

## The Politics of Recruitment and Sack Exercise of April 2015 at Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic Bori, Rivers States, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The April, 2015 recruitment of 435 staff by Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori at the eve of Governor Ameachi's administration and shortly after the mass sack of all the affected staff by Governor Nyesom Wike's administration immediately upon assumption of office raised some eye brows and a lot of concerns among Rivers people. Thus, this study was conceived and undertaken to investigate whether both actions of governments were politically motivated or not. Two valid research questions were developed, two hypotheses and a questionnaire to help in the quest for answers using case study approach for in-depth investigation. Sampling was scientific and 100 respondents were chosen out of a population of 500 but 85 completed and returned their questionnaires. The finding shows that the said recruitment of 435 staff at the polytechnic was not politically motivated. The sack of all the affected staff was politically motivated; that Therefore, it was recommended that government should be more democratic and the operation of the school should not be politicized.

**Keywords:** Politics, Recruitment, Sack Exercise, Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori, Rivers States, Nigeria.

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### INTRODUCTION

The recruitment of about 435 staff by Rivers State Polytechnic, Bori, now Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori, during the administration of Governor Amaechi of APC in Rivers State came as a great relief to citizens within the labour market in the State.

For the beneficiaries to be off the growing labour market in the state and become of economic value to the State and Nigeria in general was unbelievable. The new employees could now do something on their own independently while serving their fatherland faithfully. The feeling was great as the new status meant a very practical change for the better.

Expectedly, this development was regarded as a plus to the achievement of Amaechi administration by the entire people of the state who were concerned and had hitherto wallowed in the misery of unemployment suffered by the youths in the state. The people were happy because in addition to their children and wards being in employment, the civil service engagement also comes with job security and durability of tenure.

Employment is a sacred social responsibility of government and to meet such needs of the society remains a test of good leadership performance one of the actions by which leaders are judged by their constituents. In a democracy, this requirement is a compelling index to win or loose election. However, Three months after the said employment at the polytechnic was concluded and as the new staff were settling down to their induction and roles, the employing administration lost power to the PDP and Governor Wike stepped in. He revoked the recruitment exercise citing politics as reasons for the employment by Amaechi in the first instance and not following due process, Source (Suit No: NICN/YEN/36/2015) in the National Industrial Court of Nigeria, Yenegoa dated 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 filed by the Rivers State government. There are questions to be asked as peoples' minds were agitated. Was due process not followed as he claimed and what were the processes on ground? Were there no vacancies when they did the recruitment? Was the recruitment meant to reposition its political cronies and reward his boys? Or a witch hunt or harassment of political opponents to rubbish their predecessor by governor Wike? It was even remoured that the employment was lopsided and that the involvement of the new administration was to correct the anomaly. But while this contention between the two political opponents became a public conversation, it is interesting to see that it is the disengaged staff that are suffering as the claim and counter – claim by the two gladiators continued.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As the Polytechnic (Bori) saga last with the claims and counter–claims becoming the order of the day, between the two contenders, the fate of the newly recruited staff is still at abeyance, politics for and against have been the disuniting factor in Rivers Politics. The recruitment at Bori, might have been done in good faith or as a political ploy and grandstanding by the former Administration that should have been better left for the incoming administration to tackle, there by precipitating this uncertainty for the affected innocent youths. What ever happened, it is argued that the rush to terminate the employment by the Governor was too premature and that he should have properly investigated the anomalies before jumping into conclusion. Therefore, this research sets out to investigate the reasons behind the actions and reactions of the two contenders, the two contenders here refer to the past and present administrations of Rivers State.

### **Purpose of Study**

The study is aimed to:

- Determine if the main reason for the recruitment of 435 staff in April 2015 at Bori Polytechnic was Political.
- Determine if the main reason for the sack that followed the recruitment at Bori Polytechnic was political.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The under listed hypotheses were raised to direct the study:

- There is no significant relationship between the recruitment of April 2015 at Bori Polytechnic and Politics.

- There is no significant relationship between the sack that followed the recruitment of April 2015 at Bori Polytechnic and Politics.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework is based on the philosophy of Socrates taken from the collection of classical political narratives by George Sabine and Thomas Thorson in their book “*A History of Political Theory*”. Mention was also made of the works of Plato and other scholars who carried out some erudite review of Socrates principles of politics and enriched the concept with their own opinions thus elongating or elaborating on the views of Socrates as it were. According to Sabine and Thorson (1973), Socrates was an advocate of natural right and justice who espoused the values of virtue and knowledge as an essence to political governance. A sound ethical standard as a convention in government that could help address inequality, justice, oppression, rights violations and corruption was his prescription but was disappointed with the Athenian democracy with its presumption that ‘any man can fill any office’. Socrates distaste and aversion for wrongful social attitudes is captured in the following lines:

*There is but one thing bringeth shame to slaves. The name in all else never a slave is worse Than free men, so he bear an upright soul.*

Democracy inept of these values will certainly, lead to chaos and mistrust. Could these credentials for political leadership not an attainable prescription? We believe it is not farfetched. This fundamental idea of politics as being connected with the virtue and knowledge of Socrates became the trunk line of Plato’s doctrine also as seen in most of his work. The extension of this notion of politics as virtue and knowledge leads to ideal moral/ethical standards in political governance as being advocated by Plato. But the reality of contemporary political experience and in the days of Plato was far from expectation.

