance to the state. The Ewe in Ghana, for example, were torn between allegiance to Ghana and Ewes in the neighboring state of Togo. Also, the Nzema and the Brong (Akan groups) in Ghana were torn between Ghana and other Nzema and Brong (Abbron) in Cote d'Ivoire (Fishman, 1999, pp. 355–356).

The colonialists' inability to understand the indigenous African languages (e.g. Swahili, Hausa, and Lingala) made them impose foreign languages such as English, French, and Portuguese to establish political control over areas won through conquest or treaties (Fishman, 1999; Boadi, 1971). However, in the 1960s and 1970s, ethnic revivalist movements emerged in sub-Saharan Africa that sought to change the linguistic, socio-economic, and cultural values bestowed on them by their colonial masters, as evidenced by the renaming of most African countries (e.g. Congo-Kinshasa became Zaire, Gold Coast became Ghana and Upper Volta became Burkina Faso) (Fishman, 1999).

Tribalism and ethnicity, as previously stated, have a socio-economic significance both for those who practice them and for those who socialize others into them. Ethnic identity and tribal consciousness were fostered in African colonial states and elsewhere where colonialism was established, and people were identified and socialized along ethnic cleavages. The divisive approach was intended to prevent the united struggle of the colonized peoples for freedom and independence from the colonizers. This orientation gave rise to the British policy of "divide and rule". Um Nyobe, the leader and founder of the Cameroons Workers' Party chided the style of manipulation adopted by the colonizers when he argued that the colonizers manipulated the various ethnic nationalities in Cameroon by sowing seeds of discord and rivalry amongst them, thus making each of them believe they would dominate the country (Nyobe, 1955).

The myth of ethnic superiority and interethnic inferiority served to promote colonial socio-economic gains (Nnoli, 2008) by dividing the colonizers along ethnic lines. In the modern era (post-colonial era), post-colonial African leaders have explored the gains of ethnicity to its logical limits, having learned from the "gains"

of keeping people socialized along tribal and ethnic lines. This process has its origins in the decolonization process which gave birth to political ethnicity when nationalist movements mobilized ethnic groups for politics on the eve of independence, when political leaders of large ethnic groups wielded ethnic sentiments to consolidate a strong political footing in a scenario where class consciousness was still in its infancy (Ake, 1993).

In present-day Nigeria, political alliances in the struggle for national power and resources have taken on more of an ethnic group alliance dimension and political parties have sought to balance ethnicity in political decision-making, especially in choosing party's flag bearers. When Bola Ahmed Tinubu became the flagbearer of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), some notable politicians led by Senator Orji Uzor Kalu urged the party to pick a running mate from the majority of Muslims of Northern Nigeria because of their electoral strength. Some political analysts believe that this combination ultimately swayed the votes in their favor, culminating in the party's victory in the March 2023 polls.

In the past decades, Hausa/Fulani elites have historically formed political alliances and gentleman agreements with their Yoruba counterparts who occupy the country's western hemisphere to establish a hegemonic position in the state. Since the country's independence in 1960, this coalition and alliance have shifted political power in favor of the two dominant ethnic groups leaving the rest on the periphery of political participation. This situation has fanned the flames of secessionism and calls for marginalization in the eastern part of Nigeria, which is inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group that campaigns for an Igbo president. The country's large oil reserves in the Niger Delta have always created the need for the people of the Niger Delta to have access to political power which is traceable to the emergence of petroleum, which constitutes a mainstay of the country's economy (Obi, 2001).

Considering how much the petroleum products extracted from their land contribute to the Nigerian state, one can understand where their complaints of marginalization and neglect come from and why ethnicity is used as a weapon in political conflicts (Obi, 2001). Obi (2001) further states that his problem in the Niger Delta region was nurtured and birthed by the centralization of oil extraction and the emergence of authoritarian rule which bound the country within the framework of economic adjustment. These agitations have manifested in the electoral choices of voters. According to Orvis (2001) cited in Batty (2010), the strong role tribalism and ethnicity play in the political decision-making process in voting is due to citizens' belief that representatives from their ethnic group can better protect their welfare in the appropriation of resources.

Orvis (2001, p. 27) asserts that: "The ethnic and clan-based voting in many parts of Africa attests to patron-client networks' ability to act collectively; patrons can mobilize clients for political purposes. The networks, however, also serve as means of political participation for clients".

It is to be expected, therefore, that with the politicization of ethnicity, ruling parties, identified with the various ethnic groups and commanding much vaster resources than the ethnic unions, would take over most of the functions of the

latter (Nnoli, 2008). Their legitimacy, and therefore continued support by members of the ethnic group, depends largely on the party's ability to deliver the social welfare goods (Nnoli, 2008). An example of this is the mass resentment against the Action Group in the Western region of Nigeria in the 1954 federal elections after it reneged on providing the region with free education, but later imposed an education and health levy of N1.50 per taxpayer for the region's social welfare plan. Nnoli (2008) also comments on the importance of ethnicity in Nigeria's regional system, noting that: The inter-ethnic socio-economic competition was also expressed in the rivalry of the various regional governments for the provision of welfare services to the population under their control. The individual ethnic group associations largely performed the function of widening opportunities for employment, education, and the enjoyment of medical services and other forms of social security (Nnoli, 2008, p. 262).

