AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY LEADERSHIP, SYCOPHANCY AND THE CRISIS OF DEVELOPMENT IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

LAWRENCE UDISI

Abstract
Leadership is an unavoidable part of life in organizations. It's a must-have for any organization that wants to coordinate the actions of its members to achieve its objectives. Therefore, leadership is crucial for human survival, development, and transformation. Leaders in all realms of life make several commitments to strengthen their leadership, enable their societies to improve, survive, and progress. Who has been in charge of our country exactly? We have been affected by numerous leaders, who lack moral power and unfortunately, the public has come to accept these ways of thinking and behaving as the standard. The culture that has emerged since the creation of Bayelsa State in 1996 is the authoritarian personality character of political leadership. Also, the culture of sycophancy and praise-singing has further exacerbated authoritarian leadership style among the leaders that have emerged in the State; an ugly form of hero or demigod worship. This paper uses the Theodor Adorno’s Authoritarian Personality Theory as a guide in explaining authoritarianism and the development challenges in Bayelsa State.

Keywords: Authoritarian Personality, Leadership, Sycophancy, Development

Introduction
Bayelsa State was created on October 1. 1996. by the military government of General Sani Abacha. Geographically, it is situated within the southern and western fringes of the Niger Delta region. At creation, expectations were very high as it would ordinarily bring about the much anticipated accelerated development among the people and a place that had been eluded of development from previous administrations in faraway Port-Harcourt, Rivers State (Okoko. 2011). However, 25 years after its creation, that dream has remained largely unrealized. for the existential conditions of the people of Bayelsa State remain abysmally poor. Consequently, rather than achieve any significant
level of development in view of the wealth it accrues and federal allocations received, Bayelsa State has remained poor and underdeveloped.

Enormous worries and concerns have been expressed by scholars and social commentators over the state of underdevelopment in Bayelsa State vis-à-vis the huge monthly federal allocations accruing to this oil-bearing state. Available records show that Bayelsa and Rivers States produce more than 60% of Nigeria’s crude oil. Yet, the impact of oil wealth on the living standards of the Bayelsa people has not significantly improved (Okoko, 2011). An unsustainable argument, though vigorously advanced, has been that the underdeveloped status of Bayelsa State like most other Niger Delta States, is the skewed fiscal political structure of Nigeria in which oil-bearing minority states like Bayelsa State are denied access to the main means of appropriating the benefits of such wealth in what some analysts have tagged “internal colonialism (Ake, 1998; Soremekunand Obi, 1993; Nna, 2001).

A contestation to the foregoing argument is that development scholarship has since interrogated the judicious utilization of revenues accruing from the federation account to the states in the Niger Delta such as Bayelsa State. Thus, it would be an exercise in futility to totally blame exogenous factors like the Nigerian state over the development debacle of Bayelsa State. Instead, this paper locates endogenous factors in Bayelsa State such as authoritarian leadership and sycophancy, amongst other factors, as the major factors inhibiting development in Bayelsa State.

It is worthy to state that authoritarian leadership itself is a product of the colonial state structure of Nigeria. The critical impact of colonialism on the persistent underdevelopment in Nigeria manifested in three salient features namely: the overt large-scale violence, the interventionist colonial state and the disarticulation of the conjunctural social formation of the colonial system (Onimode, 1983). Thus, it must be emphasized that “the crucial role of this class structure was to provide local support for imperial oppression and for the post-colonial continuation of imperial domination and exploitation with new methods under neo-colonialism (Onimode, 1983).

The colonial state in Nigeria, worthy to recall, was an imposition by the metropolitan bourgeoisie to facilitate the exploitation of resources needed in the metropolis. It was characterized by the massive use of force and coercion in the production of resources for the colonialists. This violent and authoritarian nature of the then interventionist state has remained the hallmark of the contemporary Nigerian state Ifeanacho, (2012). What followed was the establishment of an
authoritarian form of government, coupled with rhetorical/espousal of public involvement and the empowering of the downtrodden, which have defined both military and democratic ventures. The term "democratization of authoritarianism" was used by Gyimah-Boadiin Ifeanacho (2012) to describe this trend.

The governing elite in Nigeria have inherited this rigid state structure. Instead of changing the trend, they started fixating on hoarding wealth via state-issued accoutrements rather than really creating that wealth. The ensuing discord led to a political structure whose leaders prioritized ethics but had no long-term vision (Nnoli, 1979).

