

Ethnicity and Development of Political Parties in Nigeria

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Abstract

The colonization of what is now known as Nigeria had created lot of developmental and leadership challenges in the administration of the modern Nigerian state today. One particular event worthy of note in the history of colonial Nigeria era was the forceful amalgamation of over three hundred and fifty different ethnic nationalities as one political unit, which now constitutes the Nigerian state. This exercise deplored by the British colonial master was solely done for administrative and commercial interest. By this singular exercise they had created a nation polarized by ethnic divide and increasingly in the quest to outdo and outplay each other in politics, commerce and relevancy. These different ethnic nationalities in the nation was now dominated by the consciousness of fear, suspicion, domination and the acts of scheming, manipulating for juice positions and recognitions, so as to take leadership role and control of resources through political power in the nation, hence, ethnicity was noted in the formation and subsequent development of political parties in the Nation, particularly in colonial Nigeria and beyond. This has been the crux and the genesis of Nigerian ethnicized society, hence relationship was now foster on the bases of ethnic divide with fear, suspicion and domination in the minds of all the ethnic groupings in the nation, this has encroached into the fabric of the Nigerian society including politics. Therefore, this paper seek to among other things, explored the ethnicity and the development of political parties in Nigeria. The methodology deployed in this paper is explanatory and exploratory, and textual approach was adopted to analyze and compare texts gotten from secondary sources (journals, articles, internet, books and magazines). The paper concludes that, the evolution and subsequent development of political parties in Nigeria along ethnic divide is responsible for the stalled growth and full integration of all ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. Hence, eliminating trust, confidence and full political integration as a nation among the different ethnic nationalities. The paper recommend further studies in this direction, and also a systematic change in altitude, behavior and conduct toward these ethnic groupings, to a more inclusive, open, transparent and credible political process to accommodate all in the Nigerian political space for peace, progress, tranquility and a sustainable democratic culture in the nation.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Political Parties, Nigerian Politics, and Political Power

INTRODUCTION

The composition of the Nigerian state to a large extent has contributed to the degree of underdevelopment and improper integration of the different ethnic grouping in the nation. This resentment is reflected in the political relationship among them, it is driven by contempt, rivalry, suspicion, and hatred and lingering fear of domination by the majority groups in the nation. This precarious situation is seen across nations in the African continent. There are bedeviled with incessant ethnic crisis and political violence. African politics is characterize by strong individuals rather than strong institution, unsettle political culture, weak political parties with no clear cut philosophy and ideology, only domineering individuals with selfish and greed motive and intention to ride on the back of the party for personal gains. It is noted here, that African states are largely colonialist in nature and formation, there are more or less a consuming rather than a producing nation, that is to say, they have move from a crop producing state to a natural resources exploiter, weak and manipulated institution largely by the elites and strong personality. African states are also noted here, to be states that have constantly shown movement of political power from pluralism to centralism, having strong individuals wielding so much political power unbehalf of the political party instead of the party's constitution or party itself. It is a prism structure, with strong alliance and loyalty for the man on top. There is no party supremacy and authority, but strong and powerful personality at the centre upon which everything rotates. The same applicable in the Nigerian political environment, here it is worse because of the tendency of ethnicity, political parties are evolved on the basis of ethnic considerations and affiliation. The Clifford constitution of 1922 ushered in the first election in colonial Nigeria, though this period, witness political parties largely agitative in nature and character for independence, but it was obvious, that the agitation and the quest for independence was prominent in a particular part of the country, the west, in fact people in the western part of Nigeria had spearheaded independence through a body called the national youth movement (NYM) which later culminated in the formation of political party (NCNC) led by Sir Hebert Macaulay in 1922 and several other political parties emerged in Nigeria later.

The point here therefore, is that people in the northern region of the country seem to be less concern or comfortable with the colonial situation then, until 1951, when the Northern People's Congress NPC was later formed and would later said, that they are not ready for independence until 1960, while the rest of the region got