In Nigeria, politicians mobilize tribal unions and urban dwellers and make them feel that their candidacy is an expression of their yearnings and aspirations (Melson and Wolpe, 1973), cited in Batty (2010). People see their political representatives as sources of political patronage considering the scarcity of resources and the attendant ethnic squabble for them (Barkan 1979; Widner, 1992). They believe that a political leader in government who shares their ethnic ties will improve their access to national resources (Hyden and Leys, 1972; Haugerud, 1995). According to Thomson (2004), cited in Batty (2010), this process has some for voters because politicians provide them with access to state security and resources such as roads, wells, hospitals, and schools. Their legitimacy and continued support from members of the ethnic group largely depend on the party's ability to deliver social welfare goods (Nnoli, 2008).

Existing national affirmative plan in Nigeria

In several multi-ethnic states, the drive to allay the fears of ethnic minorities and to avert the dominance of one ethnic group by another has prompted the adoption of national affirmation plans. According to Kenton (2023), affirmative action refers to a policy aimed at increasing workplace and educational opportunities for people who are underrepresented in various sectors of our society. It focuses on demographic groups that are historically underrepresented in leadership and professional roles (Kenton, 2023). Professor Faundez, one of the leading scholars in the field, defines affirmative action as "Involving the treating of a subclass or group of people differently to improve their chances of obtaining a particular good or to ensure that they obtain a proportion to, of certain goods" (Bank et al., 2015, p. 291). Affirmative actions in themselves are public policies designed to ensure ethnic and tribal balancing to ensure fair representation of contending ethnic groups.

Commenting on the influence of ethnicity in the Nigerian federal bureaucracy, Eifert et al. (2010) note that the Nigerian Federal Civil Service, the most important government bureaucracy, operates in a fragmented manner, with ethnicity playing a dominant role. It was in the real and contemplative minds of the writers of the country's constitution when principles such as the quota

system, zoning, and the federal character of the country to achieve fairness and equity among the various ethnic nationalities of Nigeria. In recognition of these principles, Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) states that: “The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few States or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or any of its agencies.”

The provisions of section 14(3) are the nucleus of the principle of federal character in Nigeria, which was developed by the Nigerian nationalists to avert national imbalances and prevent the dominance of the federal civil service by a state or region. This has further the quota system arrangement which has guided or increased the number of minority group students, employees, etc. in a school or business, or requiring a certain number or percentage to be hired or admitted. In federal tertiary institutions, the quota system stipulates different admission criteria to reflect the federal character of the nation:

1. **The six first generation Universities in Ibadan, Nigeria, Lagos, Ahmadu Bello, Ife (Obafemi Awolowo University), and Benin:**
 - a) 40% on merit from all states of the federation;
 - b) 30% from the catchment areas;
 - c) 20% for students from educationally less developed states; and
 - d) 10% for others at the discretion of the university.
2. **Second-generation Universities in Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Kano Maiduguri, Port Harcourt, and Sokoto:**
 - a) 30% without merit from all states of the federation;
 - b) 30% for students from the catchment area;
 - c) 30% for students from educationally disadvantaged areas; and
 - d) 10% for others at the discretion of the university.
3. **Third generation Universities in Nigeria, the Federal Universities of Technology:**
 - a) 20% from the catchment areas; and
 - b) 80% at the discretion of the university (Okonkwo, 1997, p. 117).

As a national affirmation plan, the policy emerged in 1958 essentially as a response to fears of ethnic domination and marginalization in education. The division of the country into thirty-six (36) sub-national governments and three (3) senatorial districts to produce 108 senators was also made to further serve the purpose of national affirmation. This is to ensure equal political and ethnic representation in the country’s upper legislative chambers. Despite these measures, the public bureaucracy has continually been dominated by the interplay between the perpetual dynamics of ethnicity, tribalism, religion, and prebendal politics. The dominant ethnic group(s) populating the political space are sometimes accused of using the instrumentality of the Federal Character Commission to promote their ethnic and religious interests in the area of employment in Ministries, Agencies, and Departments (MDAs) (Akintola, 2023).

Research methodology and theoretical framework

The triangulation technique was used in the study to evaluate the role of ethnicity in public bureaucracy in Nigeria. Online surveys and secondary sources were used as the method of triangulation. The triangulation approach was used to condense and bring to light a fine-grained examination of the occurrence of ethnic manifestations in Nigeria using a mixture of publications on the subject and empirical data obtained through online survey.