These political realities – past as we have been informed and – present, as we have observed, despite the varying contexts and age differential can closely be linked. Hardly has contemporary politics in Nigeria and in particular Rivers State been seen to have these salient values of virtue and knowledge as espoused by Socrates and Plato, the absence of which was the kernel of criticism in their days too. Hence many have come to believe that distribution of political resources in the state follows a particular pattern of selfishness devoid of virtue and knowledge by holders of power for that purpose to the exclusion of anyone that is not politically visible as a contributor to their manipulated victories remains ineligible to contest in its sharing. It is against this notion that the views of most Rivers State people are predicated and that the problems of this study is characteristic of political opposition which is without any ethical standards in which incumbency rubbishes the achievement of a predecessor or opposition party previously in government or where possible claim it.

However, without prejudice to the government in power, some have argued also that based on the above notion still, an outgoing administration could also make things difficult for the incoming government by making a law that could constitute a clog in its wheel of progress or in this context, rightly recruit staff but mainly from its political support base and use them as a

mole or wrongly recruit staff into unavailable vacancies. To us, these two perspectives of the purpose of the recruitment and of the sack at the said polytechnic is important at this point so as to give credence to the investigation of this problem. Against this background therefore, readers are advised to examine the merits of both perspectives in their own argument. However, where an action is claimed to have been derived from the law, the provisions of that legislation should necessarily guide us to determine its validity while setting aside any conceivable political undertone for that action. In the concluding part of these reviews is the narration of that law.

The law setting up the institution and the policies, rules and regulations, generally and in particular, of recruitment and sack of staff as extended from that law shall guide our judgment. As translated from the Republic by Alian (1968) Plato had observed that:

“Each government makes law advantageous to itself, everyone is expected to obey such laws and obedience helped to further the interest of the ruling class. Hence justice (obeying the law is the advantage of the stronger)”

From this observation, it could be concluded that the ruling class does not submit itself to the laws it created but compels obedience from the people to those laws and this translates to oppression and impunity. In this respect, Machiavelli also provided us with his own opinion on the relationship between rulers and the ruled through his popular saying ‘the end justifies the means’. Explaining the true meaning of this phrase Ndu (1998) stated as follows:

“Most of the conventional ill feeling is due to the anger of hypocrites who hate the frank way in which he exposes the gory side of politics and the unattractive reality that lies beneath the pomp and show of great men in politics, and these revelations are true anytime anywhere”.

Thus, he gave a word of caution to politicians in the following words:

“Everyone going into politics should examine his motive properly, for Machiavelli ideas on how to win and stay in power are not for those whose interest and objectives are purely selfish”.

The Nigerian political class would no doubt benefit from a session with Machiavelli for there does not seem to be anywhere else in the entire world where would- be rulers have neither the knowledge of nor the inclination to pursue the public good as is the case in Nigeria.

It is in the light of the complete absence of an intention for public good by politicians in Nigeria that informed Nnoli (1986) to define politics as ‘all those activities which are directly or indirectly associated with the seizure of state power. The seizure of state power as an end in a democratize dispensation in Nigeria is susceptible of manipulation of our political process, especially at the elections. Manipulation as an instrument of political process leads to disenfranchisement of the electorate with the consequence of a general sense of frustration in the workability of the system to meet the people’s needs.

The seizure of state power as an end in Nigeria contemporary politics' as observed by Nnoli, 'Leaders make laws themselves are above' by Plato and the popular phrase 'the end justifies the means' – a Machiavelli satirical view about politics as reviewed by Ndu all point to and corroborate the plant of Socrates criticism of the establishment inept of virtue and knowledge. Thus, it is this lack of virtue and knowledge in Rivers State democratic governance that has precipitated the problem of this study.

## **POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR**

The term political behavior as explained by Heinz Eulau (1959) is concerned with the acts, attitude, preference and expectations of man in political context. It has been noted that traditional political science paid no meaningful attention to the role of the individual political behavior in the working of political phenomenon.

The reason for this neglect may be found in the fact that traditional political science emphasized legal / institutional, over the human aspect or factor in politics. But today, according to Nwaorgu (2002) what is known as political analysis focuses substantially on political behavior of the individual adding that behavioural political science studies the behavior of individuals whose interaction come to constitute group actions or collectivities.

Therefore it is important to point to the fact that the political behaviour of an individual is basically shaped and determined partly by his psychological make-up and partly by the social environment. This position is in line with the view taken by the researcher to the effect that the symbiotic political relationship existing between leaders and the led is mutual. But, either could take up more weight and the odd favour the led long run of course, while the chance for the led as a dominant political influence to determine the political composition of the leadership of the state is an indication of true democratizations. For Ogayi (2010) the material conditions of the society are to be blamed for the behavior and orientations of the political actors.

In other words, the political actors, as well as their political dominance, in the short run as we believe, is due to the economic difficulties faced by the led and exploited who unconscientiously act to the advantage of the political class.

