

method of settling their disputes, lose more control over their situation than those who select mediation and other lower levels of intervention.

Adjudication: Adjudication is another non-violent method of conflict management. This involves the use of the courts and litigation processes. Parties to a dispute may choose not to use any of the methods we have so far discussed. They may opt instead to take their case to a court of law, before a judge of competent jurisdiction. Legal counsel may represent them.

Crisis Management: This is an extreme situation of conflict, which has reached a turning point, where critical decisions have to be taken or else the conflict may escalate to a point of extreme violence. Sometimes, a crisis is a degenerated state of conflict, where threats to human security, intense violence characterized by fighting, death, injury, large-scale displacement of populations occur. Once a crisis occurs, it is the responsibility of the government of a state to de-escalate the situation and bring a cessation to violence. This may be done through various means, including the use of the coercive state apparatus, where necessary. (Fred-Mensah, 2000).

Nature of Nigeria politics and democratic Governance

The disarticulated nature of Nigeria's present politics and democracy is best understood within the historical context. This context unravels the evolution of Nigeria's politics from the pre-colonial era to the post-independence epoch. It is a holistic approach which shows the interconnection and influences of British political diplomacy and the locally or regionally unguided exploitation.

Before the colonial era, the entity now known as Nigeria was made up of independent nations that included the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the

southwest, and Ibo in the south-east. Other principal ethnic groups are the Edo (Bini), Efiki, Urhobo, Ijaw, Tiv and Kanure. Except in a few cases such as the Itshekiri, which is an ethnic group with one language/dialect, there exist the Ibo of Onitsha, Oguta, etc., the Yoruba of Ekiti, Ijesha, Oyo, Ijebu and so on, the Urhobo of Okpe, Agbon, Ughelli, etc (Ola and Tonwe, 2005). In fact, Nigeria is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, with over 250 ethno-linguistic groups, some of which are bigger than many independent states of the contemporary Africa (Suberu, 2000). These autonomous territories and tribes had established kingdoms and chiefdoms with unique, and in some cases complex systems of government. These include the Oyo Empire, Fulani Empire, the Benin Kingdom, the Ife Kingdom, the Great Kanem Borno, and the politically decentralized Ibo autonomous communities. These respective empires had established political systems, economic organizations and defense systems which operated effectively. The need to rationalize and regulate the economic relationship of these respective empires led to the imposition of colonial administration in the late 19th century (Turner, 1980:202).

The British government's imposition, attributed to Lord Lugard, was meant to discourage other European competitors from engaging with the new Nigeria. Through its coercive apparatus, the colonial administrator defined Nigeria territorially, and forcefully integrated the various political forms and pre-capitalist modes at different stages of development into the global economic system that would satisfy the demand of British and global capital for the raw materials, primary exports, and a local market for imported finished products. Initially, Lugard pursued different administrative styles towards northern and southern Nigeria which were kept separate until the amalgamation of 1914 (Post and Vickers, 1973). The amalgamation was thought necessary to pool resources so as

to enable the relatively rich territories of the south to assist their poorer neighbors the north, under the overall British control (Mamser, 1987:27).

However, while the amalgamation brought together in one polity different nationalities at different stages of political and economic development, no efforts were made by the British to give the amalgamated units a common political orientation (Mamser, 1987:27). As such, it exacerbated an atmosphere of disunity, conflict and instability through vertical channels of extraction, accumulation and transfer. In short, it created cleavages, distrust and rivalry. Following the formal acquisition of political independence in 1960, Akinboye and Anifowose (1999:244) noted that Nigeria “inherited a weak socio-political structure, a defective and unbalanced federation, an intensification of ethnic consciousness and rivalries, a subverted indigenous ethos of government and culture, and above all, an inexperienced leadership.” The British simply conceded power to a moderate faction of indigenous bourgeoisie with a weak economic base who relied on the state for capital accumulation and appropriation.