The unrestricted self-selected survey was employed in the study. It is a survey on a specific theme area established by the researchers for the public to respond to, but the output is intended for a specific workforce (the effects of ethnicity on the makeup of public servants and the federation's public service). Online surveys are becoming the most commonly used method of data collection. Surveys provide accurate, cost-effective data (Aaker et al., 2002; Neuman, 2003; Zikmund et al., 2010). The online survey was designed using a staged method (Hair et al., 2010). The design and development process comprises logical acts (Hair et al., 2010) that have a direct impact on how successfully data is gathered (Burns and Bush, 2003).

The survey consists of ten questions designed to assess the characteristics that have the greatest impact on the structure and administration of the Nigerian federal bureaucracy and the impact of ethnicity on these aspects. A five-point Likert scale was used for the measurements. The options ranged from 5 for "strongly agree" to 1 for "strongly disagree" to 3 for "undecided". Respondents were asked to check the boxes next to the elements that impact the administration of Nigeria's federal bureaucracy (language and culture, religious affiliation, merit-based system, money consideration (financial incentive), and political patronage). Secondly, respondents were asked to answer two- and three-statement questions to evaluate the first and second hypotheses respectively. Surveys were sent through digital platforms (Facebook and WhatsApp) to citizens and public servants who use social media, hence the study employed a convenience sampling method.

Respondents completed the survey by clicking on the survey link in Google Docs and submitted their responses online. A total of 2,106 responses were received and analyzed. The data was coded using Microsoft Excel and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Regression analysis was used to analyze the data to test the hypotheses. The quantitative data findings were triangulated with data from secondary sources such as government publications, reports, case studies, and internet databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, PubMed, and ResearchGate. The search was carried out by entering the base strings ("Ethnicity" or "Tribalism") and ("Public Bureaucracy"), with the results restricted to Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, and papers published in English.

Individually, we did our preliminary skimming. Each author examined the abstracts and chose those that they thought would be beneficial for the review and triangulation. The authors discussed the selected articles at the end of this step, hence arguing the appropriateness of the individual pieces. Finally, the researchers read all publications to collect data. There were 1,153 downloads, 671 screen-

ings (no relevant title, weak focus on ethnicity and public bureaucracy, not useful in addressing the research objectives), 245 eligibility assessments, and 68 studies included in the analysis.

The Scale for the Assessment of Narrative Review Articles (SANRA) (Baethge, Goldbeck-Wood, and Mertens, 2019) was used to assess the quality of the selected studies. SANRA consists of six components: explanation of the value of the article to the readership, expression of concrete/specific goals or formulation of questions, description of the literature search, referencing, scientific reasoning, and acceptable data presentation (Campanozzi et al., 2023).

The study uses social dominance theory and bureaucratic theory as its theoretical framework. Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto developed this theory in 1999. Hawks (n.d.) asserts that Sidanius and Pratto's theory explains how and why social structures are supported by an unspoken hierarchy of groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, and economic status. According to Hawks (n.d.), these hierarchies influence the equitable distribution of resources and the allocation of undesirable jobs. Individuals who want groups at the bottom of the social hierarchy to be dominated by groups at the top justify ideologies such as tribalism, individualism, group identity processes, dominance motives, and opposition to affirmative action, all of which contribute to further inequality (Levin, n.d.). The illustration of the theory is seen in the white dominance over other minorities in modern Western societies, which is reflected in the quality of jobs or work placement done by the various ethnicities (Hawks, n.d.). Hawks (n.d.) explains that whereas people of white origin are placed in white-collar jobs, blue-collar/odd jobs are left for other minorities.

The theory of bureaucracy is the brainchild of the German theorist, Max Weber. Weber believes that bureaucracy is the most efficient way to set up an organization because of its emphasis on the specialization of functions (Mulder, 2024). The classical bureaucracy is seen as a "legal-rational authority" that is hierarchically structured and relies on the specialization of functions. Its goals are achieved through division of labor and formalistic impersonality (Peek, 2023). In its ideal form, bureaucracy is immune to prejudice, bias, kinship ties, and primal sentiments. In his theory, Weber distinguishes between traditional authority, which is based on societal norms and precepts, charismatic authority, based on the possession of rare attributes by the wielder of power/authority, and legal authority, which is derived from the rules and regulations guiding an entity. These typologies of authority however correspond to the various stages of the evolution of societies and organizations in which power and its exercise were shaped by the prevailing socio-economic system, such as in the era of feudalism and communalism, where traditional authority prevailed. In modern democracies, bureaucrats exercise legal authority as they derive from the constitution, statutes, and organizational rules. Of the three types of authority, Weber recommends rational-legal authority for organizations because it is based on reason. He contends that reason is legal, technical, and scientific (Obi et al., 2016). Weber's theory of bureaucracy is characterized by division of labor and specialization, hierarchy, formalization, rationality, impersonality, skills and abilities, security of tenure, and efficiency (Onah, 2021). It is reasoned within the public administration scholarship that where Weber's

tenets of bureaucracy are applied, efficiency and productivity would be realized. Paradoxically, the application of Weber's ideal bureaucracy has not brought about the needed change in public sector management, especially in developing countries. The question remains: "Why?" This study was designed to partially answer this question.

