Ethnicity and Development Issues in Nigeria

Mathias Oghenetejiri Obire & Stephen Chukwunonso Chiemeke
Department of Sociology
Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba
Delta State, Nigeria
Corresponding author: mathias.obire@dou.edu.ng

Abstract

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation-state with socio-cultural differences among its component ethnic groups all of which have resulted into cultural dissimilarities. These cultural dissimilarities have been established by the variances in culture which include language, dress, diet and types of social system. 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 politico-economic development of the country. Although every nation has its own peculiar ethnic issues, the difference is the mechanism by which the challenges are managed or ameliorated. The ethnic conundrum remains a major obstacle to Nigeria's existence as nation state. Consequences of ethnicity include communal conflict, political violence, nepotism/discrimination, underdevelopment, waste of manpower, political instability, disunity and disloyalty to the nation. Primordial and instrumental theories were used to give a vivid insight of ethnicity in this paper. It asserts that the concept of ethnicity and tribe never appeared in the political dictionary of most developed countries and this helped to build a virile national economy for these states. Their systems of government worked since they enjoyed the full loyalty of their people at the center unlike Nigeria where allegiance is more to the component units. A re-engineering of the country is needed to make it workable. Devolution of power to the regions is necessary.

Keywords: Nigeria, Ethnicity, Development, Underdevelopment, Governance

Introduction

Nigeria is a culturally diverse nation-state, and there are cultural variances among all its constituent ethnic communities as a result of their various sociocultural disparities. These cultural disparities are exhibited by different cultural elements such as language, food, clothes, and social structure. One of the main causes of social instability and political discord in Nigeria is the ethnic virus, which has generally been seen as an important impediment to the nation's politico-economic advancement (Achi 2021). The forces of national integration and cohesion in ethnically divided states, particularly Nigeria, continue to be negatively impacted by the inability of every ethnic group to access sociopolitical goods. However, the reason why ethnicity is easily mobilized and controlled in multi-ethnic political systems still needs to be addressed. Why has political leadership used ethnic manipulation effectively? Does ethnicity create a strong and stable political system? Does strong ethnic identification serve as a barrier to nationality? Can this explain why states without ethnic nationalism were created? To comprehend these problems,

it is crucial to examine the academic definitions of ethnicity as well as the two schools of ethnicity (primordial and instrumentalist).

Nigeria has not yet become a country. To identify those who reside within Nigeria's borders from those who do not, the word "Nigeria" merely serves as a distinctive designation. Before the various ethnicities were combined, they lived side by side in peace, and there was a strong socioeconomic web among the populace. However, amalgamation combined nationalities that were racially, religiously, culturally, and idiosyncratically dissimilar, and when combined with the fact that the newly formed country had an uneven size and population, it produced antagonistic centrifugal forces to the detriment of people. Persons, who have always had a propensity to devour Nigerians and their collective goals for development–reflected in the shape of ethnicity and prebendal politics–were announced and cemented by hostile centrifugal forces.

However, it is important to consider why multiculturalism and racial diversity have never been obstacles to nation-building in other nations in Europe, Asia, Canada, the United States, Brazil, and South Africa. Although these nations are as diverse as Nigeria, they have a leadership that are not preoccupied with such differences. What prevented later generations of Nigerians from creating a strong nation-state with which everyone could proudly identify, regardless of ethnicity, as opposed to the dysfunctional pariah state that we currently have? A study of ethnicity in Nigeria can be viewed from a variety of angles. One viewpoint that is predominant in the literature claims that the state and influential elites are key players in ethnic mobilization. On the other hand, numerous Nigerian academics have paid more attention to interethnic conflicts, as well as ethnic accommodation and cooperation. However, a regular indulgence of horizontal inequalities–that is, inequalities that arise from the different access members of different ethnic groups have to lucrative partisan, social, and economic resources–will provide greater insights into the often-neglected popular basis of the ethnic crisis in Nigeria. According to Okpan and Otega (2019), less than 0.001% of Nigerians own or have access to more than 90% of the nation's wealth, with most ownership and access acquired through corrupt means. The only commonality is that the villains that gather the country's wealth come from all ethnic groups, just as poverty in the country can be found in every extended family, village, town, and city and in all states of the country and in Abuja.

There is a consensus that every nation has its own unique ethnic issues. The difference lies in the mechanism by which the challenges are managed or amended. Ethnic problems remain a major obstacle to Nigeria's existence as a nation state. The consequence is socioeconomic underdevelopment of the country. There is nothing wrong in being patriotic and embracing one's ethnicity, but not to the extent that Nigerians are deprived of meritocracy, excellence, and unity and continually contend over the scourges of nepotism, favoritism, federal character, the quota system, and catchment area ideas, all of which severely hinder socioeconomic advancement within the nation. Therefore, this study's emphasis is on examining how ethnicity and challenges to development in Nigeria interact with demeaning and abusing one's countrymen and women. This study examined the belief that a country's declining employment options foster ethnically fissiparous tendencies. Who are Nigerians, and how can we create a nation that we can call home? Karl Marx was correct when he argued that the foundation of every relationship is economic. When you can support your family, you are a decent father. When a country supports you and future generations, this is worth something. We want to live and support our families in

a nation with a bright future. In the absence of this feature, we search for alternatives. The lack of opportunities and the level of poverty in the land drive us to the edge of the precipice (Osuntokun, 2017).