## **POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND POLITICAL FEATURES IN NIGERIA**

Two fundamental principles of political organization and behavior in Nigeria have been identified as prebendalism and clientelism by Joseph (1991) Prebendalism, according to him can be explained as thus: politics, as is often asserted, is fundamentally about the struggle over scarce resources.

In some countries, struggle is not focused in a continuous and consistent way on the state itself. Power, status and major economic goods can often be procured through a variety of paths and from a multiplicity of source. In Nigeria however the state has increasingly becomes a magnet for all facets of political and economic life, consuming the attention of traders, contractors, builders farmers, traditional rulers, teachers as much as that of politicians or politically motivated individuals in the true sense of these terms.

Thus, explained prebendal politics can be defined as:

“Patterns of political behavior which reflect their justifying principle that the offices of the existing state may be competed for and then utilized for personal benefit of office holders as well as their reference and support groups” (Joseph, 1983 in Dike 2001)

Clientelism on the other hand, Joseph (1983) opines is a mechanism which makes for the articulation of class and ethnicity, as well being a channel for recruitment of individuals into the dominant class.

Corroborating with that definition of clientelism Joseph (1991) describes clientelism in terms of patron – client relationship as thus: The patron – client relationship – an exchange relationship between roles – maybe defined as a special case of dyadiz (two persons). Ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of a higher socio – economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resource to provide protection or benefit or both for a person of lower status (client) who for his part reciprocates by offering general support and assistance including personal advice to the patron.

Both practices of prebendalism and clientelism are inextricably related and tend to reinforce each other in a functional way observed Ogayi (2010). On this relationship Joseph (1991) has this to say:

“An individual seek the support and protections of an ‘oga’ or a ‘godfather’ while trying to acquire basic social and material goods, loans, scholarship, license, plots of urban land, employment, promotion and the main resources of the patron in meeting their request is quite literally a piece of the state”.

The patron – client relationship has taken various forms in the country but the most disturbing and offensive type is mainly manifested when election are about to be held in the nation. During this period, the rich patrons hand pick and sponsor candidates who are pliable and amenable to their dubious wishes. They spent huge sum of money to sponsor their client and even hire thugs for their candidates and ensure that elections were won by all means. Hilgers (2005) also provide an explanation of the essence of clientelism in Nigerian political context in the following lines:

“In civil and political arenas, it has always been necessary to find an influential friend in order to access resources or political position. In turn for service rendered, this patron expects social and political quiescence as well as electoral support from this client.

Both godfatherism and clientelism have become features of Nigerian political experience and appear like the same. But Ogayi (2010) has attempted a distinguished characterization of these phenomena in our political context as follows:

*“That patron – client relationship (clientelism) entail a largely instrumental, symbiotic friendship (interaction) with mutual mercenary bond. It is an exchange relationship with reciprocity implicit. The patron and the client have equal stake in the relationship and each of them is as important as the other although the patron may occupy a more privileged position”.*

**Godfatherism:** Godfatherism in the contemporary Nigerian body politics is very pervasive and disturbing. According to Ogayi (2010) is the existence of a kingmaker (the godfather) and the heir (the godson).

The godson receives an endorsement from his godfather to fill any political position and so be it in other words, godfatherism is the domination of our political space by the political elites whose actions preclude the right and privileges of the rest and condescends them to the weak thereby closing every window of opportunity and survival any workable political environment could offer. From the perspective of patron, politic Ibrahim (2003) views godfatherism as:

“Godfathers are generally defined as men who have the power personally to determine both who gets nominated to contest elections and who wins in the state”.

But the interest of the godfather is not in who gets nominated and gets elected but merely a means to an end. What the Godfathers get for themselves out of the public enterprise after the election is won certainly is what influences his motive from the outset. In effect the role of the political Godfather survives the election and even gets rather stronger and more evident thereafter (Ogayi 2010).

It is at this point that the Godfather settles down to dictate ‘who gets what, when and how’ in the process of allocation of political resources. Godfathers are not only politically helpful to their godson, they are also there to bring down doubtful and insubordinate clients, so to speak. Nnamani (2004) conceives of this type of godfatherism in terms of malevolent lordship in the following words; the definition of the godfather politics, amply and aptly bear out a political overlord. Godfather who is a prototype of machiavellis Prince who would not advance another Prince’s power because it will diminish his own grip on the citizens and their resources.

This view of the godfather as a malevolent lordship represents the influence of the godfather over the godson as a negative oppressive tutelage. Apparently the relationship between the godfather and godson is mutually beneficial though at the expense of the public which they both lay claim to serve. The truth is that the godson would continue to cherish such a relationship as long as it is in his own interest of climbing the political ladder through the fatherly support of the godfather. But soon after that is done, the godson having consolidated his political power to become a godfather himself then turns himself against his former godfather as it now seems. This is a very practical experience in the Nigerian example. More often than not, Ogayi (2010) observed, this is the elongation or elonging dimension of godfatherism in which the godson grows into a godfather himself and, at this point, begin to detest the role of his former godfather as it were between Governor Nnamani and his political godfather Chief Jim Nwobodo. As a fact, Nnamani owes his becoming the governor of Enugu state to Chief Jim Nwobodo but

yet reacted to the excesses of his godfather as follows: Strictly the Godfather is simply a self-seeking individual out there to use the government for his own purpose.