Theoretically, social dominance theory was chosen and applied in this study because this theory explicitly brings to bear that some shared cultural values and ethnocentric feelings influence individuals' behavior toward others (positively or negatively) depending on whether or not they share the same racial and ethnic ties. As a result, the theory is used to explain why and how certain shared cultural, linguistic, and ethnocentric values among bureaucrats in multiethnic states condition the function of public bureaucracies in favor of certain ethnic/racial groups over others.

The bureaucratic theory forms the basis for the application and analysis of the work. The combination of theories gives room for a novel contribution to understanding the interplay of dominance motives underpinned by ethnic identities in the shaping and management of public identities in multicultural states, contributing to the growing literature on representative bureaucracy. Consequently, the study formulates hypotheses in the context of the correlation between the constructs of social dominance theory and bureaucratic theory. Thus, the research is guided by the following hypotheses (H):

H₁: Group identity undermines systematic rules in Nigeria's public bureaucracy.

H₂: Common origin undermines security of tenure in Nigeria's public bureaucracy.

Results and discussion of findings

This section presents the results of the analysis of the 2,106 surveys issued to examine the intersection of tribalism and ethnicity in the composition and management of public service in Nigeria to test the above hypotheses.

The study assessed the significance of ethnicity/tribalism on public bureaucracy in Nigeria based on the data collection approach:

Knowledge-based assessment, in which individuals respond to carefully designed test items that measure both declarative and procedural knowledge about the influence of shared language, membership of ethnic group(s), and kinship and clan structure on the technical merit and routinized structure of the Nigerian federal bureaucracy; and Triangulation, – in which researchers – review the literature to uncover the dynamics and manifestation of ethnicity and tribalism in the composition and management of public organizations in Nigeria.

According to the findings of the study, ethnicity/tribalism influences the management of the Nigerian federal bureaucracy. The survey also ranks an indicator of ethnicity/tribalism (language and culture) topmost on the list of factors that determine or influence access to appointments and attitudes in government alongside religious affiliation, merit system, financial consideration, political patronage, and patron-client relationships.

Table 1

Factors Influencing the Composition and Management of Nigerian Federal Bureaucracy

	Factors	N	Mean	SD	Rank	Decision
1	Langue and culture	2106	4.36	.90	1 st	A
2	Religious affiliation	2106	4.07	.99	2 nd	A
3	Merit-based system	2106	2.67	1.17	4 th	D
4	Money consideration	2106	3.89	1.07	3 rd	D
5	Political patronage or patron-client relationship	2106	2.37	1.32	5 th	D
	Cluster Mean		3.47	.85		

Notes: A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Standard Deviation; N = Numbers.

Source: Field Work, 2023.

Based on the criterion mean of 3.00, the table indicates that respondents agreed that language culture, and religious affiliation play an important role in appointments. This result is further buttressed by the results in Tables 2 and 3 on group identity and common origin as a manifestation of ethnicity and tribalism in the management of the Nigerian public sector.

H₁: Group identity undermines systematic rules in Nigerian public bureaucracy

Table 2

Regression analysis of the undermining factor of group identity on systematic rules in Nigerian public bureaucracy

	SS	Df	MS	F	R ²	Beta	Sig.
Regression	27.225	1	27.225	107.340			.000 ^a
Residual	105.004	414	.254		.20	.45	
Total	132.228	415					

Notes: SS = Sums of Square; Df = Degree of Freedom MS = Square; F = ANOVA statistics; R² = Coefficient of determination; Sig. = Significant value.

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The results in Table 2 indicate that group identity undermines systematic rules in Nigerian public bureaucracy, $R^2 = .20$, $F(1, 414) = 107.340$, $\beta = .45$, $p < .05$. Since the exact probability value (.000) is less than the a priori probability value (0.05), the alternative hypothesis which states that group identity undermines systematic rules in Nigerian public bureaucracy is accepted. The R² value of .20 shows that the proportion of the undermining factor of group identity accounts for 20% of the variance of systematic rules in Nigerian public bureaucracy. The Beta (β) weighting of .45 confirms that for every standard deviation

in the rate of undermining factor of group identity, the systematic rules in Nigerian public bureaucracy will increase by .45(45%).