In this political outcome, elites in charge of the state structure, which was primarily built to foster authoritarianism rather than consensus building, subverted the democratic experiments. Political leaders tend to hold their opinions more out of selfish consideration than genuine conviction. For them, ease of commitment is paramount. Conveniences are set by politicians' own self-interested economics as they jockey for power in the hope of reaping the rewards of political conversion. In much of Africa, the structure of the state makes democracy impossible, which is hardly a surprise (Ake, 1994).

The state's monopoly on the redistribution of excess resources is a primary driving force behind Africa's interventionist and coercive state structure and in Nigeria in particular. The governors of the respective states effectively represent their states and play a pivotal role in allocating resources such as loans, contracts, political appointments, and income. Members of Nigeria's political elite, and Bayelsa State's in particular, are thus used to amass wealth via their control over the state (Ifeanacho, 2012). Since the creation of Bayelsa State in 1996, either military or civilian rule, the political leadership, especially when the successive executive governors assume the status of supreme beings, an authoritarian character has since ensued and produced the peculiar effect of heating up the political system and have to clampdown on dissenting voices. Regrettably, the state structure is deliberately designed to encourage authoritarianism to the detriment of consensus building.

The emergence of this unfortunate scenario is noticed among successive governors immediately upon assumption of the political office where they embrace the idea that they are superior in ideas and the rest of the society is inferior and thereby must be governed without observing the courtesy of wide consultation. But what explains this ugly trend among political elite in the state? It is
noticed that several political elite appear to have had all the hallmarks of a good leader until the leader is elected and then the autocratic qualities start to manifest. This regrettablly gives credence to the assertion by Abraham Lincoln that to test a man’s character, give him power (Munroe, 2014). This, also points to the fact that humans are generally self-centered and which often results in neglecting, mistreating, or even abusing their followers.

Worried by these developments, this paper asks the following questions: First, is it possible to remove the toga of authoritarian leadership in Bayelsa State’s body politics? Second, what are the impacts of authoritarian leadership and sycophancy on the development trajectory of Bayelsa State? To answer these questions, the rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section II dwells on extant literature review on authoritarian personality. Section III identifies and explains the culprits responsible for the lack of development in Bayelsa State. Section IV concludes the paper.

**Authoritarian Personality: Discourse and Influence**

To put it simply, an authoritarian person is one who achieves his or her goals by forcing others under them or to submit to their will and obey their every command. The phrase "authoritarian personality,” which describes a person's tendency to be harsh and dictatorial toward others under their command, was coined by Erich Fromm in the 1950s (Baars & Scheepers,1993).

Theodore Adorno connected the mentality to prejudice, ignorance, and oversimplification. The Washington Post's Kathleen Parker summed up this point of view well with the headline "Big Daddy the boss." The last word rests with what he says. Any directive issued by an authoritarian leader is unquestionably binding. According to Jacob (2017), authoritarianism is ultimately about giving orders. In addition, he claims that the allure of authoritarian ideas is clear in today's rapidly changing and often terrifying environment. Indeed, studies have shown that there are positive psychological effects associated with such beliefs. One research that did find a connection between authoritarian ideals and happiness was a 2013 Canadian study.

There is a correlation between conservation efforts and a greater awareness of danger, according to the literature (Jacob, 2017). People’s ability to feel simultaneously endangered and very content is puzzling. In contrast, a firm belief in social hierarchy (the idea that everyone is assigned a certain role) may ostensibly give a consistent framework that makes the world seem less chaotic and, in theory, more manageable. This may contribute to an overall feeling of happiness. Parenting styles have been shown to be a conduit via which such ideas are transmitted from one generation to the
next. According to Jacob (2017), 2012 research indicated that children of parents who stressed the importance of educating their children to obey authoritative figures were associated with a greater likelihood of becoming conservatives themselves.

There are many causes of authoritarian leadership. To begin with, religious ideas are widely acknowledged as having a pivotal part in authoritarian thought. According to Jacob (2017), the research by psychologist Kathryn Johnson found that those who took the Bible at face value were more likely to prioritize ideas associated with authority, such as obedience, respect for tradition, and a desire for the established social order. Culture comes in at number two, and it refers to the collective wisdom attained through shared experience. Because of its emphasis on the individual, a nation's culture highlights the need for a coherent system of shared meaning that can motivate its citizens to achieve its collective objectives. Recognizing the effects of one's actions on one's surroundings is a cultural need, particularly for those in positions of authority (Amos, et al, 2014).