The Nnamani experience in which we saw dual perspectives in godfatherism is suggestive of the fact that godfatherism can be positively or negatively inclined a practice depending on the views of the participants although godfatherism is drawn from positive Christian practice.

In the Christian practice, godfatherism is an instrument of Christian mentorship (Coker: 2004). According to Coker, godfathers are nothing but role models whose lifestyle are worthy of emulation. He may not necessarily be a wealthy man, but one that is best endowed with Christian and moral virtues.

The contrasting pictures of the two modes of godfatherism as in the above sense gives a lot of concern. A purposive description was therefore given by Adeyemi (2004) while corroborating the views of Madunagu (2003) of godfatherism as follows:

Those who are now being referred to in Nigeria, as political godfather are not godfathers, but contractors political contractors they play the same roles in politics as business contractors do in the economy, they execute political job for which they are paid. They are not owners of the job. Political contractors are very important in free - market politics everywhere in the world.

Ogayi (2010) further stated thus, godfatherism is a typical power relation- where by the godfather is placed in a position where he can afford to lord it over the godson if he so desires. By ways of analogy godfatherism could be linked to a relationship between an entrepreneur and his worker in a typical capitalist setup. It goes with all trapping of a boss – employee nexus, where by the employee is tied to the apron string of the boss. However, in clientelism, the relationship assumes the character of producer/consumer or, what seems like the same thing, trader – customer relationship. Here the producer is as important as the customer, although the former appears to be better placed in the relationship.

In the above explanation to distinguished the two paragyins in Nigeria political process we could come to understand that clientelism carries with it implicit reciprocity between the patron and his client while godfatherism presuppose Lordship and a typical power relationship.

## **ETHNICITY**

Another dominant force that characterize Nigeria political process and resource allocated issue is ethnicity. It is a behavioral problem that manifest in ethnic diversities or mutual disagreement based on our difference and propagated on the political landscape. Udo (2005) traced the negative value of ethnicity from when Nigeria had independence from the outset of the first parliamentary democracy in 1960 with the following lines: In Nigeria, change in political behavior heightened after political independence with the characters of our pre – independence leaders who sought to lead their ethnic communities to compete for political leadership along tribal line. There was no concerted effort by those leaders to promote national loyalty and patriotism. What was done was that as the elites, group leaders took over power at the termination of colonial period they began power struggle among themselves and allocation of

scarce resources exemplified in positions and promotions, economic benefits and community amenities allocated along ethnic lines.

This clear manifestation of ethnic preferences came to its climax in the 1966 coup that targeted a major ethnic group against another that led to the Nigeria civil war from 1967-1970. Incidentally the Military regimes that fought the civil war and continued up to 1979 failed to address power to the Nigerian second Republic politicians.

The five registered Political parties, National Part of Nigeria (NPN), Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) were on the ballot. But the pattern of votes was again suggestive of ethnic solidarity and very disappointing that the pre – war ethnic cleavages were as alive as before. In this regard, Udo (2005) observation was trite when he stated this:

This is visible from the voting result in which NPP had an overwhelming majority in states of the East and UPN in the West. For NPN led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari inspite of some claims to replicate the fundamental structure and principles of post-colonial Nigeria tilted to the North.

It is alarming to know that the 1979 presidential election distributed the state among the five political parties. All the Yoruba state to Chief Awolowo (UPN), the Igbo States to( NPP) Azikiwe, the minority state of the East now South South to NPN as a back lash from the Biafran tragedy and Bendel (formerly of the Mid-Western Region) to the UPN. The North produced the president with votes from the minorities. In essence, no nationwide party as envisaged after independence has been formed or emerged.

The preponderance of ethnicity in politics is what Joseph (1991) termed 'Hallmark of Plural Society' which refers to politics as practice almost exclusively along ethnic line. Meanwhile the consequences of this political context is the reinforcement of and ownership of common heritages by the ruling ethnic leadership to the detriment of the rest. It was a lopsided allocated paradigm overheating the unity of the country.

An allusion to this negative political behaviour of Nigeria leadership was made by the 1975/76 Constitution Drafting Committee envisaging the nature of the Second Republic as cited in Joseph 1991 thus: There had in the past been inter-ethnic rivalry to secure the domination of government by one ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups to the exclusions of others. It is therefore essential to have provisions to ensure that the pre – dominance of persons from a few status or few ethnic or other sectional groups is avoided in the composition of government or appointment or election of persons to the higher offices in the state.

Udo (2005) had observed that political behavior been infested by ethnicity modifies attitudes of individuals on these internalized myths of incongruity caused by ethnicity. Having made that observation now, he cautioned that a new frame of mind should be developed where communal differences among groups would become basis of group's alliance, thereby reinforcing the belief in the reality and significance of diversity.