H2: Common origin undermines security of tenure in Nigerian public bureaucracy

Table 3

Regression analysis of the undermining factor of common origin on security of tenure in Nigerian public bureaucracy

	SS	Df	MS	F	R ²	Beta	Sig.
Regression	27.193	1	27.193	83.798			.000 ^a
Residual	134.345	414	.325		.16	.41	
Total	161.538	415					

Notes: SS = Sums of Square; Df = Degree of Freedom; MS = Square; F = ANOVA statistics; R² = Coefficient of determination; Sig. = Significant value.

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The results in Table 3 indicate that common descent undermines security of tenure in Nigeria's public bureaucracy, $R^2 = .16$, $F(1, 414) = 107.340$, $\beta = .41$, $p < .05$. Since the exact probability value (.000) is less than the a priori probability value (0.05), the alternative hypothesis which states that common origin undermines security of tenure in Nigerian public bureaucracy is accepted. The R^2 value of .16 shows that the rate of undermining factor of common origin accounts for 16 of the variances in security of tenure in Nigerian public bureaucracy. The Beta (β) weighting of .41 confirms that for every standard deviation in the rate of the common origin undermining factor, tenure security in Nigerian public bureaucracy increases by .41(41%).

These results are supported by the available data in the extant literature which point to the ethnicity and tribalism in the management of Nigerian public organizations. In this vein, Chiamogu and Chiamogu (2019) note that the civil service in Nigeria is overtly personalized based on tribal and ethnic affiliations and is run without adherence to public service ethics such as meritocracy, impartiality, accountability, competence, and professionalism leading to prejudice and bias.

This has undermined the objective value allocation, appointment, and promotion. The authors referred to the immediate past political dispensation led by President Muhammadu Buhari, which was notorious for openly promoting ethnicity, with appointments mostly going to people of Hausa-Fulani origin. For example, the current Service Chiefs and Assistant Inspector General of Police are predominantly members of the President's ethnic group. According to Chiamogu and Chiamogu (2019), significant values include three water projects with a capacity of serving 100,000 people daily, power plants, and a memorandum signed with the government of Niger to establish a refinery with a capacity of 150,000 barrels of oil daily in Katsina, where the president is from.

Similarly, Tables 4 and 5 reflect the composition of the various cabinets from 1960 to 2004, indicating the significance of ethnic and tribal solidarity in their composition.

Table 4

Ethnic Composition of Nigerian Cabinets from 1960 to 2004 (Percentage)

Regime	Hausa-Fulani	Igbo	Northern Minorities	Yoruba	Southern Minorities
Belewa 1960	60	13	0	20	6.7
Gowon 1967	21	0	21	36	21
Murtala 1975	25	0	35	35	5
Shagari 1983	38	8.8	20.5	14.7	17.6
Buhari 1983	35	10	25	20	10
Obasanjo 2004	30	15	18	18	18

Source: Osaghae, 1989, 158; Nigerian Army Education Corp and School, 1994, 330–349; list of Obasanjo's ministers in 2004.

Table 4 shows that the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, which is the dominant ethnic group in the country under Hausa-Fulani-led military and civilian governments, had 60, 21, 25, 38, 35 and 30 cabinet portfolios in 1960, 1967, 1975, 1983 and 2004 respectively; the Igbo, a minority ethnic group, had 13, 0, 0, 8.8, 10 and 15 in the years under review; Northern Minorities had 0, 21, 35, 20.5, 25 and 18 in the years under review; the Yoruba, another minority ethnic group, had 20, 36, 35, 14.7, 20 and 18 in the same years, while the southern minorities had 6.7, 21, 5, 17.6, 10 and 18 cabinet portfolios. Table 5 shows the distribution of very important and less important portfolios between 1960 and 2004.

Table 5

Ethnic distribution of very important and less important portfolios, from 1960 to 2004

	Hausa-Fulani	Northern Minorities	Igbo	Yoruba	Southern Minorities	Total Numbers
Very Important Portfolio	49 (33%)	37 (25%)	17 (11.6%)	24 (16%)	20 (13.6%)	147
Less Important Portfolio	6 (13%)	5 (11%)	10 (22%)	13 (28.9%)	11 (24%)	45

Source: (Mustapha, 2007, p.7).

Mustapha (2007, p. 7) identified very important portfolios including the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Education, the Minister of the Capital Territory, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Communications, the Minister of Petroleum, the Minister of Mines and Power. Less important portfolios are the Minister of Labor and Productivity, the Minister of Information, the Minister of Science and Technology, the Minister of Sports and Social Development, the Minister of Women's Affairs, and the Minister of Culture and Tourism. Similarly, there have also been strong indications that the significance of ethnicity and tribalism has further become pronounced during the past administration of President Muhammadu Buhari from May 28, 2015, to May 29, 2023.

According to a 2017 Business-Day story headlined, “81 of Buhari’s 100 appointees are Northerners,” 81 of Buhari’s appointments have come from the northeast, north-west, or central.