According to Amos, et al. (2014), Nigerian culture has a significant impact on leadership since it is a phenomenon that permeates all aspects of daily life and is deeply rooted in the country's history. Culture and leadership, they explain, are inextricably linked. Culture and tradition are important to many individuals, who see them as a map for how to live. Culture may be defined as a society's commonly held values and beliefs, which are the result of the interplay of rational thought, emotion, and behavior. There have been a number of attempts to explain the connection between culture and leadership, and each has met with varying degrees of success.

Culture, desired leadership traits, and follower behavior were all discussed by Hanges, Dorfman, Shtenbe, and Bates III (in Amos et al., 2014). They learned the hard way that understanding the limits placed on leadership by culture is crucial for successful group management and leadership. Culturally diverse groups need leaders who can adapt their strategies to accommodate their followers' preferences. Fagbadebo (2007), writing about Nigeria's current leadership situation, claimed that the country's authoritarian leadership is facing a legitimacy crisis and political intrigues in an ethnically differentiated polity where ethnic competition for resources drove much of the pervasive corruption, and profligacy prevalent in the polity. As a result, the poverty rate continued to rise as political gladiators regularly used voter and legislative manipulation to further their own agenda. People's trust in their government and its leaders inevitably wanes as a result.
Influence
The leader has an authoritarian mentality if he or she unilaterally establishes rules and procedures, chooses the objectives to be met, and exercises complete control over all aspects of the organization's operations. It entails dictatorial rule over a population. It is evident that the authoritarian personality was heavily impacted. In the field of research on autocratic characters, Adorno and his contemporaries have made the most significant contribution. The focus of this idea was on the possibly fascist people whose character traits render them vulnerable to anti-democratic indoctrination (Adorno, et al. 1969). The Californian F-scale used to assess authoritarian tendencies is based on these researchers' identification and description of nine traits of authoritarian personalities. F-scale was derived from fascism (Krech, Crutchfield & Ballachery, 1968; Vyrost, 1998; Stellmacher & Petzel, 2005; Balik & Kubat, 2004). The F-scale characteristics are distributed into several items including:

a. Conservatism or dogmatic adherence to mainstream ideals;
b. Authoritarian submission, an unquestioning stance towards the idealized moral authority of one's in-group;
c. Aggressive authoritarian propensity to watch out for those who don't follow the rules and to judge, reject, and punish them;
d. Anti-interception, opposition to the subjective, the imaginative, and the tender minded;
e. The tendency to think in broad generalizations and the notion that supernatural forces control an individual's destiny are examples of superstition and stereotyping;
f. Having strength and toughness. Exaggerated displays of strength and toughness, preoccupation with the superior-subordinate, powerful-follower, or other such dichotomous dimensions, and a fixation on those in positions of authority are all signs of a problem;
g. Intentional harm and cynicism. Disdain towards human beings in general;
h. Projectivity, the inclination toward the opinion that the world is a hazardous and unpredictable place, the externalization of one's own unacknowledged emotional needs, and;
The Development Debacle in Bayelsa State: The Precipitating Factors

The creation of Bayelsa State in 1996 raised expectations of rapid development; however, this expectation is far from being realized. This is in spite of the colossal sums of money allocated to the state from the federation account since its creation. Regrettably, the development performance of the state is poor—lacking basic social amenities and infrastructure and heightened poverty and unemployment. The pitiable state of development in the state corroborated the 2017 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) also confirms the state of underdevelopment and poor living standards of people in the state.

The MPI has three dimensions and 10 indicators for measurement in its modus operandi; including Education (years of schooling, child school attendance); Child Mortality (child mortality, nutrition); Standard of Living (nutrition, electricity, sanitation, safe drinking water, flooring, cooking fuel, assets). By MPI assessment, an individual is poor if the person is deprived of at least one-third of the 10 indicators with a cut of 33.3%. The 2017 MPI figures show that in spite of the huge revenues accruing to Bayelsa State even with a small population size, the “intensity of poverty” in the state is still abysmally huge. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) also noted the abysmal unemployment figure of the state for quarter three of 2018 which stood at 32.6% (Ibaba, 2020).