Nigeria’s first republic (1960-1966) was a Westminster-style parliamentary democracy. Following experiments with parliamentary forms of government, the second republic (1979-1983) and the third republic (1993) were presidential systems of democracy by military fiat. Although a few Nigerians had in 1993 canvassed for a French style presidential parliamentary system for the country, the decision to experiment with the presidential was unilaterally imposed by the Head of State, General Sani Abacha (Namdi, 2009:122). The fourth republic (1999 till date) and subsequent forms of democracy represent elements of liberal democracy, now included in the Nigerian constitution. For instance, section 14 sub-section 1 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that “the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the principle of democracy and social

justice.” At sub-section 2(a), it defines the type of democracy as one where “sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this constitution derives all its powers and authority.” With these declarations, we are not left in any doubt that liberal democracy with representative governance is the central theme in Nigeria’s type of democracy. So how democratic is Nigeria’s democracy?

Ethnicity, Politics and Nation-Building

Ethnicity as a relational product is quintessentially adversarial. Two reasons are responsible. The first, as observed by Matteo Fumagalli (2007), though in different context but very applicable to African social systems by its peculiar nature of state-formation, is that millions of citizens found themselves, almost overnight, in the new condition being labelled or viewed as minority. However, the tag ‘*minority*’ denotes the presence of some sorts of critical competitions in which the former is delicately pitched against a majority other with a leverage of number among other factors. Multi-ethnic states are consequently in a flux of nagging competitions. This is quite particular to African states where there is heavy dependance on public resources for virtually every form of sustenance, more so that the private sector is less developed.

A major blunder committed by early post-independence leaders in their state-building effort is that the state is paternalistically conceived. The state became an omniprovider of an overwhelming plethora of services, many of which could have been efficiently provided by the private sector. Access to the state’s (finite) resource base is thus crucial to the competing groups. This explains why the attempt to privatize certain public utilities, infrastructures and services have met with stiff public resistance, whereas most African states are already overwhelmed and incapable of further services. As Teshome has observed, ethnicity could be the basis for the unequal treatment of people and it may be the cause of ethnocentrism

and prejudices against members of other ethnic groups. The second, which derives from the first, is a function of several factors. The fact that the (African) state is in a constant scenario of political competitions is an indication of the economic fact that the resources available for allocation is also never surplus. It is indeed the scarcity of resources that inevitably necessitates, if not aggravates, the politics of (its) allocation.

The stakes of politics are too high. Politics extends beyond mere governmental organisation and operation of the state and its institutions. Politics is critical and determinative of people's fate or fortune in life. Without an iota of doubt, it's a functional determination of *who prospers or perishes, who lives or dies, who is favoured or marginalized and who is famed or defamed*. Politics could be used to engender development and underdevelopment, depending on who is at the winning end of power play. The politics of allocation essentially is about competing to get some scarce benefits from government. Such include health, wealth, scholarships and education, public utilities, infrastructural facilities, loans and grants, livelihoods, fame, respect, land, resource control, security, contracts, import license, influence, skills, and e.t.c. How much that one could get is a critical function of where one belongs in the endgame of politics. Two classical definitions of politics are succinct here. Politics for Harold Lasswell, though bitterly and in the ordinariness, is about *who gets what, when and how*. A technical interpretation of that is David Easton's definition that politics is *the authoritative allocation of value*. Thus, a synergetic fusion of the two, that politics is the *authoritative determination of who gets what, when and how*, brings forth a crucial case of fate determination.

The critical reason why people or groups struggle for governmental power is because it is essentially at the decision end of politics *of allocation*. Therefore,

intergroup competitions for the authoritative allocation of value in multiethnic states are inevitable and vicious. They are usually the root cause of inter-ethnic civil uprisings. Nnoli has thus rightly argued that it is not inter-ethnic contact between groups that breeds conflicts; rather it is the extent of competing claims that are associated with the economic and political problems of modern nation states (Nnoli, 1978). However and notwithstanding the status of resource availability in terms of scarcity or surplusage, the *politics of allocation* may become the vulturous *politics of enrichment* to the group(s) with the upper hand in the interplay of power politics, whereby greater opportunities of amassing wealth are effectively, deliberately and greedily cornered by the dominant group(s). The history and politics of revenue allocation in Nigeria clearly depicted this scenario. At Independence when Nigeria's economy relied solely on agricultural exports, the revenue sharing formula based on the *principle of derivation* was adopted. By this principle, federal revenues were distributed to the federating units based on the total or some proportion of certain taxes assumed to have been paid by the citizens of the units. Two of Nigeria's three units then, the Western and Northern Regions (also with two dominant ethnic stocks – Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani) tremendously got enriched under this principle through their exportation of cocoa and groundnuts (then in very high demand in the international market) and other cash crops. The Eastern Region was then less endowed and thus profited less comparatively.