self rule in 1958. This singular action later reflected in the political and party activities of the different political parties in the nation after independence, the political parties that later emerged after the colonial master left were largely regionally and ethnic base, plaque by the fear and suspicion of the other ethnic group. It is worthy of note here therefore, that political parties in Nigeria developed from the ashes of nationalist movement, same is true across most of Africa south of the Sahara, particularly in Nigeria, they were regionally based, sectional in ideology and philosophy, they had strong cultural and religious affinity, sentiment and motivation, hence these political parties across the nation developed along ethnic lines with strong personality in the centre wielding political power at the expense of the entire party. It was more of a personality clash in the early days of the evolution and development of political parties in Nigeria, Sir Ahamdu Bello of the Northern People Congress (NPC), propagating the interest of the north, The action group (AG) and political protrusion of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba cultural organization founded in 1947, largely regional and sectional gravitating towards the interest of the Yoruba people in the western part of the nation, led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the political party dominated the western house of assembly and the entire western politic, though they were pocket of other tribes and political party in the region such (NCNC) fighting for votes and the endorsement of the Yoruba people, it was grossly marginal and all to no avail the ethnic sentiment had its way in this region. Eastern Nigeria was dominated by the Igbo tribe who consolidated themselves into National Council Of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) who came into being in 1944 led Herbert Macaulay and later by Nnamdi Azikiwe in post independence Nigeria. Ethnicity and the development of political parties in Nigeria are intertwined and common political leaders used this medium to propagate selfish and personal interest rather than common interest, they instigates cultural, religious and sectional sentiment in name of politics.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRMEWORK

Democracy according to Macpherson is a rule in the interest of the whole people, transcending classes, that the process and procedure by which a society is ruled is of little or no significant as long as the goal of the state is to improve the status of all the people in the society'. This is different in ethicized society like Nigeria, it is rather a rule of the most favored group or ethnic group in the nation, politic and by extension democracy is grossly dominated by tribal interest rather than national interest. People in what now constitute Nigeria, are motivated by ethnic and cultural sentiment and they are more of their ethnic extraction than Nigeria as a nation. As a result of this indirect and direct rule in Nigeria, local chief, emirs and title holders now became proxy of the colonial masters, they did work of mobilizing and coordinating the operations of taxation, administration and management of the state affairs through the agencies of the local native authority in the north and the warrant chief platform in the east for the colonial masters. The implication therefore in this arrangement initiated by the colonial master was that class structure of rulers and the ruled was been created in the nation as whole indirectly whereby one particular ethnic group was preferred to another ethnic group base on the degree of support and cooperation shown to the colonial master. While in fact an ethnic base structure was indirectly created, this was later evident in the social, economic and political structure of the Nigerian society and it became a monumental challenge to the Nigeria state, every political party in the nation later evolve along ethnic, religious and cultural lines to grab power or dominance in the Nigerian state. These so called colonial proxies which were member of the same community, used their privilege positions with the backing of the colonial master to exploit the people through excessive taxation, abuse of their office were rampant among these class of people and several other atrocities were perpetuated by them in the colonial government and administration. This was indeed among other things, the beginning of the elite class in the Nigeria, these class who were fairly educated, expose and economically potent dictated the pace of things in the colonial government, some who fell out of favor with the colonial government, become agitated, radical and aggressive against colonial rule and were in the fight for independence from the colonial masters.

Notable among them included Herbert Macaulay (NCNC), whose political parties secure two seats and a seat in first elections organized by colonial government in Lagos and Calabar respectively in 1923. The emergence of the elite's class stem out of the fear of domination by the groupings various ethnic groupings hence, strong individuals emerged from the different ethnic groups seeking to protect the interest of these ethnic grouping in the Nigerian society. The exit of the colonial master created a lacuna in several sectors of the economy, particularly in administration, governance and government. These so called political and economic classes represent the various ethnic nationalities and extraction in the nation, simply took over the positions of the colonial master and continue from where they stop, of some of the elites were accused of neo- colonialism, furthering the interest of Europe and with strong allegiance them, these group of individuals continue to circulate and recycled them in power for self reasons and become instrument of external use by foreign government abroad. The event of October 1, 1960 simply transfer power from the colonial master to the people of Nigeria but in actual sense it is the political elites that took control of the power, through the control of social and economic structure and production capacity of the nation. As clearly demonstrated by Karl Marx, that social life, including politics is determined primarily by the social production, what is produced, how is produced and how what is produced is distributed by social movement which is process of natural history governed by laws which are independent of human consciousness.

These social classes took control of the means of production and dominate the political process using their economic might at the expense of the generality of the people; they retained power by recycling themselves and cronies in the government for generations. That explains why in the Nigerian political arena people, families and a particular group who had been power are now replaced by their children, relatives and family friends.