The national question has been caused by the unequal resource distribution among the parts of the federal government, particularly the total disregard for minority groups nationwide. Some political analysts believe that for Nigeria to continue to exist peacefully as a country, the state's inadequate handling of the ties between various nationalities who reside under the same political structure in Nigeria must be reconsidered, leading to a bright future as a nation-state (Okpan & Otega, 2019). Such a question would also help resolve the hostility arising between competing states over the allocation of scarce resources, and ensure the stability of the country as a whole. This would be made possible by ascertaining the loyalty of the individual citizen to the country without sharing it with the regions, since the center would guarantee justice, equality, and fair play to all, irrespective of the tribe or ethnic background.

It must be noted that it is not just the merger of different national communities with a political system that constitutes the problems but also the ordering of the relationship between these component units (Onyeakazi & Okoroafor 2018). Other countries with similar background histories include the United States of America (USA), as reported by Baldeh (2021) and Great Britain (Garvin, 1998). In all of these countries, the concepts of ethnicity and tribe never appeared in their political dictionaries, and this has helped build a virile national economy for these states. Ethnicity is one of the most popular subjects of study for social scientists. The discussion of ethnicity appears to have been fueled by the prominence of mobilized and political ethnic groups in the majority of multi-ethnic African and Asian nations with diverse cultures. Its popularity has made it an "unwieldy concept" hence (Sun, C., & Liang, Y. (2015). for the several connotations given to the subject, making it one of the most researched phenomena by scholars in political science, sociology, and anthropology. Ethnicity is a social construct. Smith, A. (2008). Coakley, J. (2018) stated that ethnic groups are formed, and once formed, they tend to endure strongly. Therefore, the question of whether ethnicity is a social construct or a natural order of things arises. There is a vast body of literature on the topic as a result of analysts dividing their arguments into two opposing positions, primordialism and instrumentalism, which will be examined.

It is difficult to conceptualize ethnicity. Consider the idea of an ethnic group to comprehend this idea completely. (Rahim and Adetiba, 2012) argued that an ethnic group is an unofficial interest group whose members are distinct from those of other ethnic groups within a greater society, because they share ties with the king, beliefs, and culture. On the other hand, Yinger defined an ethnic group as a subset of a larger society whose members are thought to have a common origin, share significant elements of a common origin, and have a common culture (cited in Lee et al. 2002). They also participate in shared activities, in which a common origin and culture are important components.

In addition, it has been described as a social construct of ethnicity. This means that ethnicity is seen as a byproduct of unequal access to socioeconomic resources orchestrated by the restructuring of the previously autonomous pre-colonial societies into an artificial state structure, thus the explanation of ethnicity in relation to "external stimuli" (Smith 2008). This has led to a

recent uptick in political unrest in post-colonial Nigeria. This instability is possible because of changes in ethnic composition following independence. In essence, ethnic groups that had previously maintained friendly ties with one another developed a new identity in which ethnicity was paramount and national interests came second. To understand this concept fully, we considered the concept of ethnic groups. Rahim and Adetiba (2012) claimed that because of their links to the king, shared ideals, and shared culture, the ethnic group is an unofficial interest group whose members stand out from other ethnic groups within the larger community. According to Yinger (quoted in Lee et al. 2002), an ethnic group is a subset of a broader society, whose members are believed to have a common origin, substantial components of a common origin, and a common culture. Additionally, they participate in collective events where their shared ancestry and culture play a significant role.

Development of the Nation and Ethnicity

The ethnicity and national development of the participants barely coincided. This is due to the fact that nationality is related to constitutional politics, whereas ethnicity falls under the umbrella of multiculturalism (McCronne, 2002). Consequently, the fundamental question of whether nationality and ethnicity are identical arises: It is a group of people who share the same national identity, which is typically connected through links to ethnicity and culture. The pragmatic and situational features of large communities are instrumentalist approaches to building nations. Consequently, this approach approaches a country's political knowledge. Nationality is related to a person's or a group's state of origin or connection to that state. It is a component of identity stemming from a person's national affiliation. Sociopolitical ideology asserts the collective and solidarity goals of political communities. According to Adetiba and Rahim (2012), humanity is naturally organized into ethnic and national groups, each of which may be identified by specific sociopolitical characteristics. A national self-government system is the only acceptable and authentic form of governance (Calhoun 1993). It is best to briefly examine the concept of nation to understand the concept of nationality. A nation is a cultural group that identifies itself and believes that it is inherently distinct from other nations (Encyclopedia, 2008). A nation's citizens believe that they are connected to one another and a specific location through a shared pasture (Gutiérrez, 2017). According to primordialists, the ethnic group that brings people together through a common heritage and destiny is the nation. Although the group's objective foundation has been established, this sense of mutual dedication seems natural.