Shortly after, oil was discovered in stupendous commercial quantity in the Eastern Region. The in-streaming petrodollars soon and far outstripped total revenues from agroexports prompting thereby the successful agitation by the same two chagrined regions for Nigeria to adopt a new revenue sharing formula that is either based on the *principle of need* or the *principle of even development/national interest*. Revenue allocation here is either based on the size of the population in an area, or on the basis of public expenditure deemed to be in the best interest of the nation as

a whole. The two former regions still profited significantly in this new arrangement as they contained major population centers of the country. And that is in addition to the fact that the political and bureaucratic elites from these regions are also some of the most influential in the authoritative allocation of values and the determination of deeming issues of national interest. The politics of allocation is jealously ridiculous in Nigeria that even a non-oil state would temptingly agitate for similar federal oil-related compensations to oil-producing states, for instance, to cater for environmental oil spillages, or at least would create spurious excuses to partake of similar federal largesse. Geo-political zones that are unable to benefit from certain largesse may agitate to discourage its allocation to the needy zones.

It is also not unnatural that people play the unfair *politics of domination* in their authoritative determination of who gets what, when and how. Put differently, the *politics of allocation* may also transform into *politics of deprivation*, or at terrible times the *politics of marginalization*. Occasionally at moments, with reckless abandon, it could transform into *politics of (organised) oppression or extermination*. All of these dimensions of politics, for instance, were remarkably and progressively the experience of Jews, regrettably at the hands of the Nazis. The Tutsis of Rwanda similarly and recently shared these political experiences. In Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s, the actual and the perceived desire to dominate or resist domination led the three major ethnic groups - the Serbs, the Bosniaks (Muslims Slavs) and the Croats, to fight a vicious war that resulted in one of Europe's worst post-Cold War humanitarian tragedies, during which thousands got hoarded into concentration camps, displaced, tortured, raped or utterly massacred. It is thus not far-fetched why ethnic groupings and group politics are fundamental and diehard in many states, particularly in multi-ethnic and post-colonial situations. The stakes of politics are better obtained by belonging to an ethnic group than as an individual or as a member of some other ethnic group. By

essence thus, ethnic relations cannot but be innately adversarial in group contentions for scarce resources, and even for crucial subsistence.

Quite remarkably, there is the scholastic consensus that ethnicity and ethnic nationalism is critical to state-making as both generate solidarity and garner popular participation of people in politics, yet, ethnicity, by its adversarial nature, is contraindicated to the concept of nation-building. The aim of this paper again is not to get involved in the debate on the theories and conceptualizations of nation-building as it is also a normative issue. Rather and as earlier posited, this work would adopt preferably the idea that nation-building refers to the efforts of post-colonial states towards nurturing the former colonial territories into viable and coherent modern national entities. Essentially thus, nation-building critically aims at the forging or framing of a national identity and the unification of peoples within the state in order to attain significant forms of stability and endurance, which will in turn ensure its prosperous viability.