But this not the case is in Nigeria, the political class do not consider nor have the interest of the masses at heart but themselves and their families, ethnic and religious interest serving as a motivation for hidden agenda at the expense of the other ethnic groupings, thereby creating a class and ethnic society. It should be stated here clearly that, the Nigerian socio-political environment was conceived, model and structured by the colonial master. It was basically designed to be a class and isolationist society because of the concept of divide and rule instituted by the master. This invariable laid the foundation for the circulation elite in the Nigerian political system. Scholars also argue that the Nigerian political situation stem from the socio-political environment which is ethnic communally oriented and culturally base, which date back to the pre-colonial era. People in this socio-political environment see themselves first as a clan, then a tribe and finally as a region. Hence the consequence effect of this psychological mindset and orientation is seen in the violence contestation for political offices and other benefits and privileges associated with the office. The political class capitalizes on the mindset of the people playing to the gallery of ethnicity, tribalism and ignorance of the people to circulate, recycle them in power for selfish and personal interest, all in the name of fighting the cause of a particular ethnic group. Ekeh (1973) has argued that ethnicity has flourished because the Nigerian elite who inherited the colonial state have conceptualized development as transferring resources from the civil public to the primordial and ethnic interest. with 250 ethnic groups and the major ones are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. It is however very disturbing that Nigerians have become slaves to their ethnic origins instead of harnessing these diversities towards national development. Nigerians are fanatics when it comes to ethnicity. It is therefore not surprising for a Nigerian to get angry because he/she is wrongly associated with another tribe. This is not the true reflection of a federal nation. "One of the sociological problems hindering the growth of the nation is multi-ethnicity" (Odinukaeze, 2011). Conflict theory as postulate by Marxism For Marxist theory, power is the capacity to affect the life situations of people. Power is a key feature of the structuring relations of society. Accordingly, dominant power is largely in the hands of those who own and control the means of life.

Capitalism structures an irresolvable conflict between the two fundamental classes, the working class and the capitalist class. This is a consequence of the "logic" of capitalist reproduction: It is always in the interest of capitalists to increase surplus value (by extending the working day, reducing wages, introducing labor-saving technology, etc. and these imperatives are always contrary to the interests of workers: class struggle. Governments have power, but typically they are "instruments of the ruling class." Ideally, governments are legitimated on liberal principles (consent of the government, a radical distinction between the public and the private (which legitimates the use of private power).

For Marxists, such "consensus" depends upon "false consciousness." But governments will act coercively if necessary to secure the stability of capitalist society. In the classless society, there will not be class conflict and power will be democratically shared. Dahrendorf writes that he is concerned "exclusively with relations of authority. For these alone (sic) are part of social structure and therefore permit the systematic derivation of group conflict. Moreover, "where there are authority relations, the super ordinate element is socially expected to control by orders, and commands, warning and prohibitions, the behavior of the subordinate element. That is, his concern is exclusively with legitimated compliance relations. Holds that there is both consensus and conflict in all "authority" relations so that individuals have both mutual interests and (opposing? potentially opposing? always opposing?) latent interests. In contrast to Marxism which holds that capitalists have dominant power, for Dahrendorf, society is comprised of a host of "imperatively coordinated associations" (associations in which members are subject to "imperative control" or authority). None of the "associations" dominate. Accordingly, societies are comprised of "a plurality of competing dominant (and conversely, subjected) aggregates". It is not denied that persons or groups have power, but "group conflicts" "are not the product of structurally fortuitous relations of power but come forth wherever authority is exercised". Indeed, in contrast to both Marx and Weber, Dahrendorf endeavors "to detach the category of conflict groups...from economic determinants". Finally, since authority relations are necessarily present in all societies, conflict is inevitable. Conflict Theory (C. Wright Mills) Power for Mills "has to do with whatever decisions men make about the arrangements under which they live.

It is important to see that unlike Dahrendorf, Mills is not talking only about "authority" ("legitimately power") or compliance: getting people to do what is commanded. As with Pareto, Mosca, and Aron, Mills distinguishes elites and masses. For Mills, elites have power by virtue of their location in three linked key institutions (structures) in society: political, dominated by the executive power of the Federal Government, the economic, dominated by a few hundred corporations, and military. Mills rejects both the class struggle picture of the Marxists and the pluralist picture, shared by Dahrendorf and much political theory, which holds that the American system of power is "a moving balance of many competing interests. Finally, while "democracy" requires "a society of publics," the US has become basically "a mass society" in which elite's have the capacity to manage

and manipulate “public opinion” and “the consent of men.”but it is different in the Nigerian society ethnicity define the political landscape of the entire society. Thomas Lasswall politic is who gets what and when, hence a high degree of contestation among various ethnic groupings in the society.