However, it should be highlighted that there is no single attribute that a group must possess to be considered a nation; rather, language, history, and ethnicity are the three fundamental components of national identity.

Despite being distinct, nationality and ethnicity are often confusing. Explaining nationality as a continuation of ethnicity or manifestation of a shared history, all ethnic nations typically benefit from greater integration at the national level. The three main facets of national identity—language, history, and ethnicity—should be emphasized, since no one characteristic defines a group as a nation. Language, history, and ethnicity are the three main facets of national identity. Culture and language are equally complex. Nationality should not be considered as a continuation of ethnicity. Because of modernization's sociocultural transformations, particularly nation-building and the integration of various ethnic groups, nationality and ethnicity have

become very important. Diffuse ethnicity creates space for universal national citizenship in the nation state. However, this does not change the reality that a nation has a foundational moment that can be discovered in the prehistoric era, explaining why ethnic nationalities take pride in their identity. As a result, ethnicity can be seen as the foundation of nationality; it is a shared representation of fundamental distinctions between ethnic groups, and these differences influence how they politically interact with one another (Harris, 2016). What are the differences between different nationalities and ethnicities? Are they similar?

A pluralistic society has also been linked to ethnicity. Multi-ethnic states and populations with a range of cultural traditions are typically referred to as plural societies. Examples include the multiple societies in South Africa, India, Ghana, Nigeria, and other countries. Although they are required to participate in a common political system, the groups that make up a plural society are distinct in other ways and often express their ethnic differences through group rivalry. As a result, nationality was included, whereas ethnicity was excluded. It is important to note that nationality may be exclusive to this situation. For instance, when it comes to sharing a political office, a member of ethnic group X may be favored over a member of ethnic group Y. However, what differs here is not the degree of inclusiveness or exclusiveness but the bases of inclusion and exclusion (Zenker, 2011). By contrast, ethnicity was negatively exclusive. For example, a member of the XY ethnic group residing in the AB ethnic group may not be allowed to participate in political processes in the person's host ethnic group, or vice versa. That is, the in-group, on one hand, and the out-group, on the other.

As previously mentioned, nationality should not be considered as an extension of ethnicity; rather, the two should be distinguished as unique. Thus, their complete cultural identity can be expressed as ethnic idiom. If sufficiently powerful, ethnicity can provide people with the majority of their status. Specifically, it is a nationality-inspired patriotism. However, ethnicity gives rise to the idea of ethnicism that political elites support in acquiring political power. Individuals of many ethnic groups have the same nationality. Modern states define nationality; as a result, pre-existing ethnic relations are modified to promote national cohesiveness based on sociopolitical power dynamics rather than ethnic allegiances.

Nationality places requirements on the existence of relative internal homogeneity as opposed to the persistence of ethnic diversity. Therefore, it should be viewed as a victory against ethnicity and connect each person directly to the center. Nationality seeks to stifle the controversial aspects of ethnicity, whereas ethnicity maintains an ethnic identity that is produced and sustained in a social process with varied objectives. The distinction between nationality and ethnicity, as described here for scholarly convenience, can thus be drawn from their relationships with the state.

Ethnicity and its Implication on Political Development

A basic type of social organization called "ethnicity" is based on membership that is characterized by a feeling of shared historical roots. They have identical religious practices and beliefs, as well as shared cultures. The Greek word "ethnos"—which means "a people or nation"—is where the word "ethnicity." The definition of ethnicity in Weber's book Economy and Society (1968) is significant. He defined ethnic groupings as "human groups (other than

kinship groups) that cherish a belief in their common origins of such kind that it provides the basis for the creation of a community. This demonstrates that members of the same ethnic group insidiously value their kinship and work to preserve the philosophies that form the symbolic essence of their survival.

Folarin et al. (2016)) stated that the relationship between the social structures of new and old nations is always changing and ethnicity is a precious resource. According to him, ethnic groups are categories of people whose members are anchored in a specific region of the new state's territory and are distinguished by the cultural criteria of symbols, such as language, value systems, and normative conduct. Even though ethnic members are restricted to a region with boundaries, they frequently migrate in the quest for better opportunities, especially educated youth who make up the working class or traders.