Nation-building, includes the deliberate creation of national paraphernalia and symbols of unity such as national flag, national anthem, national day and national investments/holdings, etc. At a deeper level, national identity needed to be deliberately constructed by molding different groups into a nation, especially since colonialism had used divide and rule tactics to maintain its domination (Wikipedia, 2013). Nation-building involves the intricate inclusion of all groups, towards fostering social cohesion and harmony as against the exclusivity and rancorous nature of ethnicity. The opening phrase of the first Nigerian national anthem, *'Nigeria, we hail thee, our own dear native land, though tribes and tongues may differ, in brotherhood we stand'*, is a pointer to this. The initial effort at nation-building in Nigeria thus aimed at forging a brotherhood, vis-à-vis, a nationhood of the diverse ethnies, organised in unity for a common purpose within the state. In

other words, social harmony is a critical ingredient of nation-building. However, the attainment of social harmony may of essence be antithetical to the adversarial nature of inter-ethnic politics in post-colonial states where every ethnic group is most tendentially hostile to nonmembers. The pertinent question is how do multi-ethnic states achieve social harmony in the very face of ethnic politics, rivalries and adversities involved in the competition for scarce resources and the high stakes of politics? Undoubtedly, nation-building is an uphill struggle in multiethnic states, and it is only within these contexts that the political history and the crises of ethnicity in Nigeria can be understood and dissected. It is equally significant to understanding the political situation and future of the Nigerian state.

Ethnic Politics and its Implication on the Nigeria's Development

Politics of ethnicity has made it difficult for Nigeria to have the right leaders in its political sojourn over fifty four years of independence, except for a very few of her leaders who have demonstrated total commitment to the nation's development. Ethnic politics has been a clog in the wheel of political advancement of the nation such that, there has never been a leader with national outlook that has emerged in Nigeria. The election of candidates so far, has been based on 'where the candidates came from rather than on the right candidates for the election' (Umezina, 2012).

The consequence of which 'political dealers' instead 'leaders' have been emerging in the nation's political activities. These so called leaders are without the interest of the nation at heart. They emerge to political limelight through ethnic sentiments, but end up in disappointing their so call ethnic group; this is evident in almost all parts of the nation where none of the ethnic nation is developed. One would have expected that owing to the way many of these politicians came to power via ethnic sympathy, they would satisfy the ethnic group that supported them to power, but as soon as they emerge, they neglect their people. Many of them who are at Abuja the Federal Capital Territory refused to go back to see their people at home again.

The issue of the federal character is another political arrangement that is troubling the political advancement of the nation. Although the motive behind the enshrinement of the principle is to enhance equality and fairness among the component ethnic groups in Nigeria, with a view to bringing sense of belonging into different citizens of Nigeria as well as to prevent or resist fears of domination of one region or ethnic group over the others. The plausibility of the principle notwithstanding, it brings about the reigning of mediocrity into the governmental activities in the name of equity and fairness among the component states. Given the fact that merit has been overruled as a criterion for serving the nation, it is not surprising that all manners of people have been appointed to hold public offices in which they neither had the training nor the experience. Thus, in a situation like this, there is no way any progress could be achieved in the nation building and advancement (Umezinwa, 2012). Umezinwa further states that ethnic politics and rivalry also leads to the emergence of incompetent president. For instance, Nigeria adopted the rotational presidency among the six geopolitical zones order to defuse ethnic tension, the consequent of which the president is not elected based on merit but rather on the basis of where the aspirant comes from.

Similarly, ethnic politics has also created an avenue whereby corrupt leaders are being supported by their ethnic groups. Instead of the citizens to vehemently reject corrupt leaders and condemn their activities, they do support them due to ethnicity and ethnic politics, thereby, make these leaders continue in the corruptive manner with impunity. Corruption without mincing words has been undermining Nigeria's political development. It has permeated all levels of government in Nigeria while ethnic group of the corrupt politician are always defending them.

The consequence of corruption on Nigerians is devastating. For instance, despite the enormous oil and gas deposit in Nigeria, the nation remains poor with over 90 million Nigerians living in abject poverty. Since the discovery of oil in large quantity in Nigeria, the nation has earned over \$300 Billion from oil exports (Ribadu, 2004, cited in Arowosaiye and Kulliyah, 2009) but there was nothing considerably to show for it. Corruption has cost Nigerians her whooping sum of £ 20 Billion Pounds (about \$500 Billion) which has been stolen since independence to date by past leaders of the country. The money stolen could have made Nigeria six times better than Western Europe where many Nigerians are now running to (Ribadu 2006 cited in Arowosaiye and Kulliyah, 2009).