ETHNICITY

The origin of ethnicity in Nigeria is traceable to the nation’s colonial experience, particularly the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914. According to Osadolor (1998), the act of amalgamation was not a federal idea. Lugard did not conceive a federal state for Nigeria. In the statement of the colonial office when Lugard submitted his proposals on 9 May, 1913, it was stated that ‘Sir Lugard’s proposals contemplate a state which is impossible to classify’ (Osadolor, 1998). Because it grossly impossible to administer such a state to that extent therefore, the British colonial master hurriedly came up with amalgamation of the different ethnic nationalities for their commercial and administrative not considering the imminent and undeniable difference in culture, religion, character and socio political traditions of these ethnic grouping. In the pre-colonial era and since the independence of Nigeria, ethnicity played and still playing manifest and latent roles in the body politics of Nigeria. The concept ethnicity and tribalism has always been a confused matter. Some scholars use the two concepts as though they carry the some meaning and strongly inseparable. However, it is pertinent to note that there is a difference between ethnicity and tribalism even though the difference is water-tight. Nnoli (1978:5) for instance sees ethnicity as a: ... Social phenomenon associated with the identity of members of the largest possible competing communal groups (ethnic groups) seeking to protect and advance their interest in a political system. The relevant communal factor may be language, culture, race religion and/or common history. Ethnicity is only one of the phenomena associated with interactions among communal groups (ethnic groups). Others include trade, diplomacy, friendship enmity, corporation, self-abnegation and self extension. What is peculiar to ethnicity is that it involves demands by one group on other competing group (European Scientific Journal June 2013) From the definition above by Nnoli, ethnicity exists where the communal groups comprise either of: language, culture, race, religion or common history. If we go by Nnoli’s position, tribalism which has to do with a tribe is only an element that could constitute ethnicity hence ethnicity in this case is wider in context than tribalism. Ethnicity in the words of Nnoli above shows that it does not yet exist until a demand is made by one group to seek for advantage and benefits for its group relative to what another group is seemingly enjoying. In support of this argument of the difference between ethnicity and tribalism, Eteng (2004:45) says that: An ethnic group, however, is not necessarily linguistically or culturally, homogeneous, insofar as it often subsumes sub-cultural, linguistic, dialectic occupational and class differences, depending on the prevailing level of socio-economic development and cultural differentiation. Similarly, according to Thomson (2000:60) a basic definition of ethnicity is a community of people who have the conviction that they have a common identity and common fate based on issues of origin, kinship, ties, traditions, cultural uniqueness, a shared history and possibly a shared language. In this sense, an ethnic group is much like the imagined community of the nation. Ethnicity, however, focuses more on sentiments of origin and descent, rather than the geographical considerations of a nation. From the definition above, ethnicity obvious is a smaller community found within a larger society which of cause is the implication of Thomson “... imagined community of the nation”. So, it has to do with a unique group behavior seeking for favor restrictive to its group members.

Ethnicity involves the display of sentiments in bias to a special set of group one belongs to. In concord to the foregoing, Omu (1996:170) says that ethnicity applies to the consciousness of belonging to, identifying with, and being loyal to a social group distinguished by shared cultural traditions, a common language, in-group sentiment and self-identity. On the whole, ethnicity has to do with a unique group with distinct and peculiar features which are sources of common ties on which the feeling of sentiment and emotion is being expressed in protest or support of an action taken against or in favor of such a group. In sum, ethnicity is the deliberate and consciousness of tracing of one’s identity to a particular ethnic group and allowing such feeling to determine the way one relates with people and things, ethnicity creates the brackets of ‘we’ ‘they’ ‘ours’, ‘theirs’ feeling. Ethnicity makes it very difficult for different ethnic groups to agree on anything. As Otite (1990) observed and quite rightly too, that the ethnic virus has been one of the most important causes of social crisis and political instability in Nigeria; and ethnicity has been perceived in general as a major obstacle to the overall political and economic development of the country. Nnoli (1978) defined ethnicity as a "social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups." He further explained that ethnic groups are social formations distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries and that an ethnic group may not necessarily linguistically or culturally homogenous. Osaghae (1995) defined ethnicity as the employment of mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or co-operation. However, Azeez (2004) views ethnicity as a sense of people hood that has its foundation in the combined remembrance of past experience and common aspiration. Nigeria is a plural society and it is made up of over 250 ethnic groups with many sub-groups three ethnic groups - Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo - dominate the political landscape. All other ethnic groups are swept under the carpet. This has created sub-nationalism. Ekeh

(1973) has argued that ethnicity has flourished because the Nigerian elite who inherited the colonial state have conceptualized development as transferring resources from the civil public to the primordial public it is against this background that this writer would x-ray in a laconic manner the interplay of ethnicity in the body politics of Nigeria in pre-independence era and from independence till date.