While the foregoing accounts attest to the poor state of development in the state, scholarly discourses on this subject have polarized into two perspectives. The dominant scholarly and official policy perspective in Bayelsa State blames the state of underdevelopment in Bayelsa State on the high costs of providing infrastructure due to the difficult geographical terrain. Contrarily, appreciable scholarly narratives point to authoritarian leadership, corruption and poor governance as the culprit for the lack of development in Bayelsa State. This paper stands in support of the second group to insist that Bayelsa State is in its present state of underdevelopment due to human, material, and fiscal maladministration. This section examines the culprits responsible for the massive underdevelopment of Bayelsa State.

a. The Unbridled Politics of Patronage in the State

As purveyors of rewards and punishment, appointments into political positions by the political leadership are based on party patronage and heavily influenced by ethnic colourations without due
consideration to merit. Members of the state House of Assembly (HoA) are rather selected by the governors and serve as their puppets instead of this hallowed organ of government functioning as a watchdog to the government. Unfortunately, the HoA in most cases is cajoled to pass bills within two days without a public hearing. For example, the African University Toru-Orua and the Medical University bills were stiffly opposed by stakeholders, such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Nigeria Medical Association, Nigeria Bar Association, Civil Liberties Organization amongst others kicked against the idea of creating additional universities, arguing that the existing schools are in dire financial needs (Agency Report, 2018).

Ignoring the consensus at the public hearings, the House went ahead to give expedited passage to the Executive Bills presented by the then Governor Seriake Dickson. The Bill for the establishment of African University Toru-Orua was passed into law within 24 hours at a time when the state-owned Niger Delta University (NDU) had been on strike for almost three months, due to the failure of the government to pay the staff of the University their salary for over six months (Odinkalu, 2016 cited in Okoko, Ogbomah, and Kakatei, 2020) The African University Toru-Orua and the Medical University were eventually created on July 28, 2016 and 18 August 2018 respectively.

b. Autocratic Leadership and Human Capital Development
Closely related to the foregoing is the encroachment of autocratic tendencies into human capital development in Bayelsa State. It may be recalled that the Bayelsa State government of Honourable Henry Seriake Dickson introduced two supposedly pro-people programmes: First, is the Bayelsa State Health Insurance Scheme (BHIS) described as a social security programme designed by Bayelsa State Government where healthcare services of enrollees are paid for by the common pool of funds contributed by the participants of the scheme. However, scholarly accounts on the state of BHIS are greeted with mixed reactions: First, Major (2017), argued that BHIS despite coming on stream since its inception is after all not satisfactory to the intended beneficiaries. Second, whereas Krokeyi and Eniekezimene (2020), argued that the BHIS is corruption-free, Adesina and Ogaji (2018:31) investigating household expenditure on healthcare in semi-rural communities within the Yenagoa Metropolis after the introduction of the BHIS in 2017 argued that “a significant percentage of households who are marginally non-poor were pushed into poverty because of healthcare expenditure”.

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Second, the Bayelsa Education Development Trust Fund (EDTF) was established on March 29 2017 with a mission statement: “To contribute to the establishment of a functional, sustainable and competitive education system in the State for the production of highly capable manpower”. Whereas these schemes are supposedly pro-people, the people in question were not consulted prior to the initiation/conception and introduction of the schemes. For example, a civil servant loudly complained thus:

> If my children are not enrolled in a public school, then there is no need for the government to take money out of my paycheck. Nobody likes it and the reason is that it is not every child that has access to the pattern of educational system they operate; for instance, they have selected the best teachers to the boarding schools, like the Ijaw National Academy, Saint Jude’s and the only condition for enrollment is by writing exams which they select 3 to 4 students from each school. Teachers at boarding schools are incentivized to be dedicated since they are compensated well, making the pupils at less concentrated institutions feel like second-class citizens. This indicates they are establishing a two-tiered society, with one set of youngsters being favored and nurtured while the other set being neglected. As a result, the government is focusing its resources on the kids who are already succeeding, but this raises the issue of whether pupils really need greater support. Should we emphasize the need for additional attention for those who are doing well or for those who are not? The government is just looking out for a small minority of people. (Emmanuel, 2019, para: 5-9)

Be that as it may, human capital development to a large extent is self-driven with interventionist supports from government and private interests. It is largely bottom-up in approach; for no one can cry more than the bereaved. However, these well-established norms were violated by the Hon. Henry Seriake Dickson administration in Bayelsa State and Bayelsans were made compulsorily to make monthly financial commitments in form of tax paid upfront even before the two schemes were accorded legislative approval.