According to the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), President Buhari has favored personnel from the northern region of the country in key security appointments since 2015. The report also revealed that between 2015 and 2020, the president appointed only two security chiefs from the South: the chief of defense staff (South-West) and the chief of naval staff (South-South), while the remaining six, including the heads of the Army, air force, police, national intelligence agency, and state security service all came from the North, the region where the president hails from.

Furthermore, as of April 6, 2021, a regional analysis conducted by ICIR of the heads of security agencies, including paramilitary and anti-fraud agencies, shows that 12 out of 16 (75%) are from the northern part of the country, while only four (25%) are from the southern part of the country. Defense, the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Airforce, the Nigerian Navy, the Nigerian Police Force, the Department of State Security (DSS), the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), the Nigerian Correctional Service, the Nigerian Immigration Service and the Nigerian Customs Service are among these agencies.

The Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), the Federal Fire Service, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency are also among those involved (NDLEA). For further information, see Figure 1.

Heads of Security Agencies and their State of origin

Heads of institution/Agency	Agency	State of Origin	Region
Leo Iabor	Defence	Delta State	South
Ibrahim Attahiru	Nigerian Army	Kaduna State	North
Isiaka Oladayo Amao	Nigerian Air Force	Osun State	South
Awwal Zubairu Gambo	Nigerian Navy	Kano State	North
Usman Alkali Baba	Nigeria Police Force	Yobe State	North
Yusuf Magaji Bichi	Department of State Security	Kano State	North
Ahmed Rufai Abubakar	National Intelligence Agency	Katsina State	North
John Mrabure	Nigeria Correctional Service	Delta State	South
Muhammed Babandede	Nigeria Immigration Service	Jigawa State	North
Hameed Ibrahim Ali	Nigeria Customs Service	Bauchi State	North
Ahmed Abubakar Audi	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps	Nasarawa State	North
Boboye O Oyeyemi	Federal Road Safety Commission	Kwara State	North
Dr. Liman Alhaji Ibrahim	Federal Fire Service	Niger State	North
Abdulrasheed Bawa	EFCC	Kebbi State	North
Bolaji Owasanoye	ICPC	Ondo State	South
Buba Marwa	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency	Adamawa State	North

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Figure 1: Heads of security agencies and their state of origin as of April 6, 2021

Source: International Centre for Investigative Reporting.

According to the ICIR study, the adoption by the President of the list of judges of the Court of Appeal announced in 2021 indicates an astonishing disparity: 61% of the jurists come from the North and 39% from the South. The ICIR also discovered a geographical imbalance in the ranks of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The President's appointments to the top management of the NNPC and its subsidiaries reveal an uneven geographical distribution of senior executives.

According to the report, 24 of the 40 senior management positions within the NNPC, ranging from chief operating officers and managing directors of subsidiaries to general managers' roles in the corporation, are occupied by Nigerians from the North, while 16 are occupied by Nigerians from the South, with a total of two from the North-East, two from the North-West, one from the North-Central, one from the South-South and one from the South-West (Figure 2).

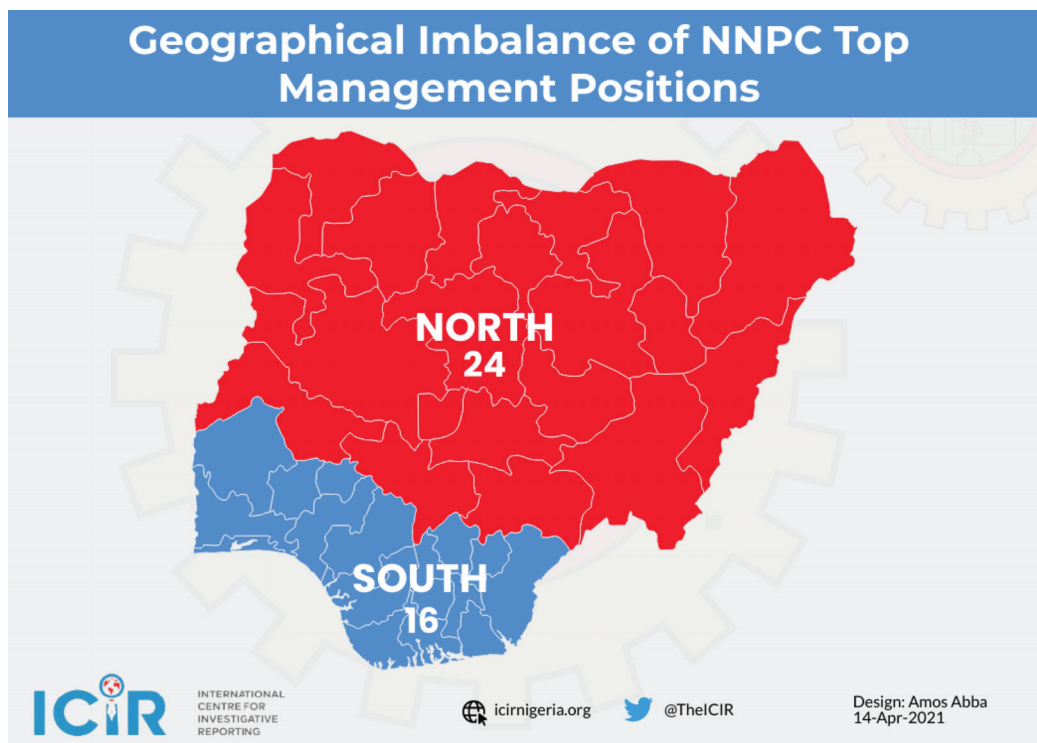


Figure 2: Geographical imbalance of NNPC management positions

Source: International Centre for Investigative Reporting.