FACTORS THAT AMPLIFIED ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC POLITICS

The truth still remains that there are various factors that amplified ethnicity and indeed ethnic politics in Nigeria in particular and in Africa in general most of these are inherent in the composition and cooperate existence of the various nation in Africa due to the colonial experience in the past and subsequent political arrangement that later followed after independence. Azeez (2004) views ethnicity as a sense of people hood that has its foundation in the combined remembrance of past experience and common aspiration. These in many ways contradict the reality on ground. Many countries on the African continent have people who do not share common goals and aspiration with their fellow compatriots, there are constant agitating for self determination and independence because of marginalization and segregation in the same country, again major factors that amplified ethnicity and ethnic politics can be said to include:

POWER STRUGGLE

This particular factor had been one of the major causes responsible for the fueling of ethnicity and ethnic politics in the system and in many African nations. The quest for political power had created a higher degree of contestation among the various ethnic groupings in nations across the African continent, particularly in Nigeria, these ethnic extractions are always in perpetual suspicion of one another, fear and constant doubts, thereby creating tension and deep resentment. Power struggle among and within the various ethnic nationalities creates deep hostility, hatred and resentment that will eventually result to violence and war in the system. The implication of this was that Nigerian federalism lacked the requisite foundation for a formidable federal system, the resultant effect of which is loyalty to ethnic groups rather than loyalty to the nation. In a circumstance of mutual suspicion and fear of domination, competition for power among ethnic groups becomes unavoidable. And it is on the basis of this fear of domination that formation of political parties in Nigeria always reflects a strong dose of ethnicism. Colonialism left behind for Nigeria a non-hegemonic state that further aggravated the crisis of ethnicism in the nation as contended by Salawu and Hassan 2010.

This is clearly pointed out by Osaghae (2001) when he writes that: ...the pervasiveness of ethnic politics in the country is taken to be symptomatic of aggravated crisis of legitimacy that has engulfed the state, and is explained in terms of the proven efficacy of the ethnic strategy, the weakness of alternative identities and political units, the prevailing milieu of lawlessness that has enveloped the country's political landscape, and the inability of the state to act as an effective agency of distributive justice. In essence therefore power struggle is at the heart of ethnicity and ethnic politics in the Nigerian state and instrumentality of its propagation is the platform of the political parties. In a similar work, Aluko (2003) identifies the Legacy of Colonialism and monopoly of power by the major ethnic groups and their consequent marginalization of the minority groups as major factors promoting ethnic nationalism in Nigeria. Other causes of ethnicism identified include poverty of leadership in terms of forging national integration among the multiple ethnic nationalities in the country (Babangida, 2002). Babangida argues further that mass poverty and unemployment creates alienation and insecurity, which in turn encourage Nigerians to experience and prefer accommodation within the social insurance system of ethnic nationalities. Further identified causes of ethnic problems in Nigeria have to do with competition for employment and political exploitation. The former has been caused by the ever increasing number of school leavers who now troop to the urban centre in search of jobs, which many a time are not found. And where such jobs are found they are given according to ethnic affiliation. The latter has to do with politicians who manipulate ethnic loyalties in order to increase their winning chance at the polls. This aspect of ethnicism in the Nigerian situation has set one ethnic group against another with immeasurable consequences. manifestation of ethnic politics has grave Implications for the survival of Nigerian state The effort made so far in this paper has been to show that the inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria has been one of conflict largely caused by ethnic chauvinism, which manifests in form of ethnic nationalism. There is no doubt that this has implications for the survival of democracy in Nigeria and indeed in the African continent in general. The question to answer here is how does ethnicity and the resultant ethnic politics affect political parties in the Nigerian state, the simple answer is power struggle among these ethnic grouping. Each seeking to undo and outdo each other in the bid to secure power at the detriment of one another and also

RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND CONTROL

This is another major areas through which ethnicity and ethnic politics is demonstrated, people of different background and lineage engaged in political violence and social crisis in an attempt to allocate, control and management resources in their locality, this menace become a major challenge toward national unity and peace in certain area of nation, particularly in the Niger delta region and other sensitive area across the African continent,

hence, the perception and feeling of neglect and exploitation create agitation and a feeling of insecurity in these area thereby leading societal violence and crisis. Resource control and allocation are factor that fuel ethnicity and ethnic politics across the African continent, many political violence and social unrest stem from the frustration and quest to control one's resources or out of the feeling or the perceived feeling of deprivation and marginalization of resource control and allocation, these feeling of frustration and marginalization is translated into violence or social imbalance. Many of the ethnic violence are triggered by the desire to control resources found in the locality of these ethnic grouping, Nigeria represent a clear example, their claimed stem from their assertion that while their community remain underdeveloped, other areas without resources are the ones benefiting from their own resources. To extent therefore resource control and allocation has become an instrument of ethnic and political divide in most of the African nation particularly in Nigeria and beyond.

ETHNICITY AS A TOOL IN THE HANDS OF GREEDY ELITE

As noted earlier most of the political leaders and politician alike use ethnic politics and indeed ethnicity as an instrument of political advancement, ethnic sentiment is usually deployed to win votes and other political consideration as the expense of the nation. The use of ethnicity as a political tool had long history in Nigerian political experience, elites vis-as-vis politician capitalize on the frosty relationships among the various ethnic groupings in the system to advance their political career. These groups of people use ethnicity And ethnic politics to systematically divide the people against so as to remain In power. Another interesting manifestation of ethnic politics in Nigeria is the administrative division of the country into three regions. Each of these regions is dominated by one of the three ethnic groupings thereby reinforcing the popular philosophy of three-player of ethnic game. Many things have been affected by this tri-polar pattern. Particularly interesting was the move for self government, which if attained would usher in a democratic government in Nigeria. The north was unwilling to see a self-rule at the centre. The position taken by the north on this issue was indeed another expression of fear of domination. The north then felt that the enlightened south could use their advantage position to marginalize its people to extent they delayed self rule until independence in 1960. The whole point here therefore ethnic remain a major challenge in the advancement and development of the Nigerian project. Fear and domination of the major tribe in Nigeria still remain a major challenge to the full and proper integration of the Nigerian state.

STRUCTURAL IMBALANCE

In any society ethnicity and ethnic politic thrive effectively when there are structural imbalances in that society particularly in areas such as population, distribution of economy wealth, political positions, ethnicity divide a nation , its create segregation and separation instead of integration of the various ethnic grouping in the society, it is canker worm that slow undermine the progress of any society. Ethnic group is an informal interest group whose members are distinct from the members of other ethnic groups within the larger society because they share kinship, religious and linguistics ties (Cohen, 1974). This means that ethnic groups are social formations, which are distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries (Nnoli, 1978). Hence imbalance exist between and among these ethnic setting and each group seek to protect and guide their respective interest at the expense of the other, thereby creating socio cultural and political distinction to the detriment of the larger community. In all political activities in Nigeria and most of the African state, the factor of ethnicity is reflected. It is particularly obvious in areas like voting, distribution of political offices, employment and government general patronage of the citizens, even in education, they seek to regulate the amount and the number slot allocated to a particular ethnic grouping in the university and other institution of higher learning.

POLITICAL PARTIES

A political party is a social group defined by Herbert Simon as a system of interdependent activities characterized by a high degree of rational direction of behavior towards end that are objects of common acknowledgment and expectation. It is different from other social groups, such as labor unions and other associations because of the unique functions a political party performs for the system, such as organizing for public opinion, communicating demands to the center of governmental decision-making and political recruitment. This is why a political party is taken 'as a useful index of the level political development. Hence the relationship between a viable party system and a democratic order is axiomatic (Omoruyi 2014). In pre-independence era, party politics in Nigeria was based on ethnic factor thus one can say that it was during this period in question that the seed of ethnic politics was sown, germinated in the first republic and the products started spreading during the 3rd and 4th republics. For example, the Action Group as a party developed from a Yoruba Cultural Association, Egbe Omo Oduduwa; the NCNC was closely allied with the Igbo Union while the NPC developed from Jamiyyar Arewa. Thus the leadership of the aforementioned parties was along ethnic cleavages. The A.G. was led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba; the NCNC leadership fell on Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo while NPC was led by Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto, a Fulani. Even to a large extent, the colonial administrative arrangement in Nigeria during the colonial period encouraged ethnic politics. The 1946 Richard Constitution had divided Nigeria into three regions for

administrative convenience which is directly associated with the three major ethnic groups - Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. It is not surprising therefore that the first political parties were formed along ethnic lines. During the first republic, politics was organized in the same way as during the pre-colonial era. The three political parties that existed during the pre-independence era also came into lime light and dominated the landscape; although other parties sprang up.