## **ELITISM**

Elitism refers to as the belief that a society or system should be run by an elite. Elite refers to those personalities in any state that could influence the policy directions of that state to

themselves as main beneficiaries. This dominant interest group is referred to as elites. Their major function is to influence policy formation processes and to control the implementation of the decisions of state. These are: monarchs, presidents, prime ministers, their cabinet and others, such individuals are categorized as elites.

The elite theory sees society as closed pyramidal and unresponsive and composed of the few as rulers and the masses as the ruled. The dominant take is that the large mass of the people are ignoble, unorganized and disunited and so incompetent and incapable to exercise political power. Consequently in the view of this, Strickland (1968) has emphasized that authentic power resides in the hands of the Elites as it were the leading light in politics in our environment. Hence the role of the masses is as a prop to the political hegemony of the elite while hardly being rewarded even in kind.

This dichotomous political behavior of the elite and their crony masses could be seen to be basis for uncontrollable tempers of the ruling class in dealing with such important matters as employment as we have seen in the subject matter of this thesis.

## **PARTISANSHIP**

This is politics played along party line. Partisanship is the tendency to differentiate from between parties existing in a polity manifesting in division, hatred and the winner takes all over the other party. It is a protectionist platform for the protection and safeguarding of the party man 'no matter what' as such, injustice could be meted out to the opposition thereby seeing other oppositions party members in the light of an enemy, credit is consequently denied, or fault accentuated. Appointments made by one party may face termination & replacement. Partisanship as a synonym for party loyalist has attained a dominant influence shaping political behaviours especially among the minorities of the Niger Delta region, portending, unfortunately that for a political party to maintain or win power is a do or die affair.

This view has become very tenacious among the rulers who act as godfathers and their godsons who use all manners of intimidations, threats, and even violence during campaigns and elections to win votes. Another dimension of partisanship is the winner takes it all syndrome which entirely emasculates and sidelines members of the opposition from having access to any hand-outs, office or position of government irrespective of qualification, competency or experience. This writer is therefore, of the opinion that the role of partisanship in the subject matter been examined can provide us with the basis for the action and reaction that played out between the two administrations in the matter at the polytechnic.

## **THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK THAT GAVE BIRTH TO THE POLYTECHNIC AND OF DUE PROCESS IN ITS STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SACK**

### **Establishment of Rivers State Polytechnic Bori now Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic**

The instrument creating this institution is the Polytechnic (Bori) law of 12<sup>th</sup> March 1989. Part 1, section 1, Sub-section 1 under the first schedule state as follows:

There is hereby established a polytechnic at Bori to be called the Rivers State Polytechnic, Bori, in the Law referred to as Polytechnic which shall be constituted in accordance with the law Sub-section 2 provides for its

status as a corporate person thus: the Polytechnic shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its corporate name.

While Section 2, part 1 of the first schedule to the law state out its objectives, Section 3 spells out the ‘powers of the Polytechnic and their exercise’ for the purpose of this research, we would only be concerned with matters of appointment, discipline and termination among the stipulated objectives of the Polytechnic, Section 3 sub-section 1 provides: for the purpose of caring out its objectives as specified in Section 2 of this law, the Polytechnic shall have power under!

**Sub-Section 1c:** To institute such posts and offices as are tenable in Polytechnics and to make appointments thereto, and to provide conditions of service of staff as may be approved by the Governor.

**Section 1e:** To provide for the discipline and welfare of staff and students of the Polytechnic.

**Sub-Section 1j provides:** To enter into contracts or other transactions, establish trust, act as trustee solely or jointly with any other person and employ and act through agents.

Concluding on the powers of the Polytechnic over appointment, discipline and termination, in section 3, Sub-section 1P provides inter alia:

To do all such other things and perform all such other functions as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of its objectives and to advance the objects of the polytechnic.

But according to Sub-section 2 of Section 3 of this law, the powers conferred on the polytechnic shall be exercisable on behalf of the polytechnic by the Governing Council of which the Rector is a member empowered by section 31 Sub-section 4and5 to: ... exercise general authority over staff and the maintenance of discipline, and execute the decision of the Council, respectively. The law also gives a supervision power to the Governor over the powers of the Governing Council as it is clearly stated in Section 12 Sub-section 1&2 as follows:

- Subject to this law, the Governor may give to the Council directives of general or specific character relating to particular matters. With regard to the exercise by the Council of its functions and it shall be the duty of the Council to comply with those directives and;
- The Council shall be answerable to the Governor through the Commissioner in exercising the powers and performing the functions conferred on it.

On behalf of the Council certain committees are created by the law to assist the Council to deal with staff appointment and promotions and discipline of staff. In this regard, Section 39 provides for the establishment of Senior Staff Appointments and Promotions Committee and the Junior staff Appointments and Promotions Committee while Section 53 Sub-section 4 empowers the Rector to delegate power to a disciplinary committee.