Below is a list from the report: Mustapha Yinusa Yakubu (North-Central) is in charge of Refineries, Umar Isa Ajiya (North-West) is in charge of Accounts and Finance, Yusuf Usman (North-East) is in charge of Gas and Power and Adeyemi Adetunji is in charge of Enterprise and Investment (South-West). Others include South-South COO in charge of Upstream Tombomieye Adokiye, North-West COO, Corporate Services Mohammed Abdulkabir Ahmed, and North-West legal counsel Hadiza Coomassie. The ICIR discovered that the Southeast is not represented on the

NNPC's internal board, which oversees the day-to-day operations of the corporation. Nonetheless, the region is home to two oil-producing states: Imo and Abia.

Reacting to the preponderance of ethnicity in Nigeria's public service, a lawyer (Festus Onifade) filed a suit against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for a breach of Sections 7 and 8 of the Federal Character Principle, in a suit numbered FHC/ABJ/709/2021/ in the Federal High Court (Ejekwonyilo, 2021). The suit challenged the appointment of Ms. Mueeba Dankaka as the Chairman and Secretary of the Federal Character Commission (FCC) respectively (Ejekwonyilo, 2021). The plaintiff, Moses Owuru, alleged that the two appointments were a clear breach of section 4 of the FCC having been made from the Northern part of the country, and prayed the court to issue an order compelling the president to immediately dissolve and re-construct it to reflect the provisions of geographical balance as provided in the Federal Character Act (Ejekwonyilo, 2021).

The tendency to favor citizens from the country's north (mostly Muslims) has sparked considerable criticism from activists and civil society organizations. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) accused President Muhammadu Buhari of preferring Muslims from Northern Nigeria in federal posts in a statement issued in 2018 after the Buhari-led administration appointed them to several federal ministries. Also, in 2018, former President Olusegun Obasanjo sent an open letter to President Buhari, encouraging him not to seek re-election, noting, among others, his "nepotistic deployment verging on clannishness" (Oluwagbemi, 2018).

The results of the study indicate that ethnicity and tribalism play a significant role in the composition of the Nigerian federal bureaucracy. The results of this study are at variance with the cardinal thesis of bureaucratic theory, which portrays bureaucrats as impartial and neutral, particularly when discipline is viewed through the Weberian bureaucratic lens. However, according to the findings of this study, this is not the case. The practical implications of the study are clear. In Nigeria, bureaucratic principles (such as meritocracy, objectivism, neutrality, equity, and rationality) are influenced by tribal and ethnic biases that are not rational, meritorious, or objective. This is because administrators in multi-ethnic states like Nigeria cultivate empathy and solidarity with their ethnic and tribal groups. This is a confirmation of the main thesis of the dominance theory developed by Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto. Sidanius and Pratto's theory explains that social structures are supported by an unspoken hierarchy of groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, and economic status. As further revealed by the results of this study, these hierarchies influence on how equitable resources are allocated. The results of the study further debunk a universal theory of public administration scholarship pioneered by Max Weber. This is because primordial factors such as tribal and ethnic ties that manifest within the administrative machinery alter meritocracy, equity, and fairness in administrative processes because the goal of administrators in this context is the protection and preservation of tribal and ethnically backed interests. This adds to Riggs' (1961) prismatic Salah model and Gaus's (1961) ecology of public administration, who called for an ecological study of administrative systems and thus also debunked the universal/Eurocentric approach to the study of public administration. Riggs (1961, p. 4) contented that "the significance of any (administrative) system lies in its setting." Guy Peters further remarks that pub-

lic bureaucracies are sometimes portrayed as running roughshod over their societies, but they are bowing by many thin but strong bonds to their societies and values (Eze and Amah, 2016). As the results of this research show, the manifestation of ethnicity and tribalism in the composition and management of the Nigerian federal bureaucracy mirrors the character of the Nigerian state, which is characterized by a multiplicity of ethnic groups who are bonded by shared ethnic and tribal consciousness. According to Adedeji (1999) in Mohamed (2014), the result is seen in the over-politicization of public goods, which not only weakens the state but also breeds ethnicization of competition.