On the contrary, politics involves the manipulation of resources connected to positions because of access to power. On the other hand, politics is defined as "who gets what, when, and how" by (Kalu, P. (2016). People from certain ethnic groups who are fortunate enough to obtain positions use the power connected to such positions to their advantage. It gives individuals connected to a powerful man more confidence to be his relatives. This boosts confidence in using the system to obtain resources and gain the greatest benefit. Members of certain ethnic groups congregate to exploit and share positions, resources, and other benefits at their disposal, turning ethnicity into pews.

Significant signs of underdevelopment in Nigeria's public higher education systems are the main cause of the obvious signs of underdevelopment in Nigeria's higher education institutions, which are the institution's intrinsic ethnic politics. Therefore, the three identified factors, ethnicity, politics, and development, interact. Each of these elements establishes a preliminary foundation that signals other criteria. Politics are influenced by ethnicity, which then determines who receives what and when, which has implications for development. For instance, choosing who fills key strategic roles, identified as major posts, promotes ethnic consciousness.

Members of same origin gather together and harmonize into a single whole to favourably galvanize other factors in order to secure their members' strategic position. On the other hand, Kalu (2016), defined politics as "who gets what, when, and how". People from specific ethnic groups who are opportune to secure positions manipulate the power associated with that position(s) in favor of their ethnic group. Being related to a man who is in power reinforces confidence in those related to him. This boosts confidence in accessing resources and benefits from the system. Ethnicity becomes a pew where members of a particular ethnic group are accommodated.

Historical and Practical Views on Ethnicity

Primordialism

The essentialist view that ethnicity is a given in social life is interpreted in this way is viewed as immediate proximity and kin relationships as well as being born into a certain community, culture, language, and having the same social behaviors (Adetiba. & Rahim 2012). This may be

the case because (Fearon & Laitin 2015) see ethnic identification from the perspective of extraction, rules of group membership typified by cultural features, and widespread historical mythology. This group is thought to consist of people who are brought together by fate or a shared lineage.

According to Munasingh (2018), primordialism views ethnicity as a principle of social structuring, one of the most potent and constant aspects of the human condition that reveals implications beyond the immediate social environment. In essence, it is possible to see an ethnic group's conduct as a means to achieve a goal, the outcome of an earlier affective arousal or emotional need. Primordialism uses emotional and instinctual limitations as the last and most compelling justification for group mobilization. The classification of ethnicity as a component of socio-political and economic action results from the argument that ethnic groups are rational interest groups lacking primordial significance, and that they assert and maintain their identity for socio-political and economic reasons rather than psychological primordial attachment. People who view ethnicity as a crucial tool for achieving their sociopolitical objectives might mobilize ethnic groups for political action. Therefore, according to Munasinghe (2018), ethnic groups are "purposeful groups; their common purpose is that they are arbitrarily created and sustained for pragmatic utility."

One concern that naturally arises in this context is why people continue to follow ethnic leaders whose agendas appear to favor the elites above the general populace. Freeman (2020) asserts that racial and ethnic groups can be considered superfamilies. The core of ethnicity is its advocacy of solidarity and unity, which undeniably triumph over the original community. Because of their cohesion and togetherness, the populace has come to support its leaders (Ganiyu, 2023).

However, primordial views cannot be ruled out in a country's governmental progress. For example, primordial attachment was found to be one of the preferred bases for the disintegration of previously self-sufficient political units in Nigeria when they were restructured into their present political units. This conveys to our notification that primordial attachment plays a substantial role in the socio-political and economic development of ethnically divided states by virtue of some incomprehensible outright consequences endorsed to aboriginal bonds. In other words, people have the capacity to create and review the social political and economic realities around them; hence, the well-being and sense of belonging that stems from ethnic group distinctiveness.

Conversely, primordialism has been criticized on the basis that primordialists "have forsaken people's ingenious capabilities or energies for the instituting of a enhanced world" (Munasinghe 2018). This has made primordialism important only in times of struggle, and not so substantial at other times. Primordialism can be valuable in clarifying the impassive basis of ethnicity and the doggedness of ethnic solidarity and how ethnic relationships can influence individual group identity.

Primitivism is criticized heavily for impeding ethnic groups' and individuals' ability to respond proactively to internal and external sociopolitical difficulties by making them emotionally imprisoned and submissive to primal impulses. As the only plausible explanation for national mobilization, primordialists point to emotional and instinctual restraints (Smith, 2017). This

explains why people and groups blindly adhere to their ethnic leaders, even when their acts and inactions serve to advance their own sociopolitical standing at the expense of the sociopolitical and economic advancement of their groups, Munasinghe et al. (2018). asserts that a significant portion of ethnic disputes are not caused by differences in culture but rather by differences in political and economic power, as well as access to financial resources.