On discipline, the law also describes what constitutes misconduct that could lead to a disciplinary action. Any matter which in the opinion of the Rector is prejudicial to the interest of

the Polytechnic or what the Rector considers as a ‘good cause’ the meaning of which is stated in Section 51, Sub section 2 and is as follows:

- Conviction for any offence which the Council considers to be such as to render the person unfit for the discharge of the function of the officers;
- Any physical or mental incapacity which the Council after obtaining medical advice, considers to be such as to render the person concerned unfit to continue to hold his office;
- Conduct of scandalous or other disgraceful nature which the Council considers to be such as to render the person concerned unfit to continue to hold his office; or
- Conduct which the Council considers to be such as to constitute failure or inability of the person concerned to discharge the function of his office or to comply with the terms and conditions of his employment.

The decision and the power to discipline any erring staff subject to the commission of the above misconduct is vested in the Council. However, the Rector prior to the Council’s decision on the misconduct of a staff can temporally suspend such staff and place him on half pay for not more than 3 months within which a formal report would have been made to the Council for their decision.

For the purpose of clarification, Section 52 Sub-sections 5 gives the meaning of ‘misconduct’ as in proper behavior, bad conduct, a specific act of wrong doing susceptible of investigation and proof and it includes:

- Any willful act or omission or general misconduct to the scandal of the public or the polytechnic or to the prejudice of discipline and proper administration of the Polytechnic, for example, dishonesty, drunkenness, use of false certificate, foul language, violent demonstration, wistful destruction of polytechnic property, immorality and falsification or forgery of certificates or other documents;
- Any criminal offence and conviction of a criminal offence; and
- Any act prejudicial to the good name of the Polytechnic and ‘gross misconduct’ may be construed accordingly where the misconduct complained of is of a vulgar or aggravated kind cases of doubt may be referred by the Rector to the Academic Board for definition. Under Section 52 (2), the law directs that such officer accused of misconduct shall be informed in writing of the charge against him and shall be given reasonable opportunity to defend himself. Sub-section 4 of this section provides further ventilation where he is not satisfied by the decision of the Rector.

Any person aggrieved by the Rector’s decision under Sub-section 3 which empowers the Rector to dismiss, terminate, retire, down grade or apply such other disciplinary measures to the officers concerned as he may consider fit, may within a period of 21 days from the date of the letter communicating the decision to him address a petition to the Council to reconsider the case and the Council decision there on shall be final.

It can be seen from the foregoing review and citation of the instrument creating the polytechnic that the procedures and officers that should deal with hiring and firing of workers of the Polytechnic are clearly stated. The powers of the polytechnic are developed upon the Governing Council while the Rector being a member of the Council executes such decisions of

the Council. The Senior Staff Appointment and Promotion Committee and the disciplinary committee are delegated committees created to assist the Rector in the execution of the decision of the Governing Council.

However, the Governor who is the appointer of most members of the Governing Council is given a superseding power over the powers of the Governing Council under Section 12(1).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Scope of the Study**

This is a deep and incisive study on the ‘politics’ of recruitment and sack of April 2015 at the Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic Bori which took place between April and June, in which about 435 staff were affected in the disengagement. The key players are the Rivers State government (past and present) the school authority and the affected staff. The research will beam its search light on the school and its Staff.

### **Area of Study**

The focus of this study is the Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic (Bori) formerly referred to as Rivers State Polytechnic, Bori, it is a tertiary institution of learning in Bori, Khana Local government area in Rivers State, Nigeria. It has two campuses, one for the School of Management Sciences and the other for the School of Engineering. It was approved as a state owned polytechnic by the National Board for Technical Education in January 2010.

The Polytechnic was established by the Rivers State Government in May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1988 to provide instruction and research in applied Sciences, Technology, Commerce and Business management. The military Governor, Anthony Ukpo, inaugurated the provisional Council and his successors, group captain Ernest Adeleye signed the edicts establishing the polytechnic into law on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1989 and performed the formal opening ceremony of the institution on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1990.

### **Design of the Study**

The research design that is used by the researcher is survey design. This is so in order to probe deeply and analyze the interactions between the political factors that influence the actions of the government in hiring and firing their employees almost at the same time. Focus is on the Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic Bori and research approach will be longitudinal.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study will include the management staff of the institution under investigation including the academic and non-academic staff. The total population targeted for this study is 500 persons.

## **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample size for this study was 100 people randomly selected from the existing two sub-groups of Fifty (50) academic and Fifty (50) non-academic staff by using the cluster sampling technique that allows for the random selection of the number of persons proportionate for each category for selection.

## **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument for Data collection will be the questionnaires. Its questions were developed in such a way that it could be easily understandable and simple to respond to. Question will be set to elicit only YES and NO response in a close-ended form.

## **Validation of Instrument**

In order to determine the validation of the instrument, the questionnaire was submitted to the supervisor for vetting and correction. The supervisor's review indeed provided the face validation of the instrument.

## **Reliability of the Instrument**

To ensure that the instrument-(the questionnaires) passed the reliability test it will be served on the same respondent's test-retest but at a short interval for authentication for an instrument to be reliable, the result of the two tests were positively correlated.

## **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher personally served the instrument on the sample unit. One week was enough for them to give their opinion and return it to researcher. The researcher was on hand to gather the instrument again and to ensure that as much as possible each of the questionnaires served was collected.

## **Method of Analysis**

Data gathered from the field were analyzed into two groups corresponding to the YES and NO responses and talked to determine the weight of each class of responses. Simple arithmetic calculations of averages and summation were utilized.