These included Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) by Aminu Kano; United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) led by Joseph Tarka, NPC by Sir Ahamdu Bello. A.G. by Chief Obafemi Awolowo and NCNC led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. There was no radical departure from those of the pre-colonial era as the parties had ethnic coloration in terms of leadership and regional affiliations. However, it was in the 2nd republic that regionalism was played down a bit. The 1979 constitution stipulated that for a political party to be registered, it must be national in outlook. That is, wide geographical spread across the country. The new political parties that were registered had their leadership replicated along ethnic lines as in the first republic. Thus, Obafemi Awolowo retained the leadership of A.G. which metamorphosed into UPN; Nnamdi Azikiwe controlled the Igbo speaking areas under NPP which is an offshoot of the old NCNC. NPN dominated the Hausa/Fulani areas; PRP in Hausa speaking while GNPP led by Ibrahim Waziri controlled the Kanuri speaking area. Therefore, ethnic coloration and affiliation played out in political parties' formation and operation during the 2nd Republic. Voting patterns followed ethnic lines in the elections. It should be pointed out that political party formation had a different dimension in the third republic which was midwived by President Ibrahim Babangida government. Two political parties were formed and funded by the government. These were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). Even though these parties were established by government, ethno-religious cleavages were visible in the membership and composition of the two parties. While the SDP favored the southerners, NRC was a party for the Hausa Fulani North as could be observed from their operation (Odivwri, 2011). In the current political dispensation of the Fourth Republic ethnic coloration has reared its ugly head. With ANPP considered as a party predominantly occupied by the Hausa/Fulani and AD as direct successor to Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group and Unity Party of Nigeria and as a result dominated the six Yoruba speaking states of Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo until 2003 when it lost all the states except Lagos. The ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) is being perceived as to have deviated a bit from the usual ethno-religious dominated party politics of the past with their membership and formation cutting across the clime of Nigeria. However in the 2011 general elections, ethnic and regional politics started to play itself out.

With the demise of Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'adua some people in the North felt power should not shift to the south and they started kicking against the presidency of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan. The new parties on contest like APGA is seen as Igbo party; ACN as a re-incarnation of A.G. or UPN which is Yoruba based, CPC and ANPP are seen as the party of Hausa/Fulani affiliations. It is only the PDP that to some extent has national outlook but the insistence on certain part of the country to produce the 2011 presidency has shown that ethnic and religious politics is still with us and will continue to plague the body politics and unity of Nigeria as a sovereign state. Nigeria remains plagued by ethnic, religious and cultural divide, issues of conflict and political violence are always rampant and imminent to extent that there are breakdown of law and order in land, a typical example was the political violence and crisis that engulfed the western Nigeria during the first republic whereby the NPN wanted to capture the AG dominated west using all kind of manipulation including treasonable charges and imprisonment against leaders of the opposition in the AG dominated west. The consequence resulted in the breakdown of law and order in western Nigeria, which later also was the root causes of the civil war that later started in Nigeria as a whole in 1967. If Nigerians learn to value nationalism more than ethnicity, there will be an increase in economic and political development and Nigeria will reclaim its rightful. This is true because a lot ethnic sentiment is always considered when developmental project and initiative are evaluated and considered at the end of the day, ethnic, religious and cultural factors will hold sway are the expense of the totality of the nation. (Aluko, 2003) identifies the Legacy of Colonialism and monopoly of power by the major ethnic groups and their consequent marginalization of the minority groups as major factors promoting ethnic nationalism in Nigeria. Other causes of ethnicity include poverty of leadership in terms of forging national integration among the multiple ethnic nationalities in the country. (Babangida, 2002) argues further that mass poverty and unemployment creates alienation and insecurity, which in turn encourage Nigerians to experience and prefer accommodation within the social insurance system of ethnic nationalities. Much has been said about Nigerian state, it is or less a mere composition of different ethnic nationality, rather than a composite nation with the needed values of nationhood, solidarity and loyalty from its peoples.