Instrumentalism

In contrast to primordialism, instrumentalism views ethnicity as a predictable variable that may be strategically manipulated to achieve more secular goals (Smith, 2017). It depends on an individual's affiliation with the community that benefits them both politically and economically. In other words, their foundation is not in proximity, as in the case of primordialism, but rather in the necessity of socio-political and economic security or shared interests. According to (Gul & Zhang 2016), the instrumentalist viewpoint viewed ethnicity as a means of achieving socio-political and economic competitiveness, making it contingent, situational, and circumstantial in terms of politics. As stated by Keyes in (Gul & Zhang 2016). According to the instrumentalist perspective, ethnicity is constructed in a society by circumstances. If this is true, ethnicity can be easily manipulated, or it would be more accurate to view it as a social construct meant to inspire mobilization.

According to (Fessha 2017), specific groups of individuals who are motivated by competition for sociopolitical and economic goals create ethnicity. Essentially, it is a socio-political and economic superstructure designed to cater to particular interests. Munasinghe (2018) describes it as a more "convenient basis for mobilization" and a flexible political instrument to fulfill a specific goal. One may argue that the instrumentalist approach is a reasonable response to the circumstances at hand, as well as to social pressure from other communities or from inside the community itself (Kemper, 2005). Ethnicity exists only in society. Hence, ethnicity is subject to change, which helps to explain why ethnic communities might not remain constant. Ethnic groups are described as a specific community's strategic tool for enforcing its objectives and interests since they are dynamic and are defined and constructed to serve their socio-political and economic interests (Gutiérrez 2017).

The instrumentalist believes that ethnicity is constructed with social, political, and economic goals in mind. As stated by Smith (2017). Radical instrumentalists hold that there is no objective reality that the country can be compared to. They observe stark contrasts between political leaders and their followers, the latter of whom are more susceptible to manipulation by the former. They are viewed as aspirational social engineers who manipulate public sentiment in an effort to seize political power within the state. In his contribution, Hale (2004) argues that instrumentalists explain the political phenomenon as manipulation by the elite in the absence of an underlying psychological explanation. This raises the question of why this kind of manipulation is effective. Essentially, people's psychological comprehension is a major factor in ethnicity. Put another way, this indicates that people's psychological comprehension is a factor in ethnic manipulation. This shows that among those groups who stand to gain the most from it, the instrumentalists identified the "manufacturers" (Smith, 2017) of nations.

Explaining instrumentalism from the perspective of modernization theory, the instrumentalists think that ethnicity may eventually disappear as long as people interact because of modernization. Maybe this provides the information (Adeniji & Ofiwe 2015). to consider the ethnic group a form of social structure. Ethnic politics are a result of the political elites' manipulation of ethnicity through the modernizing process. Horowitz (1985) supports this by stating that ethnicity is multifaceted and thus malleable. Thus, rivalry for political and economic resources gives rise to ethnicity. This shows that states with a diverse population may have socio-political and economic divisions, which may be the source of ethnicity's influence on political growth. If an instrumentalist sees a community as a means of achieving individual or group socio-political goals, then the state is an artificial, contemporary institution without ties to blood relations. Additionally, the state is vulnerable to manipulation because it depends on its constituents for support.

Moreover, the instrumentalist has been criticism for failing to acknowledge the conflicts people have with what Munasinghe (2018) refers to as their "ideal interest." Individuals struggle to protect their cultures and identities in spite of socio-political and economic injustices. Besides their financial interests, this is also the case. ethnic expressions that are mostly cultural and occasionally religious. For instance, the recognition of their socio-cultural status has been at the heart of the war between the Zulus and the Ndebele in South Africa and among ethnic groups in Bangladesh. Therefore, the psychological and emotional significance of ethnic ties is seen to have been underestimated by the explanation of ethnicity that focused on politics and the economy.

It is important to note that the instrumentalist theory is unable to account for the fact that ethnicity is now the most important factor in mobilization than any other aspect. Maybe it stems from the dynamic nature of ethnicity, where individuals within each ethnic group can be viewed as social actors who possess a variety of social identities, such as social standing and religion. This can align with every group's needs without any contradiction, which has increased the theory's significance for explaining sociopolitical conflicts between ethnic groups. A fundamental and noteworthy distinction between instrumentalism and primordialism is in the foundation of a person's or a group's devotion to their society. The instrumentalist bases their argument on what, how, and when their ties to their community or ethnic group benefit them or provide them with real benefits, which could be social, political, or economic.

In summary, people see their ties to their community or ethnic group as a tool for accomplishing their objectives. The primordialist, on one hand, believes that despite potential gains or losses in their relationship to their society, they are inherently psychologically and emotionally connected to it. The political class may continue to prosper economically and politically, as previously stated. Primitivists maintain a strong belief in their sociobiological affinity to their tribe. Thus, it may be said that both the primal and instrumental perspectives represent an unwarranted polarization of parts of human life that are fundamentally complementary (Gutiérrez 2017).