Hypotheses test on each of the assumptions were required a chi-squared test to either reject or accept the statement of the hypotheses, further analyses and evaluation of the acting variables on the basics of the test were then carried out as is consistent with the findings of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of data. Statistical test of hypothesis is also covered here. In the analysis, observed measures are captured in percentages and compared with means of 50% as between the two main responses (Yes/No) while the statistical test is carried out on the basis of Chi-squared criterion at 5% significance level and degree of freedom (df) of 5 and 4 respectively 85 out of 100 questionnaires were completed and returned. The analysis is set forth as follows:

### Hypothesis one

Table 1: Opinion of Respondents on the recruitments as political

S/N	Items	Analysis				Chi – Squared Test Info				
		Yes	%	No	%	Sig Level	Df	Critical Value	Computed Value	Decision
1.	Did Vacancies really exist before the recruitment was contemplated?	85	100	-	-					
2.	During the process of the said recruitment, did the school follow due process?	60	70.6	25	29.4					Reject
3.	Was the number of candidates offered employment more than the existing vacancies?	50	58.8	35	41.2	0.05	5	11.07	146.1	H <sub>0</sub>
4.	Where the candidates employed qualified?	70	82.3	15	17.7					
5.	Do you think politics was the motive behind the recruitment?	35	41.2	50	58.8					
6.	If politics, do you think the recruitment was partisan to reward party faithful's.	35	41.2	50	58.8					

Response to the 1<sup>st</sup> question on Table 1 above indicate that vacancies actually existed before the recruitment exercise was contemplated. With a unanimous opinion by all the respondents, they affirmed the truth of vacancy existence at the time.

Item two above also indicates that due process in all material sense was followed in the recruitment exercise. This view was held by 70.6% of the responses as against 29.4% who were negatively inclined.

On whether more were recruited than the number of existing vacancies at the time, 58.8% responses showed affirmation while 41.2% were of the opinion that only existing vacancies were filled.

The table also indicates that only qualified candidates were recruited for the job. This is buttressed by 82.3% of the responses while 17.7% were of contrary view that unqualified candidates were rather hired.

It has also been shown that no political motive was intended in the recruitment. This opinion was given by 58.8% of the respondents while 41.2% believed the recruitment exercise was politically motivated. Item 5 on the above table has given that indication.

The last question from the above table is on partisanship while 41.2% responses held the partisanship view as to the reason for that recruitment exercise, 58.8% were of the view that the exercise was not partisan and not being a forum for rewarding party faithful's.

## Hypothesis Two

Table 2: Opinion of respondents on the sack of the April 2015, recruited staff

S/N	Items	Analysis				Chi – Squared Test Information				
		Yes	%	No	%	Sig Level	Df	Critical Value	Computed Value	Dec
7.	The entire recruitment exercise, you are aware was cancelled by the new Governor?	85	100	-	-					
8.	Was due process followed in the cancellation of the exercise that led to the sack of all those recruited?	55	64.7	30	35.3	0.05	4	9.48	8.8	Accepted
9.	Was the sack due to the fact that the candidates were not qualified?	-	-	85	100					H <sub>0</sub>
10.	Could political motives be behind the eventual sack of all those recruited?	48	56.5	37	43.5					
11.	If politics, do you think, the sack was partisan in other to punish those perceived as political opponents?	45	53	40	47					

All the April 2015 recruited staff were sacked. This is the opinion of the entire respondent in a unanimous confirmation. The indication can be seen on the 1<sup>st</sup> item number (7) on the table 2 with 100% responses and none was retained at 0%.

Due process was followed in the cancellation of the recruitment exercise. This opinion was supported by 64.7% while 35.3% of the respondents were of the view that no due process was followed in the cancellation.

It is shown that all the recruited candidates were qualified. This was a unanimous opinion among all sample units given no room for contention as indicated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Item number (9) on the table above.

It has been shown that politics was behind the mass sack of the April 2015 recruited staff. This fact was attested to by 56.5% of the respondents while only 43.5% were averse to that conclusion as indicated on the 4<sup>th</sup> item, number (10) on the above table 2.

Finally, it was shown that the sack was politically motivated and partisan intended as a punishment for political opponents. This conclusion can be seen from item 5, number (11) on the above table 2 in which 53% supported that view, while 47% disagreed. Further on this issue, on a checklist of political characteristics made available to respondents to pick or state any additional reason for the sack, the same percentage of responses who view the sack as political 53%.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Recruitment in April 2015 of 435 staff by the then outgoing governor of Rivers State to fill vacancies in Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori was not politically motivated. This was the unanimity of opinion given by all the respondents to the questionnaires served on them. The question was reinforced by the views of most of the respondents that vacancies actually existed at the time for which the recruitment was undertaken to solve and only very qualified candidates benefited from the exercise. However as to the number of actual vacancies, that number as the study shows was exceeded by the number that benefitted from the recruitment exercise. Nonetheless, the recruitment exercise, it was agreed followed due process enshrined in the law creating the polytechnics – Polytechnic (Bori) law under part IV, Section 47 of this law on staff of the polytechnic, it was stated that the polytechnic may from time to time, in addition to the principal officers mentioned in this law, engage and designate as it thinks appropriate such other employee as may be necessary for the proper and efficient conduct of its business and functions. The law gives beyond this general provision regarding staff employment and specifically created some committees to oversee the role of employment and promotion in the polytechnic. Part II, Section 2(a) and 2(b) provides for the appointment of the following Committees with the said mandate:

- Senior Staff Appointments and Promotion Committee;
- Junior Staff Appointments and Promotion Committee.