It may be recalled further that, a few Bayelsans complained that they were not favourably disposed towards the schemes because not all civil servants have children or wards to cater for and so be exempted from the two schemes. These yearnings for exclusion were disregarded and the administration of Hon. Henry Seriake Dickson went ahead to collect from such persons’ monies in form of compulsory tax.
c. The Reign of Sycophancy

Sycophancy is a demonstration of insincere flattery in order to gain an undue advantage (Clark, 1934). In other words, it is flattery that is very obedient or an indication of deference to another, to an excessive or servile degree. Such a person is referred to as a sycophant or a “yes-man” (Alphons, 2000). The issue of sycophancy is also very prominent in Bayelsa State polity. This results from backstabbing, betraying and rumour-mongering among political officeholders and their enormous followership. Conscious of the potency of this weapon, it has been weaponised by the governor(s) to deal with politicians and followers who run out of favour with them. For example, Mr. Ebiowei from Ogboloma community a close friend of the then Governor Seriaki Dickson and party faithful complained and expressed his bitterness for not being considered for appointment or awarded any contract by the governor to another party faithful and friend, who secretly recorded the conversation and later on took it to the governor. Of course, the governor did not take it kindly as Mr. Ebiowei was blacklisted and never given any appointment.

d. Autocratic Leadership

This is simply leadership without due diligence to consultation and consensus building. It is widely adopted as a leadership style in the initiation and award of capital projects. Such contracts usually follow an ugly commonplace path: First, contracts for projects are awarded autocratically without due process and diligence. Second, corruption in such projects is massively noticed. Third, such projects are later abandoned after the usual fanfare of inauguration. It is interesting to note that, Yenagoa, the state capital is littered with several such abandoned projects including the five-star basket house hotel project along Abacha Road, the Igbogene-Government House Bypass Road, the Bayelsa Palm Road, etc.

A worrisome development in siting and awarding projects in the state is that governors even establish universities as constituency projects, making the stateown three universities: The Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island; The Bayelsa State Medical University, Yenagoa, and the University of Africa, Toru-Orua. However, these universities lack adequate funding. It is indeed so troubling that a weighty matter as establishing a university is cavalierly done at the convenience of the sitting governor.

The implications of the foregoing are many. First, it attests to the fact that it is the governor’s interest that matters most. Second, it is an affirmation that political leadership is more of a matter of convenience than commitment. Convenience is commitment and it is determined by the
individual concerned. Thus, state power in Africa is constituted in such a way as to render democracy impossible (Ake, 1994).

e. **Unprecedented Ethnic Influence in Award of Projects**

Ethnic influence in citing and awarding projects is another worrisome phenomenon associated with authoritarianism in Bayelsa State. This is evident in all administrations since the return to democratic rule in 1999. Examples of such projects are the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, cited in Amassoma in 2000, the community of the then governor, Chief D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha, the Bayelsa State College of Education established by the Timipre Silver’s administration, which was sited at the governor’s community Brass. The school was later renamed Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education (IJBCOE), and relocated by Governor Seriaki Dickson to Sagbama town in 2012, the governor’s local government headquarters. Also, Governor Seriake Dickson cited the State-owned University of Africa established in 2016 at Toru-Orua his own community.