Nigeria's Ethnic Identity and National Development

Okpan & Otega (2019) steadfastly held that Nigeria is well-equipped to reach greater economic, social, and political heights due to her abundance of natural and human resources. Many

commentators have noted that Nigerians' weak sense of national identity and lack of social integration are what have hindered and continue to prevent this takeoff. Without a doubt, the politicization and mobilization of ethnic group identity leads to ethnicity (Kelechi 2021). According to Nnoli, referenced in (Kelechi 2021) there is no doubt that ethnicity is more noticeable in competitive settings when socio-political and economic resources are limited in comparison to the interests that surround them. It is the frustration that nothing is working and nobody is trying to find solutions to pressing problems that is making people to go back to their ethnic comfort zones.

The question of equity and inclusive development amongst the ethnic groups has remained unanswered; overtime Nigeria has grown powerful individual personalities who are stronger than state institutions that could have paved the way for inclusive national development. The result has been a continuous scramble for resources by these powerful elites; they elites fan the embers of ethnicity amongst the citizenry for their personal self-interest. Without taking into account the political and economic institutions that serve as the framework for the concept of inclusive development, growth cannot be accomplished on its own. Institutions are thought of as enduring frameworks of accepted social norms and practices that organize recurrent human interaction and enable a community (or state) to carry out specific tasks, whether they be social, political, or economic (Peters & Pierre, 2021).

Culturally and ethnically defined groups suffer from socio-political isolation, whereas inclusion fosters socio-political integration. Political resources that are productive can be accommodated by inclusive socio-political strategies. They facilitate the participation of all ethnic groups in government and are a step in the right direction toward the recognition of each ethnic group's sociopolitical rights. The result of all of this is stability and development. Therefore, participation from all ethnic groups is essential for the democratic system in Nigeria to be stable and sustainable. A sound political system and a healthy socio-political integration will result from each ethnic group receiving recognition via their contributions to the political system. Ethnicity may coexist peacefully and productively. Frequently, the secret to managing ethnicity is found in its overlooked aspect (Aluu, 2018). Here, it is of the utmost significance to emphasize how important it is that each ethnic group in Nigeria be given due recognition. This is due to the incomplete nature of information based on views of a single ethnic group; as a result, an inclusive system is the only and most effective approach to understand and recognize the views of others.

Conclusion

Political stability is a stimulant to the sustainability of other variables, taking into account the relationship between socio-political and economic development, which are reliable variables. Ethnic elites have historically utilized ethnic symbolism to gain and hold political power because ethnicity may be abused. Undoubtedly, given its detrimental impact on long-marginalized or excluded populations, ethnicity presents hitherto unheard-of issues. In an effort to guarantee that national cohesion takes precedence above ethnic affiliation, the developmental requirements of the individuals that make up each ethnic group must be taken into account. The solution appears to be the socio-political and economic inclusion of all groups in governance, which will ultimately result in the socio-political and economic development of each group.

Undoubtedly, ethnicity is a multifaceted socio-political phenomenon. As such, marginalization on both the political and economic fronts poses a threat to socio-political advancement while also being counterproductive from an economic standpoint. It denies individuals and organizations the chance to grow in ways that would advance society. Consequently, an integrative socio-political framework must be created that will explicitly acknowledge each ethnic group's participatory role in society, be inclusive of ideas of a non-ethnocentrarian and inclusive system, acknowledge differences in equity, and acknowledge the varying socio-political and economic power of each ethnic group. Since now is the moment for unanimity of purpose, socio-political inclusiveness must be viewed as essential to both political stability and socioeconomic viability.

Recommendation

Being patriotic and proud of one's ethnicity are perfectly acceptable as long as they are not used as an excuse to despise and disparage one's fellow citizens. This study examines the growing number of ethnic fissiparous tendencies in the country as a result of diminishing employment prospects. The devil looks for idle hands to work for. Who are Nigerians and how can we create a nation we can all call home? Karl Marx was correct when he argued that the foundation of all relationships is economic. Everybody wants to live and support their family in a nation where there is hope for the future. If this does not happen, we search for other options. We are approaching the brink of disaster due to the dearth of opportunities and the extreme poverty in the country (Ogbonna & Ihentuge 2022).

The destiny of minority groups and the helpless majority over their just share of the country's resources—that is, its political and economic resources—are, in essence, the central questions of the national question (Van de Walle 2010). This is the question, and the nation will benefit more if a response is found as soon as possible.

It should be highlighted that the issues lie not only in the combining of several national groups under one political system, but also in the structuring of the relationships among these constituent entities (Sun & Liang 2015). The United States of America (USA) is one of the other nations in the globe with a comparable historical background, according to Yakubu (2019).) and even Great Britain (Regan & Cronin 2000). In all of these countries, the perception of origin and tribe never appeared in their political dictionary and this has helped built a virile national economy for these states. They were able to operate whatever system of government since they enjoyed the full loyalty of their people to the center unlike Nigeria where allegiance is supplementary to the component units. What we need to do is re-engineering of the country to make it workable. We must devolve power to the regions whatever the number of them we collectively agree to have. We must free the resources of this country from over-administration and channel them to physical development and industrialization so as to create jobs for our people.