The functions of the Senior Staff Appointment and Promotion Committee are provided under Part II, Section 39(3) and prescribed as follows:

The Senior Staff Appointments and Promotion Committee shall be charged with the responsibility for making appointments and promotions on behalf of the Council to academics, senior administrative, professional and technical post within the polytechnic.

In the same vein, the functions of the junior staff appointments and promotion committee under part II section 39(4) shall have the responsibility for making recommendations to the Rector on the appointments and promotions to all junior staff posts in the polytechnic.

As stated above, it can be seen that all the provisions of the law regarding the said appointment were strictly followed in the course of the recruitment as it was the appropriate mechanisms of the institution that played their lawful roles to fill the said vacancies.

Hence due process was followed in the identification of vacancies, calling for only qualified candidates and in the eventual recruitment. Therefore the point of view that the recruitment exercise of April 2015 by the Amaechi administration strongly articulated by the

respondents was not politically motivated and targeted at only qualified candidates without regard to political grouping.

The study has shown that the sack of all of the 435 staff recruited in April 2015 by the polytechnic during the Amaechi administration by the new Administration of Governor Wike was politically motivated. The study further found out that due process was not actually followed in the course of the sack. We must understand that the said due process was at the instance of the governor who under the law has the power of suspension over the power of the Council. In part II section 12 (182) it is provided that:

- Subject to the law, the Governor may give to the Council directives of a General or specific character relating to particular matters with regard to the exercise by the Council of its function and it shall be the duty of the Council to comply with those directives and that;
- The Council shall be answerable to the Governor through the Commissioner in exercising the power and performing the functions conferred on it by this law.

The power of the Governor was used arbitrarily as in this case. It has been shown that the recruitment was a needful act done according to the law in pursuance of the objectives of the polytechnic.

Therefore if sack was to be contemplated, it should have been based on staff insubordination, conviction, incapacity, indiscipline or incompetence.

Due process as dealing with the sack of any staff of the polytechnic is covered under Part IV, Section 49 and Part IV Section 52 under removal and discipline of academic senior administrative and technical staff, and discipline of junior staff respectively. In regard to the removal of any senior staff under section 49, the process must include:

- Give notice in writing of those reason to the person in question.
- Afford him an opportunity to making representations in person on the matter to the council; and
- If he or any three members of the Council so request within the period of one month beginning from the date of notice make arrangements:
  - If he is an academic staff, for a joint committee of the Council and the Academic Board to investigate the matter and to report on it to the Council, or
  - For a committee of the council to investigate the matter where it relates to any other member of staff of the polytechnic and to report on it to the council: and
  - For the person in question to be afforded an opportunity for appearing before and being heard by the investigating Committee with respect to the matter.

Section 49(2) of this law also provides for the reading of the report in three months and to be presented to the Council and the council's final decision in another one month. In regard to the discipline of a junior staff, section 52 of the law empowers the Rector to suspend him for not more than three months and forth with constitute a committee to:

- Consider the case; and
- Make recommendations as to the appropriate actions to be taken by the Rector.

Sub-section 2 provides that in all cases, the officers shall be informed in writing of the charge against him and shall be given reasonable opportunity to defend himself. Subsection 3 of section 52 prescribe such punishment as dismissal, termination, retirement, downgrade, etc. Subsection 4 gives him further recourse to the Council by sending a petition stating his grievances for re-consideration and final decision of the Council.

On the political motivation of the sack, several authors have identified certain political characteristics leading to political behaviors such as this. They include partisanship, godfatherism, clientelism, ect. The study thus revealed that what underline this political actions of the Governor in the sack of the entire members of staff that were hired by a preceding government were partisanship and godfatherism. Partisanship is politics played along party lines. It is a winner takes all syndromes and a platform where injustice to the other party is seen as sacrosanct.

Godfatherism, according to Ogayi (2010) is the emergence of a godson into a godfather and using his new status to disobey, derogate or if possible punish his former godfather. This twin political behavior is what is responsible for the action of the Governor. As a newly anointed godfather, he had to go all out to up root all the structures of his former godfather, Amaechi and create his own identify. This stunt is further re-energized due to the fact that they now belong to different parties and must be partisan. Partisanship as an instrument of politics pays only to selfish political gladiators at the expense of the masses.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the above conclusion from the study we would recommend the following:

- Amend part II, section 12 of the polytechnic law by curtailing the power of the governor from unnecessary interference in the recruitment and sack of staff at the institution.
- That the polytechnic should always act in accordance with developmental requirements.
- Institutional structures such as the polytechnic should be made more democratic or autonomous commercially including their staff recruitment.

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