f. **The Influence of Marriage-Induced Projects**

The influence of marriage-induced projects in Bayelsa and indeed in other states and the presidency is another topical issue. Prior to 1987, the wive of Nigeria's leaders (presidents, prime ministers, heads of state, governors, and military administrators) were considered "mere wives." States that were already on the decline had a First Lady's position before 1987. They were only given supporting roles as "better halves," with little advisory and consultative power in governmental matters. That is to say, they served only a symbolic or ceremonial function, were seldom consulted on questions of state, and remained mostly silent. In 1987 during Ibrahim Babangida's military regime, the office was revived from its dormant status. This was the moment of transition from dormancy to activity (Iheanacho, 2016). Maryam Babangida, Babangida's wife, was the last piece of the American political system's jigsaw puzzle in Nigeria. In other words, Maryam Babangida is the progenitor of the prestigious role of First Lady in modern Nigeria. By organizing the department’s work within the framework of the Better Life Programme for Rural Women (BLPRW) and launching a slew of pet projects in communities throughout Nigeria, FL rose to prominence as a political force. BLPRW was founded and is operated as a non-governmental organization (NGO) because of the lack of constitutional support for its activities. Its mission is to improve the lives of the most marginalized members of society, with a particular focus on women living in rural areas. As a direct result of Maryam Babangida’s legacy, the position
of FL rose in esteem and gained formal recognition throughout all three levels of government, but mainly at the Federal and State levels (Iheanacho, 2016)

The phenomenon of the rise of FLs in the character of Amazon has coincided with the reestablishment of a democratic system that allows for the periodic election of new people as president and governor. Each one actively pursues a distinct set of initiatives. The present trend of political candidates speaking along with their wives to make pledges of programmes they would execute as FL under their government shows how important this role has become. Because of this, men's ambitions to fill the office of FL have spread to other high positions in government. These days, it's not uncommon for the spouses of high-ranking government officials such as ministers, commissioners, commanders of military units, vice chancellors of universities, monarchs, directors of agencies and parastatals, etc., to create and serve as FLs of such units. There are currently hundreds of Nigerian women with the initials FL after their names (Iheanacho, 2016).

In Bayelsa State, the emergence and prominence of FLs at the centre stage of the State’s partisan politics since the return to democratic politics in 1999 is not in doubt. Not only do political office seekers use the channel of their programmes to lobby for the support and endorsement of their husbands, but they also influence the citing of projects in their hometowns. For example, the former Finance and Administration Director of (NDDC) Timi Alaibe, constructed 15 kilometers Odi -Torufani road in 2007, the community which is the home of his late wife. The recently constructed and commissioned 4.6 kilometers Igbedi road by the Diri’s administration is another case of spouse-induced projects in Bayelsa. The road was initially awarded in late 2015 by the Goodluck Jonathan administration but was abandoned until its completion by the Diri government on 14th February 2022.

g. Abandoned Capital Projects.

Although scholars have no single agreeable definition of infrastructure because of its complex nature, the World Bank (2008) defines infrastructure as social activities which involve services from public programmes like power generation, telecommunication systems, constant water supply, sanitation, sewage, piped gas, and transport facilities. Wikipedia (2018, in Idoniboye-Obu and Tambou 2020) stated that infrastructure comprises the basic necessary organizational structures needed for the functional activities of a society, a venture which brings development. Despite the fact that the state has witnessed some level of physical infrastructural development from creation, the level of infrastructural development is still a far cry from what is needed to qualify the state as a
modern one. There is a preponderance of dilapidated, uncompleted, abandoned projects and programmes inherited by successive administrations. Some of the projects include, Okaka Housing Estate Phase 11, Proposed Dredging of Epie Creek, Abandoned Peace Park, Umaru Musa Yar’adua Airport, Opolo-AIT Road, and the 5 Star Hotel, Abacha Road e.t.c.

h. Corruption and Underdevelopment

Ibekwe (2014), cites a number of studies on corruption in Nigeria, including those by Adebayo (2012), Transparency International (2012), the World Bank (2008), and SDIC (2009), all of which demonstrate how corruption is a primary cause of issues like poverty, economic collapse and insecurity in Nigeria. Indeed, published research suggests that Nigeria and other oil-producing governments have seen very few tangible advantages from their industry's massive yearly windfall. Despite Nigeria's general dearth of infrastructure, the Niger Delta region has been particularly hard hit since resources intended for the people are siphoned by the political class and dominant ethno-linguistic groups and individuals like governors, traditional chiefs and their cronies (Ekpo, 2012, Ikelegbe, 2005, Obi, 2014 in Ibekwe 2014).

Constant danger to life and property has resulted in the abandonment of several construction projects in Bayelsa State. These projects include hospitals, roads, and schools. The people of Bayelsa believe that those in authority over the state have been deliberately indifferent to its development and have instead been abusing their positions of power. Corrupt activities by the group and people identified by the writers (Epko, Ikelegbe, Obi, and Ibekwe) may be a contributing factor to the emergence and persistence of these problems.