More so, it is noted here that, a nation or a country as the case may be is only an abstraction, it is a geographical and topographical location, it is the people and indeed the culture, values, system, and ways of doing of that people, that constitute a nation, a nation is not a location or a place only, it is the people and its values of that nation that is that nation. But this assertion varies in the Nigeria project, hence a sharp variation is noted in the political composition of its political, economic and social life, people and indeed its political parties are more of a regional parties rather than a national with the interest of the nation at large.

CONSEQUENCES OF ETHNICITY

This is not does need much emphasis, a nation like Nigeria does not need to be told the implications of ethnicity in its political social, and economic life or other areas of endeavor, because, if there is a break down of law and order or perhaps another civil war in the country now. The nation will suffer more losses than it did last time in terms of destruction of human being and properties, it was reported that over one million Nigerians die during the Biafra war on both side therefore, politician and other stakeholder must be held accountable in word and deeds particularly in governance and politics. Ethnic sentiment and manipulation should be eradicated from the fabric and the body politic of the Nigerian society. Ethnicized Nigeria will be underdeveloped and will stall every developmental initiative and effort by successive government administration, it will create rancor, nepotism, hatred, cultural and integration barrier in the nation and many more set back associated with ethnicity. It is noted here ethnicity had been the primary sources and causes of political violence and war in many nations particularly in Africa. its negative consequences as observed by Babangida (2002), are wastage of enormous human and material resources in ethnically inspired violence, encounters, clashes and even battles, heightening of fragility of the economy and political process, threat to security of life and property and disinvestments of local and foreign components with continuous capital flight and loss of confidence in the economy; and increasing gaps in social relations among ethnic nationalities including structural suspicions and hate for one another these has been the hindering factors of production and political integration of the various ethnic nationalities in the nation.

MANAGEMENT OF ETHNICITY

Ethnicity can be managed and curtail particularly in Nigeria and in other African countries where there are multi-ethnic groupings in language, culture, and social differences. One particular way of managing ethnicity is through the formation of a broad base political parties and government in the nation, uniting them under one common goal, objectives, and purpose, another major way is through the provision of good governance and equality in the distribution and allocation of basic social amenities in all strata of the society. More so effective and efficient management of scarce resources is also a better way of creating a sense of belonging, security, peace and the spirit of inclusion rather than exclusion in the minds of all the ethnic grouping in the society and giving all the ethnic grouping equal treatment in the scheme of things in the society, this will stem out social, political and economic crisis and unnecessary contestation and competition among them. It is noted here, that most of the social conflicts, wars and political violence experienced in some of the African countries today stem from the poor management of all the ethnic grouping across the continent either in deliberate deprivation of basic social amenities, sidelining in them appointment/ allocation of political offices and out rightly promoting division and suspicion through nepotism and as a pattern of leadership failure, thereby creating conflict in the society. Another cause of conflicts be it social, economical, political or religious also stem from the poor management of resources such as gold, diamond, crude oil etc.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The paper concludes, that ethnicity impacts negatively on the Nigerian political system, that it constitute a major source of political violence and killings usually as a result of disagreement among and within these ethnic groups, which always is about their group and personal interests. is these disagreements among or within these ethnic groups or elites in the various ethnic groupings ventilating or projecting issues in the front burner of the nation's polity, it bring social insecurity and political instability which in the long run terminate possible progress, development and growth that may occur. The paper further recommends the adoption and creation of a credible electoral process to accommodate people of all creed, race, ethnicity, religious, economic, political, and social standing in the society. These will among other things, allow for peace, stability, and tranquility in the nation as a whole, it will also eliminate poverty, underdevelopment, corruption, economic depression, political instability and social insecurity. Furthermore, government on its part and as part of its social responsibility and contract to its citizenry should engage in massive political education and social enlightenment to bring its citizens to the knowledge, consciousness and the political awareness of their rights and duties in the system. The paper recommend religious tolerance and improvement in the economic status of all various ethnic grouping in the society further study in this area and also good governance across the length and breadth of the Nigeria society in particular and across the African continent in general. This will among other things stem the ethnicity menace in the nation, political education through traditional and modern means of communication will go a long way in enlightening the people about the dangers of ethnicity in the country, more so politician should eschew ethnic sentiment in their political activities, rather should foster peace and mutual co-existence and cooperation among the peoples.

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