We must embrace the principle and practice of fiscal and cooperative federalism. If people have jobs and they can fully realize their potentialities, it will not matter of who is President, Governor Local Government Chairman etc. In any case, the arena of politics should be shifted to the regions while the center will simply manage affairs collectively assigned to it. We spend too

much time on politics and little time for development. It is not some developed countries like Japan, Germany and Canada etc.

References

Achi, V. E. (2021). Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Tips for Peace & Reconciliation

Adeniji, A. S., & Ofiwe, M. E. (2015). The Impact of Ethnicity on Nigeria's Political Development: An Assessment, 1999-2011. International Journal of research and Development Organization, 2(12).

Adetiba, T. C., & Rahim, A. (2012). Between ethnicity, nationality and development in Nigeria. International Journal of Development and Sustainability, 1(3), 656-674.

Adetiba, T. C., & Rahim, A. (2012). Between ethnicity, nationality and development in Nigeria. International Journal of Development and Sustainability, 1(3), 656-674.

Adetiba, T. C., & Rahim, A. (2012). Between ethnicity, nationality and development in Nigeria. International Journal of Development and Sustainability, 1(3), 656-674.

Agier, M. (2016). Epistemological decentering: At the root of a contemporary and situational anthropology. Anthropological Theory, 16(1), 22-47.

Akande, L. (2014). Public Opinion and Democratic Decision Making in Nigeria. Public Policy.

Almond, M. (2017). Social Statistics and Ethnic Diversity: Cross-national Perspectives in Classifications and Identity Politics. Canadian Studies in Population [ARCHIVES], 44(1-2), 114-115.

Aluu, V. (2018). True Federalism and Restructuring in Nigeria: Challenges and the Way Forward. Available at SSRN 3166191.

Baldeh, P. (2021). Ethno-Regionalism and Political Party Loyalty In The Gambia: A Fracture In The Newly-Found-Democracy. European Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 4(3), 32-51.

Bates, R. H. (2019). Modernization, ethnic competition, and the rationality of politics in contemporary Africa. In State versus ethnic claims: African policy dilemmas (pp. 152-171). Routledge.

Birnir, J. K., Wilkenfeld, J., Fearon, J. D., Laitin, D. D., Gurr, T. R., Brancati, D., & Hultquist, A. S. (2015). Socially relevant ethnic groups, ethnic structure, and AMAR. Journal of Peace Research, 52(1), 110-115.

Bulmer, M., & Solomon, J. (2013). Ethnic and racial studies today. Routledge.

Charles, J. O., Ikpi, N. E., & Charles, A. O. (2018). Ethnicity: A social pathology in Nigerian federalism and unity. International Journal of Social Sciences, 12(4).

Charles, J. O., Ikpi, N. E., & Charles, A. O. (2018). Ethnicity: A social pathology in Nigerian federalism and unity. International Journal of Social Sciences, 12(4).

Charles, J. O., Ikpi, N. E., & Charles, A. O. (2018). Ethnicity: A social pathology in Nigerian federalism and unity. International Journal of Social Sciences, 12(4).

Chime, I. N., & Ojiakor, N. (2021). The political class and the manipulation of ethnicity: Nigeria in perspective. International Journal of Management Studies and Social Science Research, 3(4), 175-188

Coakley, J. (2018). 'Primordialism 'in nationalism studies: theory or ideology?. Nations and Nationalism, 24(2), 327-347

Diaz-Andreu, M., & Champion, T. (2014). Nationalism and archaeology in Europe. Routledge.

Dukor, M. (2015). Ethnic nationalism and a theory of nation-building. Philosophy and Politics: Discourse on Values, Politics, and Power in Africa, 165.

Fessha, Y. T. (2017). The original sin of Ethiopian federalism. Ethnopolitics, 16(3), 232-245.

Flachaire, E., García-Peñalosa, C., & Konte, M. (2014). Political versus economic institutions in the growth process. Journal of Comparative Economics, 42(1), 212-229.

Folarin, S. F., Olanrewaju, I. P., & Ajayi, M. L. Y. (2016). Cultural plurality, national integration and the security dilemma in Nigeria. Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs, 2(1).

Freeman, M. (2020). Theories of ethnicity, tribalism and nationalism. In Ethnic Conflict, Tribal Politics (pp. 15-33). Routledge.

Ganiyu, O. (2023). A philosophical analysis of political slogans in Nigeria Democracy: Tinubu "Emi Lokan" (It is my turn) in perspective.