In public administration scholarship, the need to balance between and among ethnic/tribal identities in public sector management appears to have sparked interest in representative bureaucracy. Wilkins and Williams (2005), writing about representative bureaucracy concerning the role of ethnic minority and majority groups in shaping public policy outcomes, note that where bureaucrats have influence and opportunities to shape public policy outcomes, they frequently shape them in ways that favor their group. Several studies (Hindera, 1993; Meier et al., 1989; Meier and Stewart, 1992) have found that minority bureaucrats implement public policies or use administrative discretion to ameliorate the adverse treatment that minority groups have received in the past from previous bureaucrats. According to Krislov (1974), bureaucrats like to advocate for the needs and rights of people with similar backgrounds because they understand them better due to shared norms and values. Since public policy decisions are frequently made under uncertain conditions, some irrational heuristic decisions are made (Tversky and Kahneman, 1973; Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Glaser, Spencer, and Charbonnea, 2014). According to Fiske and Taylor (1991) and Glaser et al. (2014), stereotype-based judgments are a common heuristic that influences policy outcomes.

However, advancing the core thesis that drives the intellectual waves and appeal of representative bureaucracy, some scholars argue that having a more equitable bureaucratic representation leads to greater organizational effectiveness and competitiveness, as well as to equal group representation in policy decision-making processes. In this regard, David Pitts' (2005) study of public education policymaking in the United States of America demonstrated that bureaucratic representation along ethnic cleavages benefits the organization. Pitts (2005), Levitan (1946), and Long (1952) argue that bureaucratic representation is the most effective means to ensure bureaucratic accountability by allowing bureaucrats to use their discretion diligently and appropriately to ensure that they represent the people they serve. However, this submission reinforces the significance of primordial sentiments couched in ethnicity and their relevance to the management and composition of the public sector in multiethnic states.

Conclusion and outlook for policymakers

Summarizing our findings, we emphasize that in multiethnic states such as Nigeria, tribe and ethnicity continue to shape public administration practice. The control and overbearing influence that some racially/ethnically oriented bureaucrats wield in the public policy process is designed to put their eth-

nic nationalities in a position of advantage, thereby extending their dominance. This contrasts with monocultural states in which the practice of public administration is not determined or shaped by racial and ethnic leanings. Recruitment, appointment, promotion, and establishment of public institutions are some areas that come directly under the influence of tribalism and ethnicity. This demonstrates that public administration practice is country-specific and constrained by prevailing realities such as ethnic and racial consciousness and solidarity, as indicated by our research.

However, since public administration is based on ecology, current research and scholarship in the field should be framed to capture how the interplay of social, religious, political, and cultural factors in states influence administrative actions. These anomalies in administrative settings indicate the need to direct research in this field away from the traditional approach that views it primarily from a Eurocentric/classical perspective. This approach should also draw the attention of academics and researchers in the discipline away from the current thinking that merely lauds the importance of diversity in an organization and addresses how ethnic and racial manifestations in the public sector jeopardize public administration practice and theory.

To mitigate the significant negative impacts of ethnicity and tribalism on bureaucratic norms and principles, the following actions should be taken:

- A system of checks and balances should be established to review administrative processes to ensure that bureaucrats operate within established rules and regulations. Currently, the informal but institutionalized approach to affirmative action in Ghana, which aims to achieve proportional representation, is noteworthy and demonstrates the commitment of Ghana's leadership to fostering inclusion. On the other hand, Nigeria, with a much more formalized institutional mechanism such as the Federal Character Commission (FCC), aimed at promoting representativeness and inclusivity, has shown institutional weaknesses that block the wheels of fair representation. The persistent marginalization of ethnic minorities in appointments and promotions in the Nigerian public administration cannot be overlooked. Therefore, there is the need to rejig, through legislation, the institutional arrangement by creating an overhead layer of board management to oversee the affairs of the FCC to reduce its seeming politicization or skewness that is against the original tenets upon which it was founded. The board is to perform supervisory/regulatory functions to ensure compliance with the statute (affirmative) and report to the president periodically. The board should assume a governance posture made up of professionals, representatives of the judiciary, representatives of the informal sector, and representatives of civil society. They are to check the lopsidedness in appointments into public service positions to ensure that it is representative enough of the demographic population of tribes, ethnicities, and religions. The board should also have the power to sue erring public officials.
- It is hoped that the board will allay the fears of ethnic minorities and foster inclusivity. For instance, in the case of the South African courts making interpretations in areas of blight (determining the constitutionality of im-

plementing or not implementing affirmative action in a particular sector), the judiciary can also play a leading role, especially where political will is lacking. The interpretive powers of the court (redress) are also important in strengthening affirmative action in Nigeria, especially where there are violations in the procedures of appointment of political and bureaucratic officers. This practice will entrench meritocracy, neutrality, meritocracy, and rationality in public service operations to ensure that policy outcomes are in tandem with their objectives.

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