Ethnic politics no doubt has had a lot of negative consequences for the nation's movement towards democratic advancement. The resultant effect of ethnic politics as pointed out by Babangida (2002) cited in Salawu and Hassan (2011), 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. Ethnic nationalism is equally responsible for upspring of ethnic militias across the country; the Oodua Peoples Congress of the southwest, Arewa Peoples Congress in the north and Egbesu in the east among others (Babangida, 2002 cited in Salawu and Hassan, 2011:32)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The fundamental argument underlying this explication is the fact that disagreement is inevitable in every healthy human society, although it depends on the nature, intensity, dimension and goals involved. We may therefore explore some

theoretical bases on which scholars have focused their discourse while explicating conflict in the society. There are various approaches to the theoretical explanation in the society. We may be considering only a few of them in order to lay a good foundation for our discourse.

Scholars of structural functionalist looked at conflict as a function of the structural constituents of the society. Thus, poverty, unemployment, crime, social inequality, marginalization, relative deprivation, corruption, injustice, oppression and exploitation are regarded as sources of conflict. The general thought therefore, is that conflict exists in the society as a result of struggle for scarce resources (Ake, 1981, Nnoli, 1978, Chinwizu, 1975; Lenin, 1972; Engels, 1970; Marx, 1948).

The psycho-cultural conflict approach is premised on the fact that conflict emerged from socio-culturally provoked stereotype that are innate in people's perception of each other. Thus, identity based conflicts, such as ethnic or religious conflicts are psycho-cultural in nature and dimension which explains why conflicts are difficult sometimes to manage. The fear of extinction or dominion of one group over another is a great problem in managing conflict in societies especially in Nigeria. This identity issue also forms the basis for ethnicity which has heightened Nigeria's struggle for nationhood.

The concern of system theorists is that a change in people's social structure will result to conflict in the society. As a result, environmental pollution, scarcity of resources, uncontrolled population growth, breakdown of family institution and traditional values will greatly influence the nature of social structure thereby leading to conflict in the society. Thus, according to Ademola (2006:53), "sources of conflict are found in every aspect of life and affect large numbers of people even though their influence on the emergence and intensity of conflict are not always so visible to people". The experiences of Nigeria in the Niger Delta and the struggle

of the Ogoni and Ijaw people over environmental pollution and the destruction of their water resources and land degradation by multinational corporations in the zone is a source of constant conflict in that zone.

Research Methodology

The paper adopts the documentary analysis of current literature which enhances critical and contextual analysis of issues. Generally, the historical-descriptive method of inquiry was adopted in the study. In this regard, we made reference to foreign and local (Nigerian) sources. At the same time, we paid critical attention to the diverse views provided by the broad spectrum of the Nigerian society.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Every person living on earth obviously belongs to a tribe and he or she became a family of that tribe by birth or association. The tribal affiliation is important because it has serious impact on societal development.

The paper further concludes that with the upsurge of ethnic sentiment as the most significant factor impeding constitutional democracy not only in Nigeria but in Africa generally is a source of serious concern. And if the consequence of ethnicity is not effectively utilized the outcome is negative and disastrous.

The paper thus recommend without any iota of bias a sincere form of Good governance is therefore recommended as a means to an end. There is need for democratic governance to strive with underlying emphases in the activation of the citizenry to realize the common good to be taken root in the popular consciousness of Nigerians. It is beyond doubt that democracy and good governance is the desire of any country that cherishes fundamental values that deal with freedom, happiness, peace and order in the society. Therefore, there is need for good governance to assure the possibility of good planning both at private and public levels.

References

Ake, C. (1981). *A political economy of Africa*. London: Longman.

Aluko, J.O., 2011. Local Government Elections and the Challenges of Democratic Governance in Nigeria. In: Akanji, T.A., N.L. Danjibo, W.A. Eselebor, (Eds.), *Challenges of Democratic Governance in Nigeria*. John Archers (Publishers) Limited, Ibadan.

Anugwom, E. (2000). Ethnic conflict and democracy in Nigeria: The marginalisation question. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 15(1), 61-78.