Gul, F. A., & Zhang, L. (2016). Ethnicity, politics and firm performance: Evidence from Malaysia. Pacific-Basin Finance Journal, 40, 115-129.

Gutiérrez, N. (2017). The study of national identity. In Modern Roots (pp. 3-17). Routledge.

Hadžidedić, Z. (2022). Nations and Capital: The Missing Link in Global Expansion. Routledge.

Harris, E. (2016). Why has nationalism not run its course? Nations and nationalism, 22(2), 243-247.

Kalu, P. (2016). Political parties and ethnic politics in Nigeria. NG-Journal of Social Development, 5(2), 140-152.

Kelechi, N. O., Pius, V. U., & Akaba, C. G. (2021). Interrogating Politics of Rancor in Nigeria Fourth Republic and Its Implication to Ethnic Divide, National Unity and Democratic Development.

Kellner, K. F., & Swihart, R. K. (2017). Simulation of oak early life history and interactions with disturbance via an individual-based model, SOEL. PLoS One, 12(6), e0179643.

Kemper, R. V. (2005). Dallas-Fort Worth: Toward new models of urbanization, community transformation, and immigration. Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development, 125-149.al Journal of Humanities & Social Studies, 9(8).

Korstanje, M. E. (2015). Acemoglu, Daron & James R. Robinson. Why Nations Fail: the origins of power, prosperity and poverty. Journal of International and Global Studies, 6(2), 97-101.

Majekodunmi, A. (2015). Federalism in Nigeria: The past, current peril and future hopes. Journal of policy and development Studies, 289(1850), 1-14

Mbanefo, O. D. U. M. (2020). Elections in Nigeria: Amarch to Democracy or de-democratization of the political space? Social Scientia: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 5(4).

McCrone, D. (2002). Who do you say you are? Making sense of national identities in modern Britain Ethnicities, 2(3), 301-320.

McCrone, D. (2017). The new sociology of Scotland. The New Sociology of Scotland, 1-736.

Munasinghe, V. (2018). Ethnicity in anthropology. The international encyclopedia of anthropology, 1-12.

Ogbeide, D. R. (2021). Nation-building in Nigeria: The dilemma of a Union or Unity. International Journal of Innovative Development and Policy Studies, 9(3), 34-41.

Ogbonna, K. S., & Ihentuge, C. U. (2022). Exploring positivity in ethnic identity for national re-integration in nigeria: a multi media perspective analysis. Ama: Journal of Theatre And Cultural Studies, 15(1).

Okpan, S. O., & Otega, O. (2019). Ethnicity, ethnic identity and the crisis of national development In Nigeria. International Journal of Health and Social Inquiry, 5(1).

Okpan, S. O., & Otega, O. (2019). Ethnicity, ethnic identity and the crisis of national development In Nigeria. International Journal of Health and Social Inquiry, 5(1)

Pierre, J., & Peters, B. G. (2021). Advanced introduction to governance. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Prior, M., & Kemper, R. V. (2005). From Freedman's town to Uptown: Community transformation and gentrification in Dallas, Texas. Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development, 177-216.

Regan, J. M., & Cronin, M. (2000). Introduction: Ireland and the Politics of Independence 1922–49, New Perspectives and Re-considerations. Ireland: The Politics of Independence, 1922–49, 1-12.

Sandra, I. N., & Akpotor, J. (2020). ETHNIC POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS ON GENDER AND HEALTH. PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, 17(7), 5501-5517.

Simon, P. (2015). The choice of ignorance: The debate on ethnic and racial statistics in France. Social Statistics and Ethnic Diversity: Cross-National Perspectives in Classifications and Identity Politics, 65-87.

Smith, A. (2008). The limits of everyday nationhood. Ethnicities, 8(4), 563-573.

Smith, A. D. (2017). Interpretations of national identity. In Modern Roots (pp. 21-42). Routledge.

Sun, C., & Liang, Y. (2015). A REE-in-garnet–clinopyroxene thermobarometer for eclogites, granulites

Taras, R., & Ganguly, R. (2015). Understanding ethnic conflict. Routledge.

Ugbem, C. E. (2019). Ethnicity, democracy and the development nexus in Nigeria. The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention, 6(04), 5400-5406.

Van de Walle, N. (2010). US policy towards Africa: The Bush legacy and the Obama administration. African Affairs, 109(434), 1-21.

Wimmer, A. (2004). Dominant ethnicity and dominant nationhood. Rethinking ethnicity: Majority groups and dominant minorities, 40-58.

Yakubu, Y. (2019). Ethnicity and Nationalism in Nigeria: The Paradox of Dual Identities. International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research, 3(2), 25-29.

Zenker, O. (2011). Autochthony, ethnicity, indigeneity and nationalism: Time-honouring and state-oriented modes of rooting individual-territory-group triads in a globalizing world. Critique of Anthropology, 31(1), 63-81.