Worrying public impressions of bribery, political favoritism, and robbery of public cash in connection with the allocation of oil income in Bayelsa State (Oyadougha, 2013, Sahara Reporters, 2012, in Ibekwe 2014) Emotions in the Niger Delta area was stoked by the concentration of oil income in the hands of those who embezzled it and the consequent denial of benefits to the people. Because of this, many locals have been demanding ownership of the area's natural resources.

Bayelsa and Nigeria's anti-corruption authorities, such as the Economic and o Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corruption and other related Practices
Commission (ICPC), have mostly failed to reduce corruption and the accompanying negative conflicts.

These institutions and regulations have become institutionalized forms of cronyism and a continuation of political patronage in the nation and the state (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Connections to persons who are predisposed to be loyal to those who appointed them and to use their positions to make decisions to the advantage of a certain group or ideology are the primary criteria for appointment to these institutions (Ebipade, Bekwei, and Goodhead, 2012). A culture of corruption, including embezzlement, theft, and the diversion of public monies, might flourish if these institutions were used to settle political scores instead of doing rigorous anti-corruption work. There is no risk for the culprits since their godfathers run any organization that may investigate their actions. An example is ex-governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha of Bayelsa State, who was found guilty of embezzling billions of naira from the state's coffers in a federal court in Lagos. As part of a plea agreement, he only spent two years in prison before being given a state pardon by President Goodluck Jonathan (Carro, 2005; Daniel, Bacarese, and Hatchard, 2011; Offiong, 2013; Stolen Assets Recovery Initiative (StAR)-World Bank, 2013). More than N50 billion ($800m) was stolen by former governor Alamieyeseigha when he was in office from 1999 to 2005. Of this amount, only $620 million was recovered by (EFCC, 2004) and $180 million is still missing to this day (Ibekwe, 2014). The sum of N660.45 billion (about $4.403 billion) was mishandled by Alamieyeseigha, as reported by (Odiegwu 2012, in Ibekwe, 2014). A mystery surrounds the fate of the $620 million that was retrieved.

In addition, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has accused former Bayelsa State governor Timipre Sylver of embezzling N19.2 billion from the state's coffers during his tenure as governor, which spanned from 2007 to 2011. In July 2014, the EFCC charged the ex-governor with using three shell businesses to embezzle money from the Bayelsa State government between 2009 and 2012. Despite the governor's protests, there seems to have been some misconduct (Premium Times, 2015) The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) fraud allegations against ex-Bayelsa State governor Timipre Sylva, filed in 2015, were rejected by the Federal High Court, Abuja Division, in 2017 (The Guardian, 2015).
Conclusion
The paper argued that there is an unprecedented lack of development in Bayelsa State despite the huge oil revenue available to enthrone development. This abysmal state of underdevelopment of Bayelsa State did not occur by accident. The culprit is authoritarian leadership ably fueled and aggravated by ethnicity, sycophancy, amongst other factors. The paper made the case that the political leadership that has emerged in the state since its creation has always tended to exhibit authoritarian characteristics which manifest in instituting policies and programmes that are unpopular and undertaking entirely white-elephant projects that impact nothing on the lives of the average Bayelsa State person.

To stem the foregoing tide, the paper proposes the following recommendations:

a. There is an urgent need for a pro-people leadership, one that evolves from the people themselves. In other words, there is the need for a democratic crop of leaders who are honest, visionary, transparent and accountable to be people.

b. There should be judicious use of state funds. Mismanagement of state funds should be discouraged as it hampers development.

c. Agencies responsible for financial fraud such as the EFCC and the ICPC should be allowed to freely carry out their work and due diligence be encouraged in performing their duties. Everyone charged with managing state funds and who decide to divert such funds for personal use is punished using the extant laws of the country.

d. Authoritarianism can only encourage misuse of power and therefore must be discouraged.

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Author’s Profile

Dr. Lawrence Udisi is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. His research interests include Sociology of Development,
Conflict Studies, Environmental Studies, Social welfare and Community Development. He has thirteen years of teaching experience. He is also a member of many Professional bodies. He can be contacted via email at lawrenceudisi@yahoo.co.uk and.udisilawrence@ndu.edu.ng