Arowosaiye, Y. I., & Kulliyah, A. I. (2009). The devastating impact of money laundering and other economic and financial crimes on the economy of developing countries: Nigeria as a case study. *A publication of the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria*. Retrieved from <http://www.uniilorin.edu.ng/publications>

Azeez, A. (2004). The dynamics of ethnic politics and democratic consolidation in Nigeria: A prognosis. In D. Oni, S. Gupta, T. Omoniyi, E. Adegbija, & S. Awonusi (Eds.), *Nigeria and globalization: discourses on identity politics and social conflict* (pp. 327-342). CBAAC: Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig.) Ltd.

Babangida, I.B. (2002) "Ethnic Nationalities and the Nigerian state: The dynamics and challenges of governance in a plural Nigeria". Distinguished Annual Lecture, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Nigeria.

Babawale, T. (2007). *Nigeria in the Crises of Governance and Development*. Lagos: Concept Publication.

Brubaker, R., Loveman, M., & Stamatov, P. (2004). Ethnicity as cognition. *Theory and Society*, 33, 31-64.

Cohen, A. (1974). The lesson of ethnicity. In A. Mayor (Ed.), *Urban ethnicity, ASA Monographs 12*. London: Tavistock Publication.

Fayeye, J.O., 2011. The Role of the Security Sector in Promoting Democratic Governance in Nigeria. In: Akanji, T.A., N.L. Danjibo and W.A. Eselebor, (Eds.), *Challenges of Democratic Governance in Nigeria*. John Archers (Publishers) Limited, Ibadan.

Fumagalli M. (2007). Ethnicity, state formation and foreign policy: Uzbekistan and 'Uzbeks abroad. *Central Asian Survey* 26(1), 105–122.

Mclean, B. (1991). Multicultural studies. In C. Marsh (Eds.), *Teaching of Social Studies and Environment*. Sydney: Prentice Hall.

Mustapha, A. R. (2007). *Institutionalising ethnic representation: How effective is the Federal Character Commission in Nigeria?* CRISE Working Paper No. 43, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), University of Oxford, U.K.

Nnoli, Okwudiba (1978) *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.

Okotoni, O. (2006). Governance, taxation and fiscal policy in Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 80-94.

Owete, F. (2014). *Northern minorities protest 'marginalization' by Hausa-Fulani*. Retrieved October 23, 2014.

Osaghae, E.E. (1995). Ethnicity in Africa or African Ethnicity: The Search for a Contextual Understanding. Himmelstrand, et al (eds). *African Perspectives in Development, Controversies, Dilemmas and Openings*. London: James Currey Ltd.

Ribadu, N. (2004). *The Role of EFCC in sanitising the Nigerian economic environment in a democratic setting*. Being a paper presented at the Adamawa Economic Conference and Financial Exhibition, between 9th-10th December, 2004.

Rose, P. (1965). *They and we*. New York: Random House.

Salami, Y. K. (2004). Ethnic pluralism and national identity in Nigeria. In R. D. Coates (Ed.), *Race and ethnicity across time, space, and discipline* (pp. 397-405). Boston: Brill Leiden.

Salawu, B., & Hassan, A. O. (2011). Ethnic politics and its implications for the survival of democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, 3(2), 28-33.

Sklar, R. (1967). Political science and political integration. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, V(1), 6-7. Trading Economics. (2014). *Nigeria population 1960-2014*. Retrieved December 4, 2014.

Suberu, R. (2008), *The Supreme Court and Federalism in Nigeria*, *Journal of African Studies*, 46, 3: 451-485.

Suberu, R. (2006), *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict: The Nigerian Experience*, in D. Turton (ed.) *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: James Currey.

Turner, T. (1980) Nigeria imperialism, oil technology and the comprador state, in Petter Nore and Terisa Turner (eds.) *Oil and Class Struggle* (London, Zed Press).

Umezina, C. (2012). Ethnicity and Nigeria's underdevelopment. *A New Journal of African Studies*, 9, 215-229.

UNDP, 2009. Human Development Report. Oxford University Press